

Council seeks new way to OK Trevvett Court senior housing

By MARY BROWNFIELD

DESPITE THE California Coastal Commission's gutting the city's proposed affordable-housing law, the Carmel City Council voted this week to approve long-discussed plans to tear down nine apartments on Dolores Street and construct a new 14-unit complex of affordable-housing for seniors.

After the Trevvett Court project was presented by the Carmel Foundation to the city in early 2006, an ordinance was proposed to facilitate it and encourage the development of other affordable units. The city council approved the law, which would have provided exceptions for density, floor area, setbacks, height and other restrictions for developments consisting solely of low-cost residences, but after months of inaction, the coastal commission sent it back last summer with requests for changes. The city approved those changes, but in late 2008, citing a possible threat to "community character," coastal planners recommended the ordinance be rejected unless extensive revisions were made.

Without the new ordinance as originally drafted, the Trevvett Court project could not be approved unless specific rules for the property were adopted by the council, according to planning and building services manager Sean Conroy. Last month, the planning commission recommended the council OK a "specific plan" for the 8,000-square-foot property.

On Tuesday, the city council did just that. Without much discussion, Mayor Sue McCloud and council members Karen

Sharp and Ken Talmage approved a zoning change and the specific plan for the Trevvett Court property. Councilman Gerard Rose and councilwoman Paula Hazdovac had to step down because they live within 500 feet of the project.

The coastal commission must also approve the specific plan in order for the work to proceed. Meanwhile, The Carmel Foundation, which receives no tax dollars, is raising funds to build the new senior apartments.