

Business C Over Live Cente

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by Joel Moreno

The Santa Cruz County Redevelopment Agency wants to develop a 10-acre tract across from the main campus of Dominican Santa Cruz Hospital into a 117,000 square foot shopping complex. The area between Highway One and Commercial Way is regarded as one of the best in Mid-County to attract larger-scale retail businesses. The catch is that many of the business owners already occupying the site have no desire to move.

"I'm here to rise in opposition to the development because it would wipe me out," said John Poindexter, whose Santa Cruz Blueprint business has been at the Commercial Way location for 24 years.

Veterinarian Chuck Kessinger of Adobe Animal Hospital said he moved his business once already and doesn't want to face that prospect again.

"I'm too old to think about relocating," Kessinger said.

Their comments were made at a meeting of the Board of Supervisors on December 6.

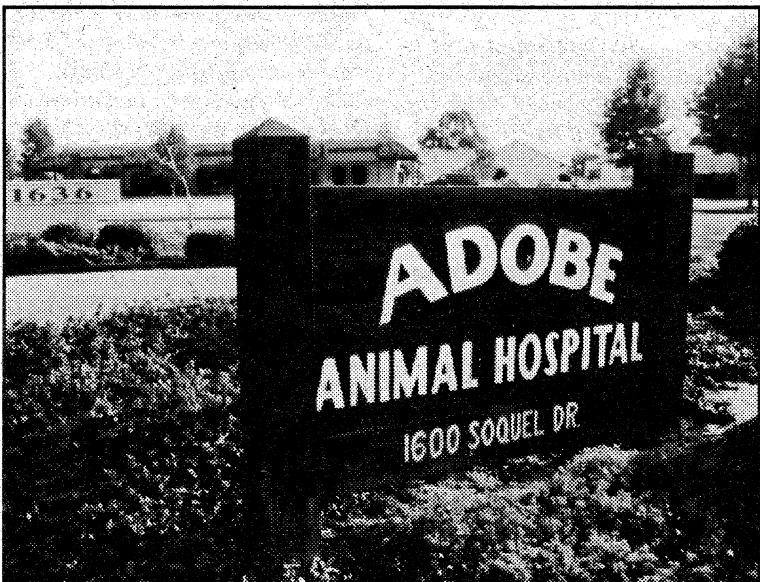
Supervisors were considering a report on a proposed retail shopping center put forward by RDA director Tom Burns.

Commenting in his opening oratory before the county supervisors, Burns tried to present the shopping center as a last chance type of opportunity.

"We are at a key crossroads in terms of the future of our retail base," Burns said.

Burns sees two paths awaiting the approach of county leaders. They can either continue working with the small local business community, while San Jose retail centers continue to swallow up market share; or the county can be "responsive to the consumer" by creating larger, local retail shopping opportunities.

Burns began his statements before the Board by clarifying that the agency at this time is merely interested in exploring the public mood toward the proposed retail site. He said that the public needed the opportunity to speak before issues like business relocation, the choice of a developer and financial support for the project could be fully determined. Burns also acknowledged that Board members would need to



New Development Would Mean Relocating Established Businesses from Established Live Oak Commercial Corridor