Huntington Beach to consider Ripcurl project tonight

Developers ask City Council approval for complex with four times the number of apartments per acre than city code allows.

By ANNIE BURRIS
The Orange County Register

HUNTINGTON BEACH – A housing development that calls for nearly four times the number of apartments per acre than the city allows, and has angered residents who say it doesn't belong in suburban Surf City, will be considered by the City Council tonight.

The Ripcurl project, which is being developed by Irvine-based Red Oak Investments' Center Avenue, would have 110 residential units per acre. The Planning Commission in September voted to recommend that the project shrink to 87 apartments per acre. City code allows for 25 units per acre.

Last month the developers appealed the commission's decision to the council, saying the decreased number of units would have a significant impact on the project and they are unsure if the development would still be financially viable.

"Unit count is important to us, especially in this challenging economic environment," Andrew Nelson, with Red Oak, wrote in the appeal.

Opponents say projects such as The Ripcurl are leading to "densification" of Huntington Beach.

A flyer is being circulated throughout the city by citizen's group Huntington Beach Tomorrow calling for a "community alert" and asking residents to speak against the projects at upcoming City Council meetings.

"I don't think the development fits in with the character of Huntington Beach – it is too high and too dense," resident Pam Vallot, 59, said at a commission meeting. "It looks like it is going to stick out like a sore thumb."

The Ripcurl plans call for the apartments, retail stores, a pool and spa, fire pit, movie projection area, fitness center, conference room, and clubhouse.

The council will vote on the appeal Monday. The decision could set a precedent for future apartment complexes, including those proposed for the Beach Boulevard and Edinger Avenue corridors in the city's recently proposed revamped development plans.
The Planning Commission on Oct. 14 approved another mixed-use project called The Village at Bella Terra, which is located next to the mall with a similar name. Developer DJM Capital Partners will be allowed to build 45 units per acre in six-story buildings. City code allows buildings to be four stories high.

The City Council meeting about The Ripcurl project will be at 6 p.m. at City Hall, 2000 Main St.