

Times-Herald



Details, A19

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Delayed waterfront deal struck

Project a go if council approves

By MATTHIAS GAFNI

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Tearly a year after a grass-I roots group sued to shutter the oft-delayed waterfront project, a settlement has been

reached that could allow the controversial plan to finally move forward.

The Vallejo Waterfront Coalition, which sued Callahan DeSilva Vallejo LLC and the city last December challenging the plan's Environmental Impact Report, announced the agreement Wednesday after 10 months of intense negotiations between the three parties.

The surprise settlement culminated an often acrimonious relationship between

the coalition and the Pleasanton-based developer.

"We're really pleased with the outnegotiations. come. It was a compromise on everybody's side," said Marti Brown, coalition co-chair. "We certainly didn't get our

alternative plan ... but I think we made it a better develop-

announced

ment." The coalition The agreement was had previously proposed a separate Wednesday after waterfront plan.

10 months of intense At the heart of the compromises - were four areas: use

of water-conservation equipment in the new developments. increased park land in the Parcel A area, lower heights to preserve views and public input on architectural standards, officials said.

"There was a significant amount of compromise on the part of the developer and the coalition. A lot of hard work that I would characterize as persistence," said Craig Whittom,

(See WATERFRONT, A2)

Waterfront

(From A1)

Vallejo's community development director who participated in the 20-plus meetings.

The developer and coalition signed the agreement last week and now the Vallejo City Council must consider it Tuesday night. City staff has recommended approval, Whittom said.

"The waterfront and downtown are important assets of the city ... This will be a significant improvement to the water-front which will benefit the entire community," Whittom said.

The project, involving nearly 1,100 new residential units and 562,000 square feet of retail space, could move dirt by late 2007-2008, Whittom said, pending council approval.

Councilmember
Stephanie Gomes, a founding member of the coalition who later resigned after winning election to the council, said she hadn't seen the settlement details, but trusted the

coalition's judgment.

"I have to see that enough compromises were made by the developer for issues that were really important, such as Parcel A and the architectural style," Gomes said. "I'll make sure that's done and then I'll approve it, but I trust the coaliion.

"The Waterfront Coalition has always been about getting the best development for the waterfront as possible. Contrary to what the opponents have said, it's not about stopping development," she said.

Developer Joe Callahan did not return a late call Wednesday.

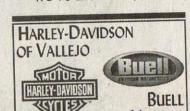
Although the negotiations were fruitful, they also were costly, Brown said.

"We've met a lot,"



Happy Birthday Patty!

Love, your Mom, Tom, Kari, Mike & Greg



very expensive. It was a pretty rigorous process."

The coalition sued last December in Solano County Superior Court, weeks after the city council approved the EIR, following several last-minute concessions by the developer. City officials have tried to resurrect the waterfront for more than three decades.

In addition to the Callahan DeSilva plan potentially moving forward, the linchpin of the project—the Vallejo Station parking garage—also can now continue.

The lawsuit was a major "hurdle" for the garage, which would open up acres of asphalt parking lots along Mare Island Way to development, Whittom said. City officials can now move forward with design phases and secure final funding for that project, he said.

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