

Apple moth spray opponents gather to discuss strategy

Light Brown Apple Moth

12-10-07

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SANTA CRUZ — With less than two months before the state Department of Food and Agriculture is scheduled to spray Santa Cruz County for the light brown apple moth again, scores of people showed up at a town hall meeting to discuss opposition strategies.

The forum, at the Santa Cruz City Council Chambers, was sponsored by a pair of county residents. It also received the backing of Councilmen Tony Madrigal and Ed Porter, who opened the chambers to the public.

“There is no need for applause,” said Madrigal, who told the 200-plus audience that the room belongs to the people.

Madrigal also announced that he’s going to try to form a seven-member light brown apple moth advisory task force, which would be made up of residents and overseen by the City Council.

But so far, Madrigal has not been able to put such an idea on

the agenda for Tuesday’s council meeting because there are too many other issues scheduled to be heard, including a proposed development near Frederick Street park.

However, Madrigal said he would try to put the item on the Jan. 22 meeting, although he acknowledged that the spraying is scheduled in early February and that by then there might not be enough time to form such a task force before the spraying.

Porter urged the crowd to show up at Tuesday’s meeting and convince the rest of the council to hear the matter.

Sunday night’s forum was the first to be held since the state sprayed portions of Santa Cruz County with CheckMate LBAM-F in the second week of November. The pesticide’s long-term health effects are unknown, but the state has long contended it’s safe and necessary to eradicate the moth, a native of Australia.