

RV park residents speak out

By DICK LITTLE

REGISTER-PAJARONIAN CORRESPONDENT

APTOS — The next battle in the Seacliff area will be over a 32-space RV park in the heart of the community. Several people who worked on a new community plan want the park to go. Tenants of the Seacliff Center Trailer Park want it to stay. While tempers remained calm during a meeting of the Santa Cruz County Housing Advisory Commission Wednesday night at the Mar Vista School, it was obvious there

are strong feelings on both sides.

"The magnitude is more than a housing issue," Commission Chairman Carl Sprague of Watsonville said following the meeting. "Our mandate is to investigate the housing in the area... We may have to look at alternatives." Sprague would not speculate on what the alternatives the commission may consider.

The commission will discuss the issue further when they meet Aug. 2 at the Aptos Firehouse.

Several residents of the park told the commission it was "low-income housing" for the area. "It's all that I can afford," resident Bill Morris said. Another resident, Judith McKenzie, said, "If the place is shut down I'll be downtown looking for a place to sleep." She said she has been a resident for 12 years.

Commissioner Gary McNeil asked if the park could be relocated, but no one wanted to venture a guess on where it might be placed. "I'm concerned about losing the affordable housing," he said.

Seacliff resident Nancy Morris said the RV park was meant to be temporary. "It doesn't make any sense to me to have a transient facility in a commercial area," she said.

"It was designated as a temporary facility," one of the leaders of the Seacliff planning group, Pepper Golech, agreed. She chided the county for not doing anything about keeping permanent tenants from the RV park. "Now it's our problem," she said.

"During the day I'm afraid to walk down there," Golech continued. "There's drugs and prostitution there." Residents agreed there are

drug problems but denied there was any type of prostitution at the facility.

A woman alleged there were drugs being sold to school children, which brought a response from a tenant who said the statement was "rubbish."

Seacliff resident Ron Brown, who works as a volunteer with the Sheriff's Office, said the drug problem at the park "has not improved at all."

He told the commission he cites cars left at the park and the Planning Department is not doing anything to remove them.

Seacliff resident Mickey Derby was upset the owners and the manager were not at the meeting to hear what people are saying. "If they were, there wouldn't be so many complaints," she said.

Seacliff businessman and commercial property owner Tom Trujillo told the commission "the time has come to develop the area." He suggested purchasing the land along the freeway where the par three golf course was located and use that for replacement low-income housing.

Seacliff resident Beth Bastasch said, "I'm against the Carmelization of Seacliff... Seacliff has always been a hodge-podge." She said the area is mainly made up of "working people."

Sprague told those in attendance, "We're on a fact-finding tour. It will take several months before we can reach a conclusion."