

Changes in Local Coastal Program top agenda

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SANTA CRUZ — A public hearing on proposed changes to the Local Coastal Program is on the supervisors' agenda for Tuesday afternoon.

According to a letter from Planning Director Kris Schenk, the amendments are part of a second round of changes in the LCP approved by the Board of Supervisors in November.

The alterations went to the state Coastal Commission in February and were approved, with one modification.

If supervisors adopt the changes in the proposed form Tuesday, the action will amount to a first reading. Final approval would follow March 6, with the changes taking effect one month from then, according to Schenk.

Among the changes are an alteration in a land-use designation for a site on East Cliff Drive, allowing for commercial development; implementation of language in the regulations governing affordable second dwelling units on single parcels; revisions to the county code on energy conservation and protection of solar access in new building permits; and a restriction on the transfer of credits from affordable developments in the Live Oak area.

The Coastal Commission decided to go along with the county's change in a land-use designation on East Cliff Drive, but proposed a change in the language.

Instead of deleting the original wording, as the county had proposed, the state commission voted to retain the old and add new wording to expand the kinds of development that would be allowed on the site.

If approved, the modification would allow an office building to be erected on the site. As a condition, the developer would set aside a minimum of 35-40 parking spaces for beachgoers, according to Schenk's letter.

The modification has been approved by members of the Schwann Lakes Neighborhood Association and the developer, Alan Simpkins, Schenk wrote.

The changes in the regulations on affordable second dwelling units would consolidate the language in the existing code. These second dwellings could be used by seniors ("granny units") or low-income persons.

The energy and solar-access proposed changes enhance the existing county code regulations. The language would require developers of commercial buildings to

seek the maximum efficient energy use available and would encourage "renewable energy resources" — such as solar heating units — be used wherever possible.

Additionally, commercial buildings would be encouraged to explore "community energy systems." According to Supervisor Gary Patton, these include scale-scale power-generating systems for the Water Street jail. If the jail could be designed to generate its own power by burning a fossil fuel, for instance, then excess energy could be shared with an adjacent laundry businesses, he suggested as one example.

As to the transfer of credits, the LCP

changes would restrict them in the Live Oak area. Any credits derived from a project there would have to be used in Live Oak, according to the change.

Credits are obtained by developers when they build housing units with more than the required affordable units. In the past, Live Oak has received more than its fair share of affordable housing, Supervisor Dan Forbus has said, while other parts of the county have not.

The proposed change would essentially spread affordable housing throughout the county's urban areas.

The public hearing is slated for the afternoon, but four other items precede it on the 1:30 p.m. agenda. It's expected the LCP changes will be discussed in mid-afternoon in the supervisors' chamber on the fifth floor of the County Government Center.