

# La Selva Beach exercise course still jogging residents' tempers

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SANTA CRUZ — "The Exercise Course That Split La Selva Beach." No, it's not a new horror movie — just the same old controversy that has been going on for more than a year now.

And it's far from over.

The illegally installed exercise course was put in by the La Selva Beach Recreation District in July 1985, without benefit of proper county or Coastal Commission permits. Residents along Arbolado and Asta drives, who have to look out at the 20-stop, exercise circuit that has more than 25 signs, protested.

The course sits in a narrow, tree-shaded residential strip between the two dirt residential roads. The strip has been owned — and maintained — by the recreation district since 1959. Board members felt they were simply putting the land to public use with the exercise course. They soon found out others felt differently.

After two hours of public testimony at a County Zoning Administrator meeting Friday, Deputy Zoning Administrator Bob Leggett continued the item for two weeks.

The continuance gives Leggett time to mull over arguments from both sides. In all, eight residents spoke against the course, asking for immediate removal, and five spoke in favor of it. The county has re-

ceived petitions and letters from 194 persons in favor of the course, another 32 in favor of it with the stipulation that signs be removed and 93 opposing it.

In asking for the continuance, Leggett asked for additional information concerning any plants and wildlife on the strip, and information on whether the recreation district can afford to make modifications to the course recommended by planners.

The modifications recommended by planner Chuck Schweikert center around lowering the exercise course signs from five to two and a half feet, as well as relocating them out of the public right-of-way and completely onto district property. More than three-quarters of the signs and exercise stations were mistakenly installed in the right-of-way.

Additionally, Schweikert is asking for a landscaping and erosion-control plan. All the modifications would require completion within 60 days.

The recreation board — and their attorney, David Brick — have agreed to make whatever modifications are necessary. Some Arbolado and Asta drive residents, however, don't want to see modifications. They want the course taken out.

Brick told The Sentinel afterward, "The problem concerns the fact that these residents like the setting as it is. It's almost as if it's a private park maintained at taxpayers' expense.

We're sorry to see it settled this way. We'd like to have seen it settled in La Selva Beach."

Added Recreation Board Director John Garner: "The key here is we have limited lands for public use. We firmly believe this course is an appropriate use."

Numerous Arbolado and Asta drive residents feel otherwise, including Ed and Colleen Meagher.

Ed Meagher, spokesman for the group, "Friends of Asta /Arbolado," said later he was satisfied with the continuance. "Normally, the Zoning Administrator goes along with the staff recommendation. In that sense, we scored. At least now we have a fighting chance."

His wife, Colleen, said that residents fighting against the course were in the ironic position of fighting an attorney hired by the recreation district with their own (taxpayers') money.

Arguments reiterated at the hearing ranged from the unsightliness of the course's signs (and how they lower home values) to questions of how the course affects possible endangered plants or insects.

Any decision coming from Deputy Zoning Administrator Leggett can be appealed within 10 days to the county Planning Commission. The continued hearing will be at 8:30 a.m. Sept. 19 in the fifth floor supervisors' chamber at the County Center.