

an appeal by Live Oak residents to review a complicated and costly drainage problem involving a low-income housing development, a privately owned beach and a blunder in the county planning process. Two neighborhood groups that formed around the issue, and Beautz, representing the Live Oak association, were petitioning the commission.

Finally, Ed Hall, commissioner from the South County, began scolding them. He said he wished Live Oak residents would get over their "inferiority complex."

"I wish they'd come down to the Fourth District (South County) some day," he said

transfer required affordable housing from one planning area to another. That often resulted in a developer building only market-rate units in, say, Aptos, while building the required affordable units in Live Oak, where, among other things, land is cheaper.

Mainly because of complaints from Live Oak residents, the Board of Supervisors recently restricted the ability of developers to transfer low-income housing credits to Live Oak, Beautz said.

The growing influence of Beautz and the neighborhoods she represents has not gone unnoticed.

"She does stand up for the community. I think it's been a very positive force in helping the county focus appropriately on the problems of Live Oak," Gary Patton, chairman of the Board of Supervisors (and, incidentally, the author of Measure J), said. "I welcome her contribution. Her articulation of the problem has helped make sure the county does not overlook it."

Beautz and other members of the association are telling the supervisors they shouldn't be allowing much more development in Live Oak until neighborhood improvements are made, Patton said.

"That's the issue the Live Oak neighborhood is focusing on," he said. "It's a very, very tough problem."

Supervisor Dan Forbus, who represents Live Oak, said of Beautz: "She's very effective. She does her homework and gets her arguments all set. She's an attorney; she knows how to do it."

Beautz' contributions are not universally appreciated, however.

An outburst at a public meeting in August indicated some people might be tired of hearing Live Oak's lament. The Planning Commission was hearing

irritably. "I don't think you're the only people in trouble."

Beautz agrees that other areas in the county need improvements as well, and she invites people of those neighborhoods to speak out. At the same time, she said, problems in Live Oak are critical.

"I think it's the most populated area that needs services and I think that makes a difference," Beautz said.

Beautz keeps after county officials with the same persistence that allowed her to complete law school while raising three small children.

"Most problems have been recognized for years," Beautz said. "Sometimes it's frustrating because you say, 'Gee, I was just here saying the same thing last year.'"

Supervisors say they don't mind being reminded.

"The board's been listening," Supervisor Forbus said. "They (supervisors) didn't take it that seriously until it got really bad. Then the community association formed and I got a little backing. The board began to listen a little bit. The question now is money."

Patton, whose background is community organizing, said, "Sometimes, it isn't the most pleasant task to get up and tell us something we already know. Her function has been not to let us forget."

He said what makes government responsive "is an organized citizens group making them be responsive. Without an organization in your neighborhood, your neighborhood won't be treated well."