

LOCAL

Glenwood housing goes to voters

12-29-98
Scotts Valley - 1990
A special election on the 145-acre development will be held next year

By **DAN WHITE**
Sentinel staff writer

SCOTTS VALLEY — The fate of developer Chop Keenan's Glenwood Meadow housing project now lies in the hands of 6,000 registered voters.

Election officials say a citizen's group has succeeded in its plan to force a special election, which will be scheduled early next year. A "no" vote would overturn the Scotts Valley City Council's 3-2 vote to approve the project.

To force the issue onto a ballot, the Save Scotts Valley group needed the signatures of about 640 registered voters on two separate petitions. The Santa Cruz County Elec-

tions Office said Monday it had verified 691 signatures on one petition and 672 on the other.

Elections coordinator Margaret Morrison said there were additional signatures but her office stops counting once the required number is exceeded.

Opponents of the 145-acre development said it would ruin the delicate ecology of the meadow while overburdening area streets. They also argued that construction of a high school across the street from the meadow will put enough of a burden on city resources.

Nick Van Bruggan, one of the opponents, said his group is trying to find other options

for the meadow.

"We would hope that we would have a year to do some serious grant writing and fund seeking and come up with a plan," said Van Bruggan. His group is trying to leave almost all of the meadow open space, reducing any possible development to 16 houses on four acres.

But he said the group did not plan to launch referendums indefinitely.

"We don't think it serves anyone's interest to keep doing referendums." He also said that the Keenan Land Co. has been publicizing inflated figures regarding the land's value.

Keenan, the developer, and project manager Kerry Williams could not be reached to comment Monday.

Supporters of the project say it was a good deal for the city because 70 percent of the property would remain in open space. Mayor Randy Johnson has said the city is badly in need of tax revenue.

The success of the petition drive has not put an end to the debate. Another citizen's group, Yes On Glenwood, has sent out fliers urging support for the project. The group includes a roster of well-known business figures, along with the council members who voted yes on the project, including Johnson and councilmen Bart Cavallaro and Chuck Walker.

Yes On Glenwood argues that referendum backers are putting forth false hopes of preserving open space on land that has been set aside for development.

In several public hearings, the overwhelming majority of public comments about the Glenwood project have been negative. Speakers often said the council was trying to approve something that residents clearly did not want. But supporters insisted these meetings did not reflect public opinion since most supporters did not attend.