

Rio del Mar group wants major park at Polo Grounds

As long as the county is going to build a park on the Polo Grounds property in Aptos, it should be a top-notch project, directors of the Rio Del Mar Improvement Association agreed yesterday.

The directors voted unanimously to support the county "Plan C" for the Polo Grounds, which would include a large community center, two playgrounds, three baseball-soccer fields, picnic areas, and parking for 300 cars.

Plan C is the most extensive use proposed for the 61-acre site, on the east side of Highway 1 near the Rio Del Mar freeway exit.

At public meetings on the county's plan, residents of the area have supported "Plan A," the least extensive use suggested. Plan A calls for a 3,000-square-foot community center

and 15 acres of open turf, but no formal playing fields.

Buzz Haines, immediate past president of the Rio del Mar association, said the directors originally favored a plan to build housing for the elderly at the Polo Grounds. "It would have kept the land on the county tax rolls," said Haines.

But that option is gone, because the county has purchased the land. "If we're going to have a park, it might as well be a first-class facility," Haines said this morning.

Haines likened Plan A to a Hyundai and Plan C to a Cadillac, something at least as nice as Jade Street Park in Capitola.

Several public hearings have been held on the Polo Grounds, and more are scheduled. No date has been set for the next hearing.