



Workers are in a hurry to correct sewer leak at Venetian Court.

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Venetian Court Is Running Out Of Time For Repairs

Work is taking place today and will continue Monday in the effort to stop a raw sewage leak at the Venetian Court cottages on the beach in Capitola.

Residents have been threatened with evictions on Monday at 5 p.m. by the county Environmental Health Department because the leak from the cottages' sewage system is contaminating the adjacent Capitola Lagoon, a popular swimming spot at the mouth of Soquel Creek on Capitola Beach.

The Capitola City Council, which last week directed the county Environmental Health Department to prepare for such an eviction, has scheduled a special meeting at 4:30 p.m. Monday to discuss the issue.

According to Councilman Michael Routh, the council will determine whether to allow the Venetian Court Homeowners Association a short reprieve if the repair work isn't completed.

"If they're within a couple hours of completion, for example, we don't see the necessity of moving everybody out," Routh told *The Sentinel*.

If the repair work is completed, no meeting will be held. As it is now, however, it appears the work will continue all day Monday.

The project involves the removal of an old sewage holding tank, excavation and the installation of a new tank and sewage pump.

Workers Saturday ran into an unexpected problem with groundwater, according to Routh, and were faced with

having to lower the level of water in the lagoon.

A drainage flume was opened and the lagoon is slowly lowering. If it becomes necessary, however, the city will "punch a hole" in the lagoon, added Routh, to quickly lower the groundwater level. The new holding tank will be delivered Monday morning.

The Venetian Court sewage leak resulted from last January's storms, when the large holding tank was cracked. The slow leak has continued since then, according to county Supervising Sanitarian Ken Mabie, and has been building up to a point where bacterial counts in the lagoon have leaped upward.

Fecal coliform counts taken last week showed 6,800 parts per 100 millimeters of water — the highest in the county, according to Mabie. The state limit is 200.

The county Environmental Health Department has the power to evict residents under a state housing law that requires "adequate and proper sewage disposal," said Mabie.

The Capitola Council became irked after the Venetian Court Homeowners Association was told last week to at least temporarily repair the leak. Nothing was done until Friday.

The 25 cottages hooked into the damaged sewage system include 21 individually owned residences that, for the most part, are rented to visitors. Four units are part of the Venetian Court Hotel.