

# TECHO proposal approved

The Watsonville Planning Commission Monday evening approved the tentative map for a 24-unit townhouse subdivision on a two-acre site at Lake Village and Brentwood drives. Approval of "Victorian Village" came with hardly a hint of the controversy that had dogged the self-help project in previous hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council.

The development, promoted by The Environmental Community Housing Organization (TECHO), had been vocally opposed by a number of Brentwood Drive residents, who feared that the project would lead to traffic congestion and pose a threat to area property values. Monday night only one area resident, Karen Seadler, was in the audience. Mrs. Seadler, a past spokeswoman for Victorian Village opponents, raised no objections to the development, asking only that the commission accept TECHO's offer to donate 8,000 square feet of land along Brentwood Drive to the city for a park.

Commissioners, who voted to recommend against acceptance of the park land when they approved the project master plan a month ago, reversed themselves Monday, voting to require the land dedication as a condition of tentative map approval.

The Victorian Village development is intended to provide housing for middle-income families (with incomes in the \$25,000-\$35,000 range) who have not been able to qualify for conventional home financing. Homebuyers would do 70 percent of the construction work themselves, under the supervision of technical experts provided by TECHO. Each family purchasing a home in the development would donate 1,000 hours labor to the project, reducing construction costs. The donated labor, or "sweat equity," could constitute all of a buyer's downpayment in some cases.

The development, which is to be constructed on property TECHO is buying from the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, is being financed by a consortium of 33 savings and loan institutions.