

County Planners Will Make Land Use Study

Following requests from several organizations including the Santa Cruz city planning commission and the Santa Cruz chamber of commerce, county planners yesterday agreed to begin a study of land use and comprehensive zoning within the county.

After discussing the matter at length, planners turned the matter over to the commission's master plan committee for study and a report back to the commission.

The committee is composed of Harlan C. Smith, Les Ley and C. S. Franich.

The committee indicated that it would consult with members of the Santa Cruz, Capitola and Watsonville planning commissions and find out their views regarding the subject of land use and zoning within the unincorporated areas of the county.

Then, it was agreed by the entire commission, after the land use problem was settled, and zones set up, the question of a building code could be tackled.

In its request for a study of the matter, the Santa Cruz city planning commission wrote:

"It is the hope of the city planning commission that the board of supervisors, in the not too distant future will adopt these measures (establishment of minimum building and zoning regulations in the unincorporated areas), for the pro-

tection and preservation of existing property investments in both the city and county of Santa Cruz.

"It has been increasingly apparent to the city planning commission and to interested property owners that building standards which lead to indiscriminate building construction on the fringe of the city and in other unincorporated county areas, will eventually lower property values in the cities and in the county. In addition, the increasing fire hazard will create rising insurance costs and discourage the proper development of well designed residential and commercial districts."

The chamber of commerce made similar requests, at the same time mentioning the land-use needs within the unincorporated areas of the county.

"We believe that your commission should give early consideration to a complete land use survey of the county which would be the basis for a well-thought-out and much-needed comprehensive zoning plan. It is readily recognized that building regulations should not apply to the entire county, but rather to those portions which are heavily populated residential districts or commercial districts.

"The matter of compatible zoning and building regulations in the fringe areas surrounding the cities, is, of course, of utmost importance," Chamber President William A. Muriale wrote.

Commissioner Les Ley wanted to know if, after he and the other members of the commission spent long hours in the proposed study of the situation, the recommendations of the commission, whatever they might be, would die quietly when they came up before the supervisors.

William Weybright, secretary of the planning commission, stated he realized that such a thing had happened in the past after months had been spent on a building code, but that this time the situation would be different.

A number of prominent persons had asked that the suggested regulations be set up, he said, and he knew that the plan would receive the support of the majority.

Surveyor Arnold Baldwin pointed out that when the building code was defeated last time it was because of the concentrated objections of the farm bureau members.

This time, Baldwin said, the commissioners should be wise enough to exclude farming lands from their proposals.