

Final conditions laid down for swimming pool project

By BUD O'BRIEN

After months of tedious haggling over the project's details, it appeared for a while Tuesday that the way had finally been cleared for the construction of a recreational vehicle park-campground-swimming pool complex on county-owned property in Live Oak.

But Supervisor Dan Forbus discovered after the board had adjourned that the conditions for the project that he had just persuaded the majority of the Board of Supervisors to approve would still cost more than the developers could afford. However, chances that the project will proceed are still good; Forbus promised representatives of the developers — the Santa Cruz Aquatics Team (SCAT) — he would immediately set to work to clear away the one remaining roadblock.

Meanwhile, Forbus advised SCAT to begin right away with the preliminary work on the site since the board had granted the necessary permits for the project.

SCAT has been working for more than two years to come up with a plan for building an Olympic-size swimming pool and auxiliary facilities on the property which it leased from the county. The property, which was known as the Granite Rock Property because it was once owned by that company, is located on 17th Avenue. SCAT wants the pool to accommodate the swimming programs that it conducts for youngsters from all areas of the county. Under the terms of the lease, the facility would also be open at stated times to the public.

SCAT being a non-profit organization composed of people in the community who are interested in promoting swimming programs, it didn't have a lot of money. To raise the money needed, it came up with the idea of using part of the property as a site for a recreational vehicle park and campground and to use the revenue from those uses to build and operate the pool. SCAT managed to raise the equivalent of about \$500,000 by obtaining a grant of a little more than \$200,000 from an organization called Coastal Conservancy and a pledge of donated labor of about \$300,000 from county labor organizations.

SCAT figured it could build the RV park and campground with the money and labor it had been offered, provided some of the conditions the county had imposed on the project could be modified or delayed. One major condition, that a left-turn lane be installed on 17th Avenue to provide access to the site, was the most onerous one. SCAT said the \$70,000 cost of that condition would put the project so far over budget that it couldn't be built.

But Forbus apparently thought he had overcome that obstacle when, during Tuesday's board session, he persuaded his colleagues (with Supervisor Gary Patton balking at a couple of his requests) to delay the implementation of some of the conditions until the RV park and campground had been installed and revenue had begun coming in. He talked the board into delaying for a year conditions calling for landscaping and the blacktopping of parts of the park and campground.

Forbus didn't ask that the condition calling for installing the left-turn lane be held up. When SCAT spokesman Dick Little asked him about it after the meeting, Forbus said he believed that with the savings his other motions had achieved, combined with donated labor, the left-turn lane could be

included. But Little and labor spokesman Fred Rule Jr. said the left-turn lane project couldn't be accomplished by volunteer labor, since the job couldn't be done during odd hours or on weekends.

Little said flatly that with the condition for the left-turn lane still in effect, SCAT wouldn't have enough money to build the project as approved. He said the \$200,000 grant from Coastal Conservancy would be withdrawn if SCAT couldn't demonstrate that

it had the resources to meet all the conditions imposed on the project.

Taken aback, Forbus nonetheless professed to believe the problem could still be overcome. He said he would look at various options, possibly even getting the left-turn project in the county road budget since it would be serving a public recreation site.

In the meantime, Forbus advised SCAT to get to work on the project.

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