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Supervisors ban parking of tractor-trailer rigs

SANTA CRUZ — The Board of Supervisors Tuesday passed an ordinance that will ban large tractor-trailer rigs from parking in certain neighborhoods.

As passed, the law requires voters in affected areas to petition the board for a commercial parking prohibition.

If half of the neighbors want the ban — and the board agrees with them following a public hearing — then the neighborhood will be designated as a no-parking area for large trucks, weighing 10,000 pounds or more.

The neighbors will pay for signs and the cost of processing the paper work through the county Public Works Department. Also, the ordinance states that no change in the designation will be allowed within the year it's set up. That's to insure some stability for the neighborhood.

The law arose from complaints from neighbors of areas in Ben Lomond and Watsonville. Planning Director Kris Schenk wrote the board in a letter.

In a letter to the Planning Department last summer, some Watsonville residents wrote that the 59-foot truck on their street took up too much parking space from other residents. And they said it caused a safety hazard by obstructing the view of motorists.

The residents also objected to the noise caused by the refrigeration unit of the rig.

As another letter pointed out, though, the truck in question is owned by a private, independent driver whose livelihood depends on his rig.

And, according to the letter, the truck is normally parked off the road.

As the Watsonville letters point out, it will be up to the neighbors to decide whether there's enough support for a ban.

One supervisor commented before the meeting that the issue is the kind of thing that will undoubtedly pit neighbor against neighbor. However, it's hoped that through public hearings, each side will have a chance to air their point.