

# Pajaro annexation possibility raised

By EMILIO ALVARADO  
STAFF WRITER

*Watsonville Annexation*

WATSONVILLE — Watsonville City Councilman Dennis Osmer will discuss at next week's City Council meeting the possibility of annexing Pajaro, saying Watsonville and Pajaro "are the same community."

Osmer, who took office in November, said the recent flood showed that Pajaro could be served better if it were a part of Watsonville.

Residents in Pajaro have praised Watsonville's quick action in helping flood victims and criticized Monterey County officials for taking too long to offer help.

Shortly after the waters flooded Pajaro, Watsonville officials set up a command post on the Watsonville side of the Pajaro bridge. The

city has also been instrumental in coordinating a number of services, including social and health services.

Osmer said he wants the city to "extend the hand" to Pajaro by offering the possibility of making Pajaro part of Watsonville. Osmer said he wants the council to discuss the issue, but he doesn't want "to force or push" the issue on anybody.

"My concern is for the people of Pajaro," Osmer said, adding, "we are the same community. The flood proved that."

Monterey County may have been slow to respond to the flood victims for a variety of reasons, Osmer said. The location of Pajaro and the county having several other areas devastated by the

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flood played key roles in county officials getting to Pajaro late.

But Pajaro for years has been called the "step-child" of Monterey County. About a year ago, citizens in Pajaro organized and demanded services from county officials. They have gotten officials to respond, but the struggle has been a long and hard-fought one.

Osmer said he doesn't want the issue of annexation to become a political hot potato.

"This is not act of imperialism," Osmer said. "This is a hope for something better for Pajaro."

Osmer said he will put the issue on the council's agenda for discussion at the 7:30 p.m. council session on Tuesday.

The City Council will meet Tuesday at 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at City Hall, 250 Main Street. For more information, call 728-6005.