

on this front porch on Paul Street in Watsonville. Both of the last

VCF AROMAS RD 8/15/90 p. 9

# Aromas folk disagree on town square plan

By LARAMIE TREVINO  
STAFF WRITER

As Aromas gears up to showcase civic pride this weekend, the town finds itself divided over how to develop its town square.

During the 25th annual Aromas Day celebration Sunday, visitors to the information booth at the corner of Blohm Avenue and Carpenteria Road can view the preliminary plans for spiffing up the lot on the southwest corner of that intersection.

Then they can walk the few steps to the Ducky Deli, where opponents of the design have attached their signatures to a set of plans posted there.

The plan that Marty Hoover, head of the town square committee has been circulating in recent weeks is "terrible," Aromas resident George Mortan said this morning. Critics are opposed to

grading and vegetation removal proposals, among other parts of the plan.

At the deli, the opposition is well represented, as rows of names affixed to plans attest.

"We're very one-sided here," said deli owner Bonnie Mahler, who likes the rustic patch visible from her back door just fine. "I just say (to customers) if you don't like it - sign it."

When she took over her committee role, Hoover enlisted landscape architect Misty Philbin to draw up preliminary plans for the eighth-of-an-acre parcel that townspeople purchased following a successful fund-raising campaign. While the Monterey County Parks Department holds the deed to the land, property maintenance is the responsibility of the service club.

Philbin's plans call for walk-

ways and curbs on the Carpenteria Road and Blohm Avenue sides, a paved plaza, a retaining wall running along the deli's parking lot, and three large raised planter beds for a demonstration garden of California native drought-resistant plants.

To accommodate the plans, a pine tree and bushes must be removed and a slope needs to be leveled. And that's where design concerns get thorny.

Some of the shrubbery has been there for 40 years, Mortan, a carpenter, said, adding that regrading the property will also harm the remaining trees.

Mortan, who quit his position on Hoover's committee after the plans were unveiled, said leaving the square as it is is the best option.

"With a little water and mowing it's a dandy little place,"

Mortan said.

Hoover, who describes the condition of the square as "very coarse," said Aromas Day visitors are welcome to present their comments to her in person at the information booth or at a public meeting she plans to hold in the near future.

She said no figures were available for costs, which Granite Rock has offered to foot through donations of labor and materials. Mortan, however, said he's heard estimates of \$40,000 to \$100,000 bandied about.

"She wants to cify this park for big bucks," he said.

Aromas Day, whose theme is "A Day In the Country," will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Activities include a parade at 11 a.m., music, presentations and exhibits.