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Child-care fees OK'd by board

4/23/91

A fee on new construction to support child-care programs was imposed this morning by Santa Cruz County supervisors.

The fee of \$328 per home was approved after two comments from the audience and no board discussion, in sharp contrast to a public meeting in March.

At the March meeting, the discussion went on for more than four hours and tax-protester Carolyn Busenhart threatened to start recall efforts against supervisors for tentatively approving the fees.

Supervisors had considered fees of as high as 70 cents a square foot for new commercial construction, but eventually agreed on fees of either 12 or 23 cents a square foot, depending on the type of business.

Pajaro Valley Supervisor Ray Belgard had pushed for the lower commercial fees at the March meeting, and he and Supervisor Robley Levy successfully pushed to have agricultural construction — greenhouses and coolers — ex-

See CHILD page 7 ►

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RP

► From Page 1
empted from the fees.

4/23/91
p. 7

The fee is not intended to fully fund child-care programs. It will bring in less than \$200,000, a little more than 1 percent of the \$17 million estimated to be spent on child care in Santa Cruz County annually.

The fee "is intended to help mitigate" the added burden on child care that an increased population brings, said John Warren, the county planner who worked on the fee program.

Fees collected won't be spent until next year, when supervisors decide how to allocate them.

—Lane Wallace