

Playing fields sought for Aptos

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APTOS — It's time the county gets serious about building sports fields in Aptos, according to Supervisor Walt Symons.

Not one county-owned playing field exists in his district, said Symons, the Aptos-area representative, in a letter to his colleagues on the Board of Supervisors.

There are baseball or soccer fields at a handful of county sites, but none are in Aptos, according to parks officials.

"This is not a new condition, for it is a historical fact that the Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services Department has taken no action to alleviate this lack of availability," Symons said.

During the last four years, the county has collected nearly \$500,000 in park dedication fees from development pro-

jects along with \$500,000 in service fees for park maintenance and general park and recreation department operations from the district, according to Symons.

"It goes into a general fund and a parks fund," he said Monday. "There is no reflection that the money is going into the Second District."

It's time some of those funds, he said, should be returned to the district to ease the lack of organized playing fields in the community.

Park dedication fees go toward the acquisition or development of a park in the district or a regional park in the county, said Clark Beattie, recreation and cultural affairs manager.

The funds, he said, have gone to various projects over the years in Aptos, including the \$2.7 million purchase of the Polo Grounds in 1987 and the building and upgrading of Hidden Beach Park and Aptos Park.

"As the population grown, the county needs recreation facilities," Beattie said. "The county recognizes that."

There are about 8,000 youths living in the district, Symons reports.

In the Second District, sports teams have been using school fields that are over used, he said.

Symons is asking other members of the Board of Supervisors to join him today in directing the parks department to prepare a plan for the use of developed and undeveloped park sites in the district.

Symons said he would like officials to look at all possible locations, including Aptos Park and other county-owned sites, that could be used as a field for local teams to practice.

He is also asking the board to direct the parks department to meet with leaders of the local sports leagues to

determine what resources they have to help make practice fields available.

In May, James Hamlin, the Aptos-area representative on the county Planning Commission, said he wanted at least part of the Polo Grounds to open this summer for sports programs.

The commission, however, agreed to postpone acting on the issue for four months so staff members could hold a community meeting and study different access routes on to the grounds.

The 60-acre property is at the end of Polo Avenue off the Rio del Mar exit of Highway 1. It earned its name because it was once a part of the large estate of pioneer Claus Spreckels and was used a race track and a polo field through the 1920s.

The first-phase of the park calls for the development of athletic fields. Two Little League, a Pony League and two soccer fields are planned.