

Watsonville Annexation 14-acre annexation sought for senior village expansion

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SANTA CRUZ — A public hearing has been scheduled to discuss a proposed 14-acre annexation near a senior residential community in Watsonville, a topic that has raised concern among city residents in the past.

The proposed annexation, land north of Tuttle Avenue and east of Vivienne Drive, would expand the senior community of Pajaro Village. It will be brought to the public for discussion at a Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) meeting next month.

The proposal is nothing new to village residents, nor to LAFCO commissioners — it was brought before LAFCO in May 1997, drawing more than 60 residents of Pajaro Village and Bay Village to protest, and was denied.

Commissioners at the time said the proposal was denied because the land was agricultural, LAFCO's last choice of type of land to annex for residential use.

Glen Kramer of Burgstrom-Kramer, owners of the land, contested that point, saying that studies of the land indicate the soil ranges from good to poor. He alleged that LAFCO's denial last year was "political," which he hopes won't happen again.

"Now it's a political issue,"

'It's really a crime to not build houses there.'

*— Glen Kramer,
property owner*

Kramer said. "They're trying to say it's prime ag land and we disagree."

Kramer said the land was originally intended to be the third phase of Pajaro Village and, if annexed into the city, would be developed as a residential subdivision for seniors. "It's really a crime to not build houses there," he said.

The land is currently zoned as commercial/agricultural land.

Though Kramer requested that LAFCO postpone the item so for more preparation, it was already advertised as a public notice and must go on, according to a LAFCO representative.

The hearing will be held at 8:30 a.m. August 5 in Room 525 of the County Governmental Center, 701 Ocean St. in Santa Cruz. Any member of the public is invited to attend.