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# Building Moratorium For Cathedral-Redwood Drive

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A 90-day moratorium on new building and grading permit applications for lots under 15,000 square feet in the Cathedral-Redwood Drive area of Aptos was handed down Tuesday by county supervisors in a move to protect the fragile canyon area from heavy development.

The temporary ban was ordered to give the county planning time to come up with solutions—and implementation of existing planning tools—to protect the area.

Preliminary review of the area is set Sept. 13 when planners will come to the board with recommendations on "interim growth measures for the county," Supervisor Gary Patton said.

Action on Mangles Gulch came after a presentation by organized area residents calling their group Cathedral Redwood Assn. of Citizens (CRAC), who said that rapid single home development in the canyon since 1975 has threatened the ecology and public health in their neighborhood.

CRAC's smooth-paced presentation persuaded Supervisor Marilyn Liddicoat—a supervisor who has carried the banner of property rights protection—to make the motion for the moratorium.

Liddicoat, however, balked at a request that the county's lot merger ordinance be quickly amended to be more encompassing to allow mergers in the canyon to increase lot sizes on contiguous parcels under the same ownership.

Dr. Wells Shoemaker, acting chairman of CRAC, spoke for the nearly 100 residents crowded into the county administrator's conference room, saying the canyon had been subdivided in the 1920s into 1,100 parcels.

There are presently 135 homes in the four mile canyon, served by a single deadend road, and that 45 of the homes had been built since 1975.

He said there are 55-65 active permits for new homes.

Hank Davis, geologist for CRAC, said the average slope of the canyon was 35 per cent and that its soils were highly erodable and unstable, while also being less permeable than needed for successful septic systems.

Steve Hall said residents were concerned about increased need for services in the area: roads, fire protection, water and successful septic systems to protect Mangles Gulch Creek which flows in wet weather.

He said that according to the Aptos General Plan and the county's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, the area should be zoned 10-40 acre parcels for building, but that in fact the area's average lots were from 4,000 to 6,000 square feet.

Katy Burdick, an environmental consultant hired by

CRAC, said the group urged the county to have a uniform interpretation of zoning restraints for all parcels, increase the septic tank requirement from 6,000 square feet lots to 1,500, amend the lot merger ordinance to allow more mergers, and to apply the county's 30 per cent slope restriction on building prior to the lot being graded.

She also said the group wanted a 60-day moratorium to give planning staff time to gear up to allow more precise review of building permit applications in the area.

County Counsel Clair Carlson said that one of the restrictions of the county's lot merger ordinance was that it allows for consideration of the width of rights-of-way which excludes many lots from being merged.

Planning Director Kay Bowden said the ordinance also demands that "all" conditions be met before a lot is merged.

Patton said, "That was the problem, when we passed the ordinance, there was no public support," and complained the pressures came from the real estate interests.

Liddicoat disagreed, "There were a lot of little people out there who had invested their life savings in property."

In other planning action, supervisors held over for three weeks action on the Maplethorpe Terrace subdivision (39 single homes) for three weeks to work out a traffic circulation system onto Soquel Drive.

The subdivision is proposed in the Maplethorpe Lane-Soquel Drive area and according to testimony given the board, area residents support the development, but are concerned about impact on the local school district and the traffic impact.

The board held over action after being told that Victory Lane was owned by one man who expressed a willingness to

let the road be the single access to the development, allowing the sealing off of Maplethorpe Lane to Soquel Drive.

A request by Joseph Southward to allow a minor land division to build a home in the Paget Street-Corcoran Avenue area was remanded to the zoning administrator to work out details of road improvements, with the applicant told he would have to pay no more than an equal share (\$4,000) with a neighbor on the improvements.

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