

# Fire station site approved

One of the county's longest-running battles — the one over where a fire station for Pajaro Dunes should be located — came to an end at Tuesday's meeting of the Board of Supervisors.

It may be resumed soon on another front, however.

The board majority — with minority members Gary Patton and Chris Matthews charging it was another cave-in to big developers — approved an application that allows the construction of the fire house on Shell Road, just west of Beach Road.

That's where the Pajaro Dunes developers — Triad, Limited — and, at least at one time, the majority of the residents wanted the fire station built.

Patton and Matthews have long contended that the only reason the developers want to put a fire station on the Shell Road site is because it would be nearer to property they want to develop in the future. The joker, as far as the two supervisors are concerned, is that that property has been zoned as agricultural and thus would be impervious to development, barring a rezoning.

A rezoning is precisely what occurred, and not just for that portion of land on which the fire station is to be located. The Triad application — in fact, there were two applications — was for the removal

of 52 acres from prime agriculture (1-A) designation to a non-agricultural designation, then to split off about a half-acre of that portion for a fire station site.

Patton and those who have supported him through the years have fought to have the fire station site near the gatehouse of the original Pajaro Dunes development, more centrally located in relation to the entire development and one that would require no intrusion onto agricultural land.

Although the homeowners' groups at one time had voted to support the Shell Road site, there appears to have been a change of heart by many. At the last few meetings in which the fire station has been discussed, many residents have appeared to speak against the Shell Road site, saying the originally-selected site was more suitable because of its central location, and many others have come to believe the Shell Road site would help advance plans for additional development.

The Shell Road site is actually near the so-called "headlands" which were at one time part of acreage proposed for an expansion of the Pajaro Dunes development. That proposal was rejected. But Patton and his cohorts suspect that the applications approved Tuesday, which not only approve the Shell Road site but

grant the rezoning from the agriculture designation, will open the way for another try at the headlands development.

The board majority scoffed at the Patton-Matthews scenario. Supervisor Marilyn Liddicoat noted that, despite the testimony of some residents at the meeting, the officials stand of the homeowner associations at Pajaro Dunes is in favor of the Shell Road site.

In concert with Supervisors Dan Forbus and Pat Liberty, Mrs. Liddicoat also pointed out that the county's Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee had unanimously recommended that the 52-acre parcel (out of a total of 193 acres) be removed from 1-A Agriculture designation because it was not "economically viable" as farmland.

Patton and Matthews urged that the board at least put off making a decision until a new poll of Pajaro Dunes residents could be made. And Patton predicted that approval by the board would be futile in the long run anyway. He said the Coastal Commission, which must pass on the proposal, has given strong indications that it would reject the project, which would leave the matter still unresolved.

Beyond that, Patton noted, funds for building the fire house and setting up the fire fighting system must be obtained by a bond issue, which would require approval of the residents.

But the board majority approved the rezoning and the Shell Road site, with Patton and Matthews opposing.

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