

Weather Report

Temperatures for 24-hour period ending at 8 a.m. yesterday: Maximum, 60; minimum, 42. For 24-hour period ending at 8 a.m. today: Maximum, 60; minimum, 44.

Monterey Bay Area—Fair through tomorrow. Colder nights. High today 55 to 62; low tonight 32 to 42. Northwest wind 5 to 15 knots.

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FORTY PAGES

County Zoners Approve Coast Road Quarry

By Wallace Wood
Sentinel Staff Writer

A major sand quarry operation next to the scenic coast highway west of Santa Cruz was approved Friday by the county board of zoning adjustment.

Rolling over a wall of arguments against the quarry by the city planning commission, neighbors, civic and conservationist groups, the BZA voted unanimously to give the permit to Granite Rock company of Watsonville. It will be for a minimum of 40 years, the expected life of the quarry.

An appeal of the decision to county supervisors is considered likely, though no one would say afterward he definitely will appeal. "I'm sure someone will," Santa Cruz City Planning Director Neal Walton declared.

Two major changes in Gran-

ite Rock's application seemed to split the opposition and turn the tide in favor of the permit. One was that the company temporarily withdrew its plans for an asphalt "hot mix" and cement batch plant to go along with the quarry. Company officials made it clear they may want the plant back later, however. The other was a requirement that cypress and eucalyptus trees be planted along Cabrillo highway to screen the quarry from view.

The 300-acre site stretches just west of Dimeo lane to the Wilder ranch. About 200 acres of "unique" high-grade sand deposits suitable for the best concrete and other uses are generally in the center of the property. The deposits run off the property to the east but will not be mined. Most of the land involved is north of Highway 1.

Hydraulic mining methods are required to keep down dust, and a conveyor belt will run under the highway to take from

100 to 300 tons of sand per hour to rail and truck shipping points. Some 20 million tons of sand are estimated by geologists to be available.

The traffic problems expected from shipping the sand by truck as well as by rail almost resulted in a curious lapse of procedure by the BZA. When Granite Rock attorney Phil Boyle objected to a requirement the company build turn lanes onto the state highway before operating truck traffic, BZA Chairman Forrest Murdock urged the condition be dropped. In its place, Granite Rock would only be required to apply to the state for permission to improve the highway, and could operate trucks if permission was not granted.

Despite Murdock's attempts to quiet him, assistant county counsel Jerry Bartholow persistently refused to allow the BZA to change the condition. He reminded the board it would be a complete break

with past procedure and illegal to "delegate authority for health, safety and welfare" to the state.

In the end, the condition stayed in.

Early in the hearing, associate county planner Jerry Tucker told the board the sand quarry would be permitted under one interpretation of the county general plan. But, he added, the city's general plan for 1990 in the same area calls for low-density housing.

"It definitely is in conflict with the city's plan," Tucker said.

Asked if, in one word, the city has plans to annex the quarry area, city planner Walton answered "yes." Then, he added, the quarry is part of a future annexation plan and no immediate action is proposed.

City Planning Commission Chairman Jack Wagstaff reiterated his group's stand against the quarry, saying it is "direct-

ly in the path of the city growth pattern."

On the other hand, County Industrial commission chairman George Penniman said his group is in favor of the plant. "It is in an ideal situation. It has buffer zones of land and three sides and will have landscaping along the highway."

Penniman said the industrial commission had visited Granite Rock's Olympia sand plant in Quail Hollow, and found it "a knowledgeable and good operation."

Granite Rock officials say the Olympia plant will cease operations within the next five years, indicating this is one reason they want the new plant near the Wilder ranch developed in about three years.

In addition to the industrial commission Les Ley of Santa Cruz, and the local Teamsters representative said they favor the operation. The teamsters' representative said the plant

would provide new jobs.

Property owners next to the quarry filed strong objections to the use. They included the Craft family, represented by James Harvey; the Marineland of the Pacific Oceanarium, Inc., represented by George Renner, and Donald Younger.

Younger scoffed at the "more employment" claim by noting the company said it will have about six employees. He claimed the firm could mine other sand deposits elsewhere, and declared the mining operation will retard the development of adjacent properties.

Younger also reminded the board the land is within the university environs plan, which calls for research and development-type industries nearby, and prospects for development might be curtailed.

Some 35 property owners in the Santa Cruz area also signed a petition against the quarry, and UCSC biology professor, Todd Newberry, told the BZA

that the Sierra club objected. SCOPE, the local organization to promote beauty and orderly city development, also objected.

The university, itself, however, and the California Roadside Council were essentially neutralized. Boyle used the presence of two worked-out quarries on the UCSC campus as proof quarries are not harmful. One is now used as a natural amphitheater and the other would make a "fine swimming hole," the Granite Rock representative said. University representative Richard Peterson said the highway quarry is "out of the area of our immediate concern. But we are concerned about the impact on traffic and area development generally."

The withdrawal of the asphalt plant and the landscaping plan caused the local Roadside Council group to withdraw its formal opposition. One representative, Phillipa Pfeiffer, said she was still against the quarry, however.