

Day Valley annexation by fire district likely

Aptos directors ready to give go-ahead if asked

By BOB SMITH

The Aptos Fire District appears ready to annex a portion of Day Valley if asked to do so by a major area land developer.

District directors said last Tuesday night following a lengthy discussion with Pat McCormick, executive director of the Santa Cruz County Local Agency Formation Commission, that they would probably give the go-ahead to an annexation of the proposed "Forest and Meadows" subdivision north of Day Valley Road.

The fire directors said they would not take any action on the proposed annexation until formally asked to do so by either area residents or the "Forest and Meadows" subdividers.

Fire directors said they probably would seek ways of charging Day Valley residents an extra service charge, to cover the difference between the property taxes Day Valley residents will pay after annexation and the amount paid by a similar property owner already inside the fire district. Another option would be a "buy-in fee" that would cover the cost of capital improvements and equipment already purchased by the district.

The board felt that the district would have to build a third district fire station to adequately cover the Day Valley area if annexed.

McCormick told the directors Tuesday night that since the passage of Prop. 13, county supervisors have been willing to transfer property taxes paid by an area for fire service from a county service area that now

contracts for fire protection with the California Department of Forestry in the unincorporated areas outside county fire districts to the annexing fire district. But in the case of Aptos, that would probably be about one-fifth the amount paid by the owner of a similar home that was in the district at the time Prop. 13 passed and the property tax system was changed in California.

The county Board of Supervisors, as a condition of approving the subdivision in 1980, required the applicant to apply for annexation to the fire district.

The area is now served by the California Department of Forestry under a contract with the county Board of Supervisors.

The fire district was contacted by the developer last month. A letter from civil engineer Robert Dewitt of Santa Cruz outlined the supervisors' conditions and asked if the district is interested in annexing the "Forest and Meadows" subdivision.

McCormick told the fire directors the annexation could not be approved by LAFCO as an island. Instead, the district would have to apply to LAFCO to annex a much larger area, including Freedom Boulevard out to its junction with Hames Road, all of Day Valley Road, nearly all of Cox Road, Ranchitos del Sol Road, Brooktree Ranch Road and all of the property with access off those roads.

The area, according to the Department of Forestry, has an assessed valuation of approximately \$39 million — which is

about five percent of the district's present assessed value. Emergency equipment response times for the Aptos fire department from its Station 2 at Rio del Mar Boulevard and the freeway is approximately 4:42 minutes. Response time for units from the CDF station in Corralitos is 11-12 minutes; Dave Mack, CDF Ranger-in-charge for Santa Cruz County, told the Aptos fire board.

District directors said the present travel time from the Rio del Mar station was too long to adequately serve the area and a new station would eventually be required in the area. The "Forest and Meadows" development is also being required by the supervisors to donate a site for a new fire station.

Annexation will require either a application by the fire district or a petition signed by five percent of the area residents or five percent of the area property owners to LAFCO, McCormick said.

If LAFCO agrees to the annexation, McCormick said, an election would be called in the area. If the fire district wanted to assess a service fee, as now allowed under a bill cosponsored in the state legislature last year by State Sen. Henry Mello, that also would have to be voted upon by the residents.

A simple majority vote would approve the annexation, McCormick indicated, but under terms of Prop. 13, a two-thirds majority would be necessary to approve the service fee or any other special assessment imposed by the fire district on the area.