

see also wing spread

Capitola gets half a loaf in Porter-Sesnon land ruling

By BOB SMITH

Everyone seemingly got a half a loaf this morning when the Santa Cruz County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) set the new Capitola sphere of influence in the Porter-Sesnon area.

Commissioners decided on a 3-2 vote, with political foes Marilyn Liddicoat and Robley Levy dissenting to set the city's new sphere boundary just north of the 66-acre Porter-Sesnon property, and including all of New Brighton Beach State Park and the Pine Tree Lane and Pot Belly Beach residential areas in the city's sphere.

The city originally had asked for all the land south of the freeway out to Borregas Gulch and including the Porter-Sesnon property, leased by the University of California to Hare, Brewer and Kelley.

Aptos incorporation proponents opposed Capitola's extension as did some residents of the Pine Tree and Pot Belly areas.

The decision left Capitola without the option to annex the Porter-Sesnon property — the principal reason the city petitioned LAFCO for the boundary change.

It left the Aptos cityhood supporters with the prospect of seeing Capitola extend its city boundaries further into the area claimed by Aptos.

And it left residents on Pine Tree Lane, who switched from opposing to supporting the annexation at the last moment, in a catch 22 situation. They had wanted to annex to Capitola because they felt Capitola would better control the Porter-Sesnon development than the county would. But LAFCO decision leaves Capitola without the possibility of annexing the Porter-Sesnon property across New Brighton Road from Pine Tree Lane, and still opening the possibility of the residential enclave being asked to join Capitola.

The only "winners" in the decision were Hare, Brewer and Kelley, who opposed the Capitola annexation after the city council went on record as favoring state park purchase of the land, and the AMTRON Corp. AMTRON started the entire sphere of influence process by asking Capitola to annex a McGregor Drive site for a new electronics manufacturing plant.

In reaching their decision Wednesday, Mrs. Liddicoat and Mrs. Levy wound up both opposed to the compromise suggested by Santa Cruz City Councilman Joe Ghio and Watsonville City Councilman Charles Palmtag, but for different reasons.

Mrs. Liddicoat said she favored only a sphere extension that would encompass the state owned property in or around New Brighton Beach State Park, and possibly the McGregor Drive frontage owned by AMTRON.

Mrs. Levy wanted the sphere extended all the way out to Borregas Gulch, putting Capitola in potential control of the Porter-Sesnon property.

Commission Chairman Pat Liberty supported the compromise motion.

"I feel strongly that it should not be extended to the Porter-Sesnon property," Mrs. Liddicoat told other commissioners after listening to the presentations from Capitola city officials, Aptos incorporation representative Mrs. Glenn Specht and Hare, Brewer and Kelly representative Skip Morris.

She cited opposition from some Pine Tree Lane and Pot Belly Beach residents as well as the opposition from Hare Brewer and Kelly and the University of California as the reasons for her decision.

"I feel it (Porter-Sesnon) logically belongs to the Aptos side. I only would be willing to go along with the staff recommendation (for the state park property and AMTRON) and I have a problem with the AMTRON portion. But if the rest of the board wants to, I won't object," Mrs. Liddicoat added.

Mrs. Levy, on the other hand, said she looked for an "appropriate natural boundary" and "who can best serve the development that will take place.

"Borregas Gulch," she added, "is the historical boundary in the area.

"It seems clear," Mrs. Levy said, "that no matter what development takes place the effect of the development should be well served by whatever jurisdiction has taken control. At this point, it seems that Capitola has the capacity to provide municipal services."