

Suit over Landmark is settled

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Santa Cruz County and the city of Watsonville have all but settled their legal battle over the Landmark Industrial Park, the largest development ever proposed in this county.

After nearly an hour behind closed doors last night, the Watsonville City Council agreed to a compromise proposal approved two weeks ago by the Board of Supervisors that will allow the project to be built.

But plans for a joint statement that was to be issued this afternoon by Mayor Ann Soldo and Supervisor Levy were put on hold until the final review by county attorneys is finished.

Some of the language in the agreement had to be changed to satisfy city officials. Those changes, called minor by principals in the negotiations, were being reviewed this morning by county attorneys.

If the agreement is made final as expected, the two agencies won't be going to court Nov. 20 to settle the dispute, which began when the board sued the city over housing and traffic problems it said would occur if the project is built.

The agreement was worked out during two months of weekly meetings of representatives of the Board of Supervisors, the council and Landmark developers.

Developers Chuck Allen and Scott Johnson said last week that they like the compromise and so do their investors.

Details of the agreement have not been discussed publicly, but Supervisor E. Wayne Moore said it "protects the interests of both parties."

Moore said he understood the agreement contained "guarantees" that Supervisor Levy felt were necessary to dispel the county's concern that the project would cause housing and traffic problems in surrounding county areas.

The agreement is also such that city officials, concerned that another agency sought to control their own internal planning, maintain control of what happens inside the city of Watsonville.

"I thought we'd have something real final right now," Mayor Soldo said last night. "We have to go back with a couple more sentences on the agreement."

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