

Rio directors critical of coast plan change

A state Coastal Commission staff recommendation to change the Santa Cruz County Local Coastal Plan designation on a key Rio del Mar parcel was attacked sharply Monday by Rio del Mar Improvement Association directors.

The state Coastal Commission will hold a public hearing Wednesday at Fort Mason's Building A in San Francisco on the Santa Cruz County LCP.

Santa Cruz County Supervisors have scheduled a public hearing next Tuesday at 1:30 p.m. at the County Government Center, to review the state commission hearing.

RDM directors were irate that a commission staff report recommends that the Dennis-Marani property on the bluff overlooking the Deer Park Shopping Center be designated high-density residential, making it suitable for low- and moderate-income housing.

Santa Cruz County supervisors have already approved a LCP designation for low-density residential,

similar to the single-family residential of neighborhoods adjoining it on the west and south.

RDM director Frank O'Connell accused the Coastal Commission staff of waiting until after local hearings had been concluded and then trying to subvert the public's will by recommending the designation change from low- to high-density housing.

"I suggest we take a stand against this sort of shenanigans. Otherwise the professional bureaucracy will plan you out of business," O'Connell said.

Nicki Pecchenino, aide to county Supervisor Robley Levy, assured the directors that her boss continues to support the low-density residential usage called for in the county-adopted LCP.

"I can assure you that the Board of Supervisors is 100 percent behind the LCP — there were a lot of compromises put into that plan," she told the RDM directors.

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