

125 people — and 3 dogs — at hearing

Animals
By LANE WALLACE
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A crowd of 125 people and three dogs turned out this morning for a hearing that could lead to limits on a dog-training business in a Soquel neighborhood.

The county Planning Department is asking that Kitty Fields' dog-training business be cut back from 15 to five classes a week, and that she be limited to boarding two dogs, instead of the 16 she now has inside her home on Maplethorpe Lane.

The controversy has stirred emotions on both sides. Some neighbors have complained that Fields' business has created too much noise and traffic in the residential neighborhood off Soquel Drive, near Park Avenue. Fields has been training dogs in that neighborhood since she was a teenager in the mid-'50s.

Other neighbors have signed petitions supporting Fields, saying the dog training is not a negative impact on the neighborhood.

A decision on what limits will be placed on Fields will be decided by hearing officer Teresa Shook, an attorney hired by the county. Shook, who conducted the hearing under court-like rules, will issue a written decision. Decisions are usually made within a week.

Debbie Locatelli, a code compliance officer for the county, testified that inspectors have been dealing with complaints about Fields off and on since 1984.

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In 1985, Locatelli said, the county proposed that Fields be limited to five classes a week, but Fields never agreed to the proposal.

The county is now asking that Fields be limited to the five classes, Locatelli said. The county is also seeking \$2,005 in enforcement costs and a \$3,000 fine against Fields and her husband, Don.

Robert Camarlinghi, who lives behind the Fields home, testified that the dog training may decrease the value of his property.

"I'm afraid nobody will want to buy," said Camarlinghi, who has lived on Maplethorpe for 22 years.

Camarlinghi said he would have no objection to Fields running five classes a week.

"Bobby, do you have a dog?" Don Fields asked.

"Yes," Camarlinghi said.

"Who trained it?" Fields said.

"Kitty did," responded Camarlinghi, drawing loud laughs from the audience.

Shook then told the audience to be quiet.

"She should have a business of her own, other than there (at the home)," Camarlinghi said.

Fields' own dog, Brianna, a German Shepherd, yesterday found a neighbor girl who had wandered away from home and crawled into a culvert.

The dog found 6-year-old Katie Gerard, who has Down's Syndrome. Katie is the daughter of Toni Gerard, who lives down the street from Fields.