

RDM board opposes zoning change for Polo Grounds

The Polo Grounds, a 66-acre brush-covered field a half mile north of the Rio del Mar freeway overpass, should remain zoned for agriculture, Rio del Mar Improvement Association directors voted Monday afternoon.

The board voted to oppose any attempts to change the general plan or zoning on the land.

The target of the board's action Monday is a county proposal that will be heard Wednesday afternoon by the Santa Cruz County Planning Commission to designate approximately 20 acres of the land as a community park.

The Planning Commission meeting begins at 1:30 p.m. in

the Board of Supervisors chambers, 701 Ocean St., Santa Cruz.

RDM board members reaffirmed their general anti-park stance, noting that most of the association's members who responded to a survey last year opposed any more county parks in the Rio del Mar area.

But the position, unless modified, also puts the association on record as opposing the construction of 300-plus senior citizen units on the property by a ecumenical church group.

Ironically, Robert Barton, a consultant for the group, brought the Polo Grounds issue to the board, asking that the directors support his group's opposition to the county com-

munity park proposal.

Directors didn't really address the desirability of the senior citizen proposal, agreeing with director Ray Garcia that they should take no action until a formal proposal was filed with the county.

"I would personally suggest we sit and wait until they (the church group) make a proposal," Garcia said.

Garcia was also unhappy with members of the Aptos Council of Improvement Associations — an umbrella "political action" group composed of representatives of five large homeowners' groups — for taking a stand on the Polo Grounds proposal without first

consulting the directors of each association.

"I thought it was customary for issues before the council to be brought back to the individual organizationsa before voting on them," Garcia told the Rio association directors. "The council is composed of five associations, each with veto power. I don't think our representatives should have taken any action."

Council representative Bev Moore said the issue wasn't settled yet. "It will be discussed again."

Other directors were vehement in their opposition to the community park proposal.

"They are trying to set up

another park and they can't maintain the existing parks. Where will the funds come from?" director George Truckell asked.

"Things are moving too fast and are too disorganized. There are proposals for parks on Wingspread, the Polo Grounds and Seascape," he added.

Director and Association director Bunny Stage reminded the other directors that 69 percent of the members who responded to the last association survey "don't want additional parks. Only two percent did."

But, as Association president Mel Deerwester pointed out, the

survey was limited to the Rio del Mar area and "the Polo Grounds are not Rio del Mar."

Still Garcia, after learning that the issue was supported by the County Board of Supervisors and was before the County Planning Commission this afternoon, told the other directors: "then we should take a position. If they are going to build a community park, it will have a major impact on Rio del Mar."

"I move that Rio del Mar (Improvement Association) oppose changing the (land use) designation of the Polo Grounds and leave it as agriculture." His motion, seconded by Stage, passed unanimously.