

# Council OKs mobile-home rent control

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A mobile-home rent-control ordinance was finally approved last night by the Watsonville City Council, but homeowners who had fought for it were not happy with the final version of the law.

The unhappiness was caused by four changes, proposed by City Attorney Don Haile, that were made to an ordinance that had been supported by mobile-home owners. The amended ordinance was approved 4-3 by the council.

"The homeowners who have spoken up are very disappointed in that action," said Henry Garrison after the meeting.

Garrison is chairman of the Interpark Homeowners Committee, a group of mobile-home owners from various parks. Asked whether the committee would make good on its threat to seek a ballot initiative, Garrison said he could not yet comment on the committee's reaction to the amended ordinance.

However, at least one dis-

gruntled homeowner leaving the council chambers was heard talking about circulating petitions for an initiative.

One of the amendments the homeowners, who generally own their coaches and rent spaces in parks, most opposed was a clause allowing park owners to pass on to tenants the entire cost of government-mandated services.

They also opposed a "modified de-control" clause that would allow park owners to raise the rent of a space by 10 percent when a mobile home is sold. The raise would be limited to not more than once every two years or twice every five years.

Garrison protested that the de-control would make it harder for owners to sell their homes, because buyers would know the rent was going up.

"We think it's wrong," he said. "We think it's unjust."

Mayor Betty Murphy, Councilwoman Gwen Carroll and Councilman Dennis Osmer voted against the amended ordinance.

Osmer was the most vocal in his condemnation.

"There's been a substantial amount of trouble taken to reach some concurrence, and the ordinance we had before us supported that concurrence," he said. "Now we are going to vote on an ordinance that destroys that concurrence."

He also railed against the many months of wrangling over a rent-control ordinance. Disagreement among council members has forced mobile-home owners to return again and again to the drawing board and to sit through numerous meetings.

"We're wearing these people down," Osmer said, "... and I think it's criminal what we've done to these people."

Haile's other two amendments would limit a rollback of rents to their Jan. 1 levels, not last June's, and would call for a panel of three arbitrators to resolve rental disputes, with one arbitrator selected by park owners, one by homeowners and the third chosen by the first two arbitrators.

The ordinance will return to the council for final adoption at the next council meeting. It would affect four parks: the

145-space Rancho Cerritos, on Kralj Drive; the 122-space Monterey Vista, on Holm Road; the 119-space Portola Heights, on Freedom Boulevard; and the 217-space Meadows Manor, on Blanca Lane.