

New Boardwalk rides get green light from city

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SANTA CRUZ — Two new rides at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk won tentative approval from the Planning Department Wednesday, when Zoning Administrator Patrick Murphy approved their design and recommended approval of their coastal permits. And at least one of the tourist attraction's neighbors is not happy about it.

The children's rides, the Jumpin' Star and the Tornado, already have been installed but are closed, awaiting approval from the Coastal Commission.

Residents also have until July 28 to appeal the zoning administrator's approval with the Plan-

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ning Department.

Boardwalk spokesman John Robinson said the company applied for the permits earlier this year, before the rides were installed.

It will be at least another month before the permits are complete and the rides open for business.

"Our season ends in early September so it's hard to say whether they'll be up and running by then," he said.

But Catharine Gunderson, an East Cliff Drive resident who's been involved with the city's Beach Area committee, objected to installing new rides before the permits are granted.

"There's been a history of the Boardwalk trying to expand beyond its parameters," she said. "This is a bad precedent the city is setting by giving permits after the fact of installation."

But Robinson said it's standard practice for amusement parks to do that because they never know how long the process will take and they have no place to store them. Besides, he said, the rides are innocuous.

"These are very low impact rides," he said. "The Jumpin' Star goes up and down eight feet and holds six kids at once. The Tornado spins children around. They're not loud and troubling. You wouldn't even know they were there unless you were one of our smallest customers."