PRICEY RENTAL FAILS TO GET PERMIT

By KELLY NIX

THE MONTEREY county Planning Commission last week declined to issue a permit to a couple who wanted to continue renting out their Pebble Beach house on a short-term basis.

On Sept. 13, commissioners voted 5-3 to reject William and Duncan Lewis' application for a permit allowing them to rent their house for 30 days or fewer.

The Lewises had rented the six-bedroom, seven-bath house on 17 Mile Drive overlooking the 14th Tee of the Pebble Beach Golf Links for weddings, family get-togethers and other events until a Carmel Valley wedding planner — apparently upset that the Lewises had a competing wedding site — complained to the county about noise from the rental, claims that William Lewis said Wednesday were untrue.

"We rented it for 16 to 17 years and paid over $300,000 to the county" in transient occupancy taxes, Lewis, a neurosurgeon, told planning commissioners. "Then we were notified we couldn't rent it anymore because there was someone in Carmel Valley whose business was to provide wedding facilities."

The rental on the property known as "Woods Hole" went for $1,550 per night. The Lewises live on the property in a separate house.

Lewis said they still rent the house, but for 30 days or more, which is permitted.

"I don't think the county should be legislating what a person can do with their own house," Lewis said.

While Monterey County doesn't specify "short-term rentals" in its list of uses, one may apply for a coastal development permit to allow "other residential uses of a similar character, density and intensity," such as a bed and breakfast establishment. County planning staff found that "an applicable use could be a bed and breakfast" business, even though the Lewises don't serve food to their guests.

A Pebble Beach Company representative told planning commissioners that until the county adopts and ordinance outlining regulations for short-term rentals, the company is opposed to such rentals in Del Monte Forest.