

SV lands another look Developer told to make park a top priority at Skypark

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SCOTTS VALLEY — Kaufman and Broad, which is developing 190 homes here, has been told to get busy and build a park that's required as part of the subdivision.

The city's action, announced by public works director Ken Anderson, means 10 homes about to be built can't be occupied until the park is completed.

Problems have arisen over what home buyers are being told about the "linear" park — which will be located behind homes along the edges of the development — and what the city actually requires, Anderson said. In addition, grading has caused erosion along a bluff where a portion of the park is to be built.

Skypark resident Mark Newton, whose home overlooks the bluff, told the City Council last week that salespeople at Skypark told him the bluff would be developed into a passive, natural park. He is now worried about the impact of a 6-foot-wide asphalt path and a 3-foot-wide gravel jogging path that will be built behind the homes.

"I'm sure this is a pattern of the salespeople," said Mayor Joe Miller. The city has tried to make things clear by sending a letter to all new occupants informing them this area will be an active park, he said.

John Bremond, president of Kaufman and Broad, said all homeowners are given a disclosure statement when they buy their homes and a linear park plan approved by the city.

Newton said he probably received these documents, but noted that new home buyers receive so much paperwork it is impossible to read it all carefully.

From the backyard of their homes, Newton and his neighbors have a clear view of the soon-to-be-built park. For security reasons, open rail fences were required between the backyards and the linear park, which varies from 30-100 feet in depth.

Newton asked that the city make every effort to make it a nice-looking park since residents will have to live with it 24 hours a day. Eleven homes already have been built adjacent to the park, according to Anderson.

The 6-foot-wide asphalt road — which could be used for such things as baby strollers and bicycles — and the gravel jogging path are among 107 conditions facing the developers. The conditions also call for Kaufman and Broad to "grade, build and restore native vegetation in the linear park" and to install a 2-foot-wide drainage area.

Grading in the area has caused the bluff to erode

and has destroyed many of the native plants, said planning commissioner Sheryl Ainsworth, who called it "a sea of mud" from the homes to the cliff.

"We are very aware and very concerned," said Anderson, who added that the city holds several million dollars in bonds from Kaufman and Broad that won't be released to the developer until all conditions are met.

The linear park will eventually tie into a much larger community park to be built east of the housing development. This community park also has some new residents worried.

Skypark homeowner Scott Chopin suggested to the council last week the park be developed so that the more passive activities occur closer to the homes and the more active ones, such as baseball and soccer, take place farther from the development.

The Skypark residents' comments were made as the council took another look at the master plan for the entire Skypark area, a site in the center of the city that once was home to the private Skypark Airport.

The master plan, adopted in 1995, included the residential development that is now under construction, a high-density residential development below the bluffs at the corner of Lockhart Gulch and Mount Hermon roads, 17 acres of community park, and 25 acres of commercial development along Mount Hermon Road.