

# Residents, board can't work out kinks in La Selva exercise course

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LA SELVA BEACH — Even Jane Fonda might not be able to work her way through the exercise-course controversy that has split this seaside community for 1½ years now.

The split in residents of Asta and Arbolado drives and the La Selva Beach Recreation District Board is as wide as ever, as evidenced by a fractious special-district meeting Tuesday night.

A group of about 20 residents split down the middle, favoring or opposing the course.

The recreation board voted 4-1 against an alternate plan proposed by residents. Instead, they decided to leave the decision up to the county Planning Commission.

The commission will be asked once again to mediate. A fourth public hearing will be held Jan. 28.

The voted-down alternate plan would have spread the 20-station, 26-sign exercise course throughout La Selva Beach rather than limiting it to the tree-shaded strip between two residential drives, Asta and Arbolado.

Recreation board Chairwoman Linda Bourgaize summed up the board's views by citing several factors. These included the question of safety to course users who would have to cross busy Playa Boulevard, the fact other district lands proposed for use in the alternate plan were already being used, and the possible added expense for reapplying to the county for a different permit.

Recreation directors also refused

a compromise proposal by resident Ron Crooks that would have eliminated the course's signs. In place of signs, pamphlets would have been made available to users.

And then, there was testimony such as that from Arbolado Drive resident Stella Knouse.

"I don't care if there's 15 signs or no signs, there's nobody using the course so let's get rid of it," she said.

Arguments interrupted the meeting several times. There were charges from both resident-spokesman Ed Meagher and recreation director John Garner that the other side was not willing to compromise.

The course was mistakenly installed without proper county permits by the recreation board in July 1985. Ever since, the course has been shut down, pending a county decision.

Residents, who have organized under the name "Friends of Asta/Arbolado," object to the aesthetics of the exercise equipment and say the course is too dense for the ½-mile strip. Several also cited the estimated \$6,000 spent so far by the district on the course and the permit application.

Recreation directors and other residents of La Selva say the course simply puts the open space, which the district has owned since 1959, to public use. Directors said that some \$20,000 has been spent on tree maintenance within the strip in the past seven to 10 years.

The alternate plan retained the 20 exercise stations, but spread them to various parks and streets, including

San Andreas Park, Triangle Park, San Andreas Road, Florido Avenue and Playa Boulevard.

However, even Meagher conceded he didn't like the alternate. He said the plan "only came about because the gun was to our heads." He was referring to the Planning Commission, which urged the two sides to work out a compromise.

Meagher said he still feels the course is an "improper land use for a single-family residential area." While not pushing for the alternate, he also said the residents' plan "gives the Recreation District everything it insists it wants so badly."

Recreation Board director Peter Stanger called the alternate course "complicated," saying users could "get lost too easily."

Garner said, "I'm unwilling to compromise other district-owned parcels. If our plan is unacceptable by the county, we'll go from there."

Only director Don Green voted against the board's decision. His opposition, however, was not based on opposing the pursuit of the permit. He wanted to tag on a clause that if the Planning Commission denied the course, the district would then try to sell the property.

Without agreement, it appears a compromise will be ordered by the Planning Commission.

At the December meeting, commissioners were leaning toward cutting the number of exercise stations in half, saying the equipment and signs were too dense for the strip.