

Hopes for ball fields dim on land near New Brighton

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APTOS — Children and weekend athletes hoping for sports fields on the Porter-Sesnon property have been dealt a serious blow.

Donald Murphy, director of the state Department of Parks and Recreation, has told county officials he is not endorsing local use of the scenic coastal bluff property.

Playing fields on the site would violate the state's designation for the park as a state beach, according to Murphy.

"In addition, it is our understanding that the community at large does not necessarily endorse playing fields at this location," he said in a letter to the county Board of Supervisors.

Gary Patton, chairman of the board, said he believes there is still room for negotiation.

Before any long-term plans are made, the state must reopen general plan discussions for the adjacent New Brighton State

Beach. Final plan approval then rests with the state Park Commission.

"I suspect the board will work within the state parks process," Patton said Thursday.

He said he did not think Murphy's position was an "inflexible no."

County leaders and sports enthusiasts have expressed strong interest in building athletic fields on the Porter-Sesnon property.

State officials recently bought the 72-acre site for \$3.45 million. It is the largest piece of undeveloped oceanfront land in the county.

At a recent hearing on the property, several residents said it is an ideal site for soccer, softball and football fields.

Others have called for the land to remain undeveloped.

Building the fields on a 15-acre section between Highway 1 and the railroad tracks would not impinge on the coastal bluff, according to supporters.