

Use of Polo Grounds for summer discouraged

By DONNA KIMURA

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APTOS — Athletic teams desperate for playing fields shouldn't be able to use the Polo Grounds until a \$400,000 access road is built off Huntington Drive, according to Barry Samuel, director of the county Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services Department.

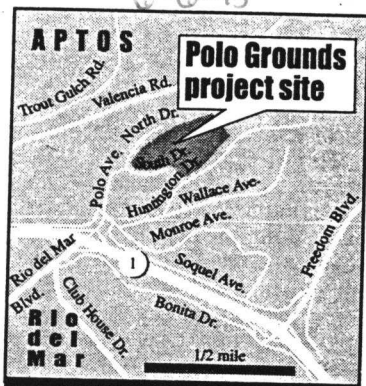
"You cannot develop the fields until the road" is built, said Samuel.

He recently met with representatives of Little League and soccer leagues to discuss using the grounds before the road is built. At the meeting, it was determined that amending an existing permit to use nearby Polo Drive as a temporary entrance would take just as long as constructing the required Huntington Drive entrance.

That means even informal use of the fields won't be allowed this summer.

The meeting was held at the request of the county Board of Supervisors in May. The board asked parks officials to meet with sports groups to try to find a way to use the fields, even temporarily, before a road is built.

Samuel's report on the meeting goes to the board for review at today's meeting. The report is scheduled to be approved without discussion at 3 p.m.; but if any supervisor or member of the public asks to discuss the item, it would be put over to the board's 7 p.m. session. Teams can't even car pool or walk into the Polo Grounds from nearby Polo Avenue with-



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out an amendment to the current permit, according to Samuel.

In addition, there is the possibility of a lawsuit challenging the amendment process, which could even further delay the project, Samuel said in a letter to the supervisors.

He recommends supervisors discuss building the Huntington Drive during the budget hearings this month. He said the road and parking lot would cost close to \$400,000.

County parks officials have recommended issuing certificates of participation, a form of bond financing, to pay for the project. The annual debt would then be covered by increasing a county service fee by 83 cents a year for 30 years.

The county has owned the Polo Grounds for about eight years.

Supervisor Walt Symons, who represents the Aptos area, said he wonders if it will be developed in his lifetime.