

Supervisors OK Seabreeze, Sumner Woods Projects

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The 128-unit Seabreeze townhouse development in Aptos and a lot split allowing for 45 single-family dwellings for the Sumner Woods development in Rio Del Mar were approved by the county Board of Supervisors Tuesday.

Both projects still must gain Central Coast Commission approval.

Discussion on the proposals centered around housing for low and moderate-income persons. Seabreeze, proposed by McKeon Construction Co. at McGregor and Mar Vista drives, included 32 low and moderate-income affordable units, making up 25 percent of the project. But Sumner Woods, proposed by Albert Russo and the Hawaii and San Francisco Investment Co. for Sumner Avenue near Los Altos Drive, did not specify any affordable units.

Supervisor Chris Matthews was the most outspoken in pushing for the low and moderate-income affordable units at Sumner Woods. He questioned whether the inclusion of the affordable units were a major concern of the residents, specifically, Concerned Citizens of Rio del Mar, which had fought hard to get the original 84-unit townhouse proposal changed.

Jerry Brown, of the planning firm Brown, Marani and Hickey who worked with the developers in coming up with the revised plan, noted that affordable units was just one of many issues.

Mitchell Page, attorney for CCRDM, added, "They (CCRDM) would like to see

affordable housing in the county, too. They just don't want it at the expense of their neighborhood."

He noted their objections stemmed around traffic and high densities. "Cluster housing," which was originally proposed, "wasn't in conformance with the rest of the single-family dwelling neighborhood."

At one point, Brown said, "We would be more than happy to place low and moderate-income affordable units if we were allowed to put in more units overall. At 45, we're at the lowest end of the economic scale now."

The original application had called for 84 townhouses on the nine-acre parcel. It was later scaled down to 78 and then 66 units. One of the earlier proposals did call for 18 affordable units.

Supervisor Gary Patton centered his concerns on an open space offer by the developer, as well as assuring a 30-foot setback of buildings from a drainage corridor and a park dedication fee.

He was successful in gaining concurrence from the rest of the board for an irrevocable offer by the developer for some 78,400 square feet of open space at the northern end of the parcel, but did not get the latter two suggestions passed.

At first, Supervisor Marilyn Liddicoat sided with Patton and Matthews for the park dedication fee. However, County Counsel Clair Carlson cited "ambiguity" in a law that termed it a violation to require developers to pay both the park dedication and school impact fees. The developer is already paying the school fees and Liddicoat said she didn't

want to invite any lawsuits with another fee.

Matthews stood strong in his objections to the project. "I thought the project was too large from the beginning, regardless of the low and moderate-income affordable units. I do want to say that any subdivision that comes before me should include some affordable housing."

Seabreeze, with its proposed 32 low and moderate-income affordable units, had an easier time of approval. McKeon Construction Co. returned with mitigations of supervisors' concerns brought up three weeks ago — the most important centering around a transfer of 15 affordable units to Seabreeze from the developer's Soquel Knolls project on Wharf Road.

Neighbors and supervisors agreed that the transfer was higher than the area's "fair

share" of low and moderate-income affordable units. The developer agreed to keep the units at Soquel Knolls.

Other changes included: deleting the condominiums that originally were set in a quadraplex design and making all the units townhouses, having a single Homeowners Association, maximizing passive solar design in all the units, individual water meters and noise and visual barriers along McGregor Drive.

The only question involved the developer's three-year phasing-in plan. Forbus objected to "guaranteeing" building permits, while Liddicoat said if developers didn't have a commitment from the county, developers may not be able to get financing.

The board continued the phase-in question until the final map returns.