

# SCOTTS VALLEY DELAYS DECISION ON HISTORIC BARN

City weighs options: \$1 million or force home builder to renovate



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Florida-based Lennar Homes is proposing to demolish the Scotts Valley Polo Ranch in exchange for a \$1 million payment as it prepares to build 40 homes on the site at the end of Santa's Village Road.

*Historic Buildings*

By SHANNA MCCORD

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SCOTTS VALLEY — The million dollar debate over a historic barn on the northern edge of Scotts Valley will resume in two months.

The City Council voted unanimously at its meeting Wednesday to delay a decision on whether to demolish the Polo Ranch barn and take \$1 million from developer Lennar Homes or force the developer to find a way to renovate the dilapidated property.

During the next 60 days, city officials and residents will analyze the options for the barn.

Representatives from Florida-based Lennar Homes said the barn, built around 1930, is too far gone to save and have instead offered the city \$1 million for its demise.

City officials said the money would likely go toward improving Scotts Valley's public parks.

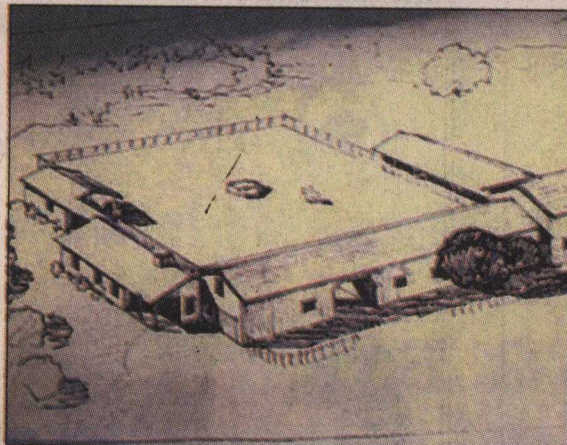
The debate drew at least 50 residents to the council meeting, most of them lobbying the council to take action to preserve the structure. Criticism was lobbed at the council for not holding Lennar responsible for taking care of the barn through the years.

Several people spoke in favor of using the cash to improve soccer



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ABOVE: The Scotts Valley Polo Ranch has continued to deteriorate through the years.



LEFT: This is an artist rendering of the Scotts Valley Polo Ranch barn from several decades ago. The City Council was faced with an offer from Lennar Homes of \$1 million to tear down the barn to make room for 40 new homes.

SEE BARN ON A5

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# BARN

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fields and buy playground equipment.

"There aren't many buildings I'd fall on a sword for," Charlene Duval said. "I thought this was a done deal. I thought this was a keeper."

Lennar Homes had promised the city when it won approval from the Scotts Valley Planning Commission in 2008 for constructing 40 upscale homes on the 113-acre site that it would restore the barn and move it to a nearby location.

However, the housing project was delayed during the recession and the downturn in the housing market.

During the past five years, the barn has continued to fall into disrepair to the point it's not safe or financially feasible to bring it back to life, city officials said.

Lennar has done nothing to maintain the barn during the years the project was delayed and wants to rescind the deal made with the city in 2008.

"It's quite obvious the barn has not been in good shape for years," Lennar's Grant Reed told the council. "We would choose to dismantle the barn and move it off the property."

Councilman Dene Bustichi spoke in favor of taking Lennar's \$1 million offer, a reversal from his view in 2009.

"I'll take as much responsibility as a city representative should in not holding Lennar's feet to the fire," Bustichi said. "I am deeply concerned about the possibility of losing that barn but the money could do our city some great benefit."

David Payne told the council the money could be used in many ways to improve youth sports and recreation programs.

"I think you should seriously consider investing in our parks, especially Skypark," Payne said. "I would love to see all or some of the funds used for all-weather turf at Skypark."

Several members of the Scotts Valley Historical Society want the barn to stay.

"You're the council known for letting the Polo barn go," member Debbie Muth said. "That's no legacy at all."

Lennar bought the property from software company Borland in 1998 and tossed around several proposals through the years while the land has sat dormant.

The barn, which is falling apart and surrounded by a chain-link fence and barbed wire, was built by famed architect William Wurster.

The 113-acre property was sold to millionaire Marion Hollins of Pasatiempo Golf Club fame in May 1930 for her polo stables, barn and elaborate groom's house.

Hollins resided there during the construction of her Pasatiempo home.

The barn's designed included an arch connecting the quarters to spacious stalls for seven horses, a hay barn and tack shed.

Hollins vision for a polo ground project was never completed as her inherited oil wealth vanished during the Great Depression.

The area was the site for a Christmas-themed amusement park called Santa's Village.

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