

Supervisors crack down on Rio code violations

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Santa Cruz County supervisors took action yesterday to halt what neighbors described as off-and-on code violations at a Rio del Mar building site.

Some 30 neighbors showed up at the supervisors' meeting to complain about the situation at 301 Sumner Ave., where Brooks Terhune is building a home.

The problems neighbors complained about most — a temporary mobile home without the required utility hookups and firewood for sale in the yard — have already been solved.

The mobile home was removed several weeks ago, but supervisors took the precautionary step of revoking Terhune's permit, which prevents him from bringing it back.

Several neighbors said they saw piles of firewood with a "For Sale" sign on the property. Terhune said his truck has a sign for the firewood business he closed several years ago. Wood was placed on his property without his knowledge or permission, he told supervisors.

Neighbors also complained that

there were numerous vehicles parked at the site at various times. The site had been spruced up before yesterday's hearing, they said.

Terhune said he hadn't been given proper advance notice of yesterday's hearing and called it "blatantly unfair" and asked for a continuance.

"I was never confronted until today" said Terhune. "There's a twisting of the words," he said of allegations about the property.

Buzz Haines, representing the Rio del Mar Improvement Association, said he was concerned about

the "ability of the county to enforce its own ordinances" and suggested more teeth be put in the laws.

The county has red-tagged Terhune's property for several violations over the last 15 months, including sale of firewood, the illegal trailer at the site, putting up three storage sheds (two of which have been removed) and failure to hook up the mobile home. Terhune said he never used the home.

The red tags are still in effect for violations that haven't been corrected, but they do not prevent

Terhune from completing the home.

"The notices did not say to stop all work," said county Planning Director Dianne Guzman.

Midcounty Supervisor Robley Levy, who dealt with the complaints of neighbors, said she hoped Terhune will "swiftly complete construction," which she said would essentially eliminate the issues that have stirred up the neighbors for nearly two years.