

Live Oak group wants affordable housing to be built elsewhere, too

LIVE OAK — Directors of the Live Oak Community Organization are prepared to take "drastic steps," including going to court or starting a petition drive, to insure affordable housing is built somewhere in the county besides their area.

Directors unanimously voted Thursday night to support First (Live Oak-Soquel) District Supervisor Dan Forbus in his fight to change the county's affordable housing trend.

Since 1978 when Measure J, the county's growth-control ordinance was passed, 80.5 percent of all affordable housing built in the unincorporated areas of the county have been constructed in Live Oak.

Forbus, who met with the organization's board along with his Planning Commission appointments Ivan "Skip" Eberly and Win Alexander, is scheduled to meet with county Planning Director Kris Schenk next week to see if an "equitable solution" can be found.

"Our hope is that we can resolve this through positive negotiations," Live Oak Community Organization President Carl Johns told The Sentinel. "If we feel a reasonable agreement can be made, we will present it to our membership at an upcoming meeting.

"If we cannot get cooperation, however, we are prepared to take more drastic steps which could include going to court or starting a petition drive to place an amendment to Measure J," he said.

It was Forbus last week who said he would support an amendment prohibiting affordable housing being built in Live Oak until it is built elsewhere in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Measure J not only sets up growth controls, but also states that 15 percent of new housing must be affordable to those with low to moderate incomes.

The Live Oak Organization's board is willing to taking things "a step at a time," said Johns, "but we are certainly ready to pursue it as far as the community wants

to go."

Johns was quick to point out that the group is not necessarily against affordable housing in Live Oak. "We just want the rest of the county to take their fair share. We are not against all of Measure J, but we acknowledge it may be necessary to fine tune it."

He added that the influx and densities of affordable housing built in their area so far "is creating a profound change in our community."