

Scotts Valley - 1990

Santa Cruz Sentinel — Wednesday, Feb. 12, 1992 — A-3

SV residents with high (school) hopes will meet

By KATHERINE EDWARDS
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Scotts Valley residents will meet tonight to size up their options in the struggle for a hometown high school.

"We need to either move on this issue or give it up," said City Councilwoman Peggie Lopez. The forum is scheduled for 7 p.m. at the Scotts Valley City Hall.

"It seems I've been hearing for years people saying, 'I think it's a good idea, how can I help.' We need to get some kind of structure organized and let the citizens take off with it," Lopez said.

Many citizens have been dreaming of a high school in or near Scotts Valley for decades, with no results.

In November 1990, more than three-fourths of Scotts Valley voters supported an advisory measure asking if residents

would like a high school in Scotts Valley. "It passed overwhelmingly and nothing happened," said Lopez.

Currently, about 500 Scotts Valley students attend one of three high schools in the Santa Cruz City Schools District. Others attend San Lorenzo Valley High School.

Supporters of a Scotts Valley high school say it will promote community pride, give continuity to students who grow up together and ease parents' commuting headaches.

On the other side of the issue are parents who are concerned that Scotts Valley doesn't have enough students to support a quality high school.

Carole Harris, a board member of the Scotts Valley elementary school district, said as a parent, she feels "if you don't have a certain number of students, it seems like the program dies." She added

the school board hasn't taken a formal position on having a local high school.

For former mayor Mike Caffrey, planning should happen while the number of high school students is still relatively small.

"We can envision a need in the city of Scotts Valley 10 years from now," he said. "If you wait until the need is there, then you're 10 years too late."

One of the options that residents will discuss tonight is trying to persuade the Santa Cruz district to build another high school.

Carol Dee, assistant superintendent of instruction, has said the enrollment figures won't justify another high school.

A previous proposal to expand Soquel High School — which drew a warning of legal action from Scotts Valley Mayor Joe Miller in January — has been put on hold

because of a lack of funds and Soquel's low enrollment, Dee said.

As a compromise, city schools formed a task force last month to consider having all Scotts Valley students at one high school.

But Lopez said the same promise was offered several years ago with no result.

"People in Scotts Valley felt they've historically been ignored by the city school board," she said. "There's a lot of negative feelings out there that have to be dealt with."

Other suggestions from parents include making changes within existing schools, such as closing Harbor High School and moving its students to Soquel High, or turning Harbor into a middle school and building another high school near Scotts Valley.

Another option is unifying with San Lorenzo Valley school district.

Caffrey pointed out that while San Lorenzo Valley is closest to Scotts Valley, unifying would be "a political nightmare."

"They have their own autonomous school board. ... You'd have people in Boulder Creek voting on issues that affect Scotts Valley," he said.

Residents will also consider unifying within Scotts Valley itself, to become a K-12 district.

Jim Maxwell, business manager for the county Office of Education, said there is no enrollment requirement to form a high school district.

"You don't have to have 'x' number of students before you have a high school," he said. Unification would require a public vote of approval, he said. "But then, how to get money for the high school, well, they'd have to get in line like the rest of the districts in this county."