

# Affordable project criticized

SV residents protest

By JOHN ROBINSON  
Sentinel staff writer

SCOTTS VALLEY — A plan to build 112 affordable apartments in a sand pit above Lockhart Gulch Road should be buried and forgotten, according to speakers at a public hearing Thursday night.

An overflow crowd of 150 Scotts Valley residents told the Planning Commission that a dense apartment complex doesn't belong in semi-rural area.

"One thing this has done is bring the community together," said Tom Baldge, a Lockhart Gulch resident. "Our opposition to the project has nothing to do with affordable housing. It has to do with density."

The Skypark Apartments project calls for building the housing complex in an old sand quarry at the base of a cliff, just below a newly approved 190-unit development at the old Skypark Airport site.

Residents of the area said they want no part of affordable housing or a dense apartment complex in that area.

George Fabrin, who lives on Lockhart Gulch Road just outside the Scotts Valley city limits, told of going to the county to get a permit to build a "small second unit" on his 75-acre parcel.

"They told me no," Fabrin said. "They said it was a rural area and you have to have 40 acres per home. Somehow it just doesn't add up."

A group calling itself Scotts Valley Citizens for Responsible Growth attacked the plan, saying water supplies, fire protection and school capacity are inadequate.

Besides the developers, the only person who spoke in favor of the project was Donna Maurillo, who told the crowd she had just moved from Aptos to a home she bought in Scotts Valley.

Maurillo questioned whether the opposition was against low-income people, rather than development. Some opponents have claimed that the development will cause an increase in crime.

"I hear a lot of concern about the kind of people who live in these projects," Maurillo said. "I challenge anybody who is here to say people who are low- or moderate-income shouldn't be in this community."

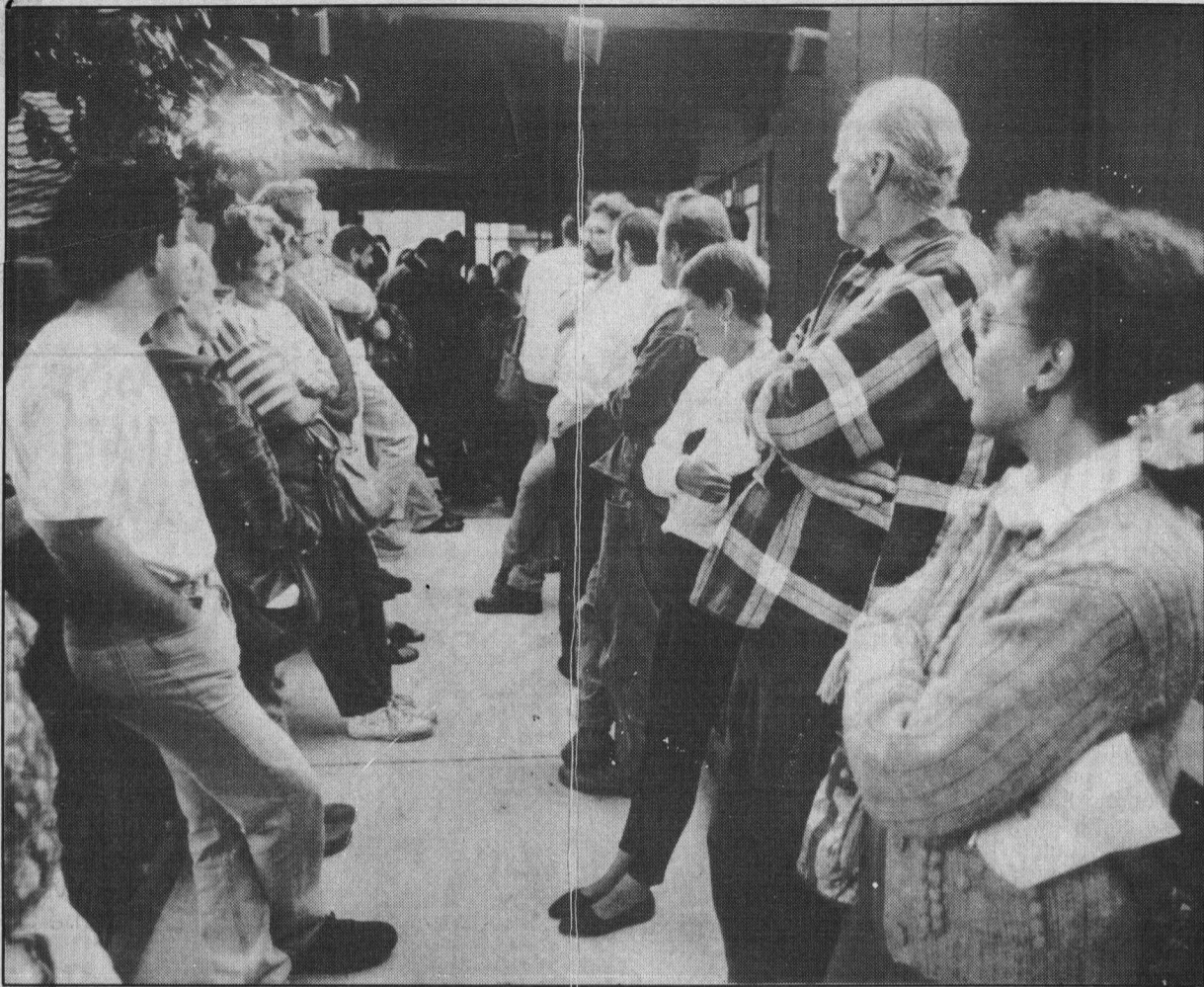
Maurillo went on to say she had lived in low-income housing, and asked how many people in the audience actually knew people who lived in such housing. She then asked how many people in the audience owned their homes. Most of the audience raised their hands.

"I guess we've got a lot of rich homeowners here," Maurillo said.

Her comments were greeted with silence, and were quickly rebutted by the next several speakers.

"I used to live in a complex with shootings and rapes where you couldn't do the laundry at night," said Lockhart Gulch resident Deborah Jones.

"I was on welfare and went to school and became an accountant. I have saved for years to buy my first home, and it is in Scotts Valley. I want to protect my home and



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

An overflow crowd attended the meeting in Scotts Valley on Thursday.

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my water rights. I am deeply offended by (Maurillo's) comments."

Others said the Scotts Valley School district can't absorb the nearly 100 students it is estimated the development would bring. "The Scotts Valley School District is in no position to accommodate any more students coming from any new construction," said Sheri Holbrook, a Scotts Valley resident who is principal of alternative programs for the Santa Cruz School District. "We don't even have bus-

es yet."

School superintendent Andre LaCouture said the system is full, but would have to accommodate any new students. Children probably would be taught in portable classrooms until new schools are built over the next several years, he said.

The Planning Commission ended the public hearing at 10 p.m. and began discussing the project. It is scheduled to decide whether to recommend the project at its Oct. 12 meeting. Final approval is up to the City Council.

'One thing this has done is bring the community together.'

— Tom Baldge, resident