

Aptos residents like plan ... well, sort of

SANTA CRUZ — You win some, you lose some.

In summary, that was what Supervisor Robley Levy was left with Tuesday after supervisors approved the Aptos Village design plan.

Although much of the plan was what Levy and neighbors had wanted, not all of it was. The key setback was a vote on the most controversial parcel, where the La Mirada senior-affordable housing project is planned.

The county Planning Commission May 15 had "grandfathered in" the La Mirada zoning, saying that if that project dies, then the parcel will be zoned to a lower density.

Voting 3-2, with Levy and Pajaro Valley Supervisor Wayne Moore dissenting, the board affirmed that vote.

Other parts of the plan sailed through with less controversy. The commercial area was changed to a

new zoning, called C-2, allowing only neighborhood and "low traffic-generating" businesses to locate there. Any new businesses or changes in existing ones are required to have a public hearing before approval.

Residential zoning throughout the area was slashed in half, mainly to reflect the development that exists.

Led by three neighborhood groups, Aptos residents had protested the zoning on the La Mirada project. They said the number of units allowed under the "urban medium" zoning — 50 units on 3½ acres — was too dense for their largely rural enclave.

"Our objections can be summed up in three words," said Chuck Mornard of the Quail Run Road Homeowners Association and Aptos Neighbors Association. "Density, traffic and drainage."

Mornard said the density is "16 to 48 times" greater than the surrounding neighborhood, where homes are

spread out on one- to five-acre parcels.

He said traffic is "worse than when we came to you before." Congestion at the post office, within 100 feet of the proposed development, has doubled since some post office outstations have closed.

And the land, he said, located at Trout Gulch and Quail Run roads, was "under water in 1982 and '83." It lies at the base of three valleys which drain through the parcel.

Levy agreed with Mornard and other speakers, saying zoning the parcel anything but low density "flies in the face of what responsive zoning to neighborhood concerns is all about."

She called it a "bizarre turn of events" that the board was "grandfathering in a project that's in foreclosure."

The development firm of Davidson, Cavanaugh and Brezzo of San Jose is in foreclosure on the

property. Levy added that the Farmers' Home Administration, which the developers hope to fund the project, has said the project "can't get funding this year" and may not be funded next year, either, casting the project in further doubt.

"If, in fact, the project is in foreclosure, then the neighborhood's concerns have been met," said Chairman Gary Patton.

But it's important for the county to try to live up to its commitment to set aside at least 15 percent of its new construction for affordable housing, he added.

A majority of supervisors also voted to reconsider the La Mirada project June 18. The development, for 35 affordable units and 15 units to be sold at the regular market rate, was previously approved by the Board of Supervisors. It was held in abeyance while the Aptos Village plan was revised.