

Board settles dispute over Aptos kiwi farm

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A compromise was reached by Santa Cruz County supervisors yesterday settling a dispute between an Aptos kiwi-fruit farmer and his neighbors.

Supervisors imposed several conditions on Joseph Raemaekers' buildings on his property at 555 Charlson Road.

There has been an ongoing dispute between neighbors and Raemaekers, who built a road, a cold-storage building and a packing shed without permits. He also placed a trailer on a site not approved by the county.

Supervisors endorsed an agreement that will keep Raemaekers' property designated open space in perpetuity; the county usually makes open-space agreements run 10 years. Raemaekers will have to decide whether to accept the agreement. Raemaekers could not be reached for comment this morning.

Raemaekers will also have to apply for permits for what he built illegally, and won't be able to build

a home on either of the two parcels until 1999.

Neighbor Grant Wrathall told supervisors they were "patting (Raemaekers) on the back for doing something dishonest and underhanded."

Supervisor Robley Levy said intense hard feelings on both sides worsened the issue.

"If there had been more willingness to cooperate," Levy said, "we would not be dealing with it at this point."

She criticized Raemakers for building without permits but said he has a right to farm his land. Three other supervisors joined Levy in saying the county should not send a message that building without permits is permissible.

"I'm tired of people building without permits," said Supervisor Jan Beautz.

Supervisor Ray Belgard cast the lone dissenting vote against the compromise, saying the county was being too harsh.

"I'm not sure all the actions he took were deliberate" violations, Belgard said.