

Aptos project approved

By LANE WALLACE

A controversial proposal for a 58-lot subdivision in the Day Valley area of Aptos was approved Tuesday by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors.

The 58 building sites, on 142 acres, include two projects, The Meadows, to be developed by Robert Swanson, and The Forest, by David Hara.

The action came at a meeting which supervisors added to their schedule before property rights advocates Marilyn Lid-dicoat and Pat Liberty leave the board. The two women, along with Dan Forbus and E. Wayne Moore, voted for

the project, while Gary Patton voted against it.

(The proposal has gone through all the proper governmental reviews, however.)

Water, or the lack of it, was the key issue on the project. The county planning staff recommended against approval, saying the land (on Day Valley Road near Cox Road) is in a water recharge area.

The staff report also said the gross density of 2.5 acres per unit isn't consistent with the general plan requirement of 2.5 acres of developable property per unit. (Portions of the property are undevelopable.)

Geologists and engineers for the developers disagreed with some of the county and U.S. Geologic Survey findings, saying dry wells and retention basins in the area should alleviate any water recharge problems that might arise.

More than 100 residents of the area signed a petition opposing the project, but 50 signed one favoring it.

Ray Amrhein, a director of the Central County Water District which serves Day Valley, said the availability of water is something that should be solved at the water district level.

Supervisor Dan Forbus said the idea of limiting

development in ground-water recharge areas could be carried to such an extreme "that nothing could be built."

Patton called approval of the project "outrageous," saying it could exhaust a finite supply of water for the area.

In other action, the several Seascape residents objected to a general plan change which clears the way for 22 single family homes on 3.5 acres, 44 condominiums on 3.3 acres and 27 low and moderate income homes on 1.7 acres in the Seascape area.

Pete Alexander said

putting the proposed project in the Seascape area "is like putting a children's shoe on the foot of an adult."

Supervisors, who had approved the concept of the general plan change two weeks ago, noted that the high density development is part of Measure J, the growth management law approved by county voters in 1978. The high density development and low-income units are part of the trade-offs involved for a developer to meet Measure J requirements, supervisors told Alexander.

Approval for the project itself will be considered next month.