

County drops suit against city

The city of Watsonville and the county of Santa Cruz have declared a truce in at least one of the many battles they have fought with each other in recent years.

As a result of negotiations that have been going on quietly for several months, the county has agreed to drop its legal action regarding the city's plans for expansion of its dump grounds off San Andreas Road in return for the city's agreement to conduct an environmental review on the proposed expansion.

County Supervisor E. Wayne Moore Jr., who represents the city on the county governing board and was instrumental in bringing about the agreement, said the accord will be beneficial to both sides. What the

agreement does, Moore said, is to allow both entities to join together in preparing a state-required Solid Waste Management Plan instead of remaining at loggerheads over a "silly disagreement."

The battle began last year when the city purchased a 50-acre parcel of land adjacent to its existing dump near San Andreas Road with the intention of using it for expansion of the dump. The county said the city couldn't do that without first obtaining a Coastal Zone permit for the state Coastal Commission and preparing an environmental impact report (EIR). The city refused, so the county sued. The court ruled that the city did have to get the coastal permit, but didn't have to do the

EIR until such time as it actually formulated plans for expansion. The county appealed that portion of the ruling.

That's where things were when the two bodies finally reached their compromise early this month.

Moore noted that both the city and the county need to expedite their dump expansion program because both are nearing capacity now, and that the new agreement will remove a major roadblock.