

# Aptos' Cathedral Drive Building Sites To Enlarge

A majority of county supervisors are well on their way to designating the Cathedral-Redwood drives area north of Aptos a "unique area" where minimum building sites will have to be 15,000 square feet or more.

Tuesday, the board extended a building permit moratorium in the area for another 45 days to give county counsel time to come up with an ordinance to set the minimum building site at 15,000 square feet.

Supervisor Marilyn Liddicoat complained the board majority's decision was based on "evidence" provided by a citizens group from the area "and I don't see how it will hold up in a court of law: we're opening ourselves to lots and lots of court suits."

The "evidence" was defended by Supervisor Gary Patton, who said, "I have never seen a group of citizens do a better job of presenting the board with material on which to make a decision.

"It is a model of good citizenship," Patton said of the work that has been done in disclosing slope and septic tank problems in the area by the Cathedral Redwood Association of Citizens.

Liddicoat responded, "Now that you've ingratiated yourself, I want to remind you there are people who disagree . . . people up there who still believe in property rights."

She asked that John Cavanaugh, who owns a number of parcels in the area be allowed to speak, and Cavanaugh said the 15,000 square foot minimum would make a number of lots unbuildable—lots that would pose no health problem. He asked the board to make its considerations "on an individual lot basis."

County Environmental Health Officer Ray Talley recommended the board's action for the three-mile stretch of roadway that runs north of Aptos, but told the board that much of his background material had been gathered by the citizens' group.

Talley said that, according to county records, in the past 14 years there have been around 17 septic tank repairs and that the citizens group said there had been an additional 11 more repairs and two tank failures.

Cavanaugh said the failures were caused by the older tanks, built before the county set septic tank requirements.

Talley also said there had been two landslides in the area (Cavanaugh said one was 175 years old) and that the area is one of generally steep slopes.

He also said the area has four types of soil, three of them unsuitable for septic tank leaching.

"All soils there are high erosion soils," Talley said.

The health administrator told the board that his recommendation was "not based on new evidence" of the conditions in the area and that it would take "a lot-by-lot check and geological surveys to have definitive information." He was willing to recommend the board find that conditions merited an increased minimum in buildable lot size.

Cavanaugh argued that the Redwood Drive area was "not a paper subdivision" as has been testified and that in the 1920s the land was divided with consideration given to topography.

However, under questioning by the board, Resources Director Henry Baker disagreed with the property owner saying the number of 6,000 square foot lots had not been divided according to the area's topography.

Liddicoat complained that the majority of the board was not acting with "due process," saying the findings for the 15,000 minimum should be based on an independent study with Talley indicating that time and financing in his department did not make it possible.

The board set Jan. 17 for final consideration of the increased lot size ordinance.

REFERENCE