

# 'Last' Boulder Creek town plan meeting wasn't

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BOULDER CREEK — It was billed as the "final town plan meeting," but Thursday's gathering turned out to be nothing of the sort. Residents still can't agree on a blueprint for the coming decades of the town's future.

The town plan process started last November, drawing up to 500 people at early meetings.

Most of the 150 people present Thursday said they agreed with 98 percent of the plan, but it was that last 2 percent that kept the walls of the Boulder Creek Recreation Hall ringing with lively argument for more than three hours.

Although the financing of the

project, a proposed San Lorenzo Valley redevelopment agency and the county planning department all came in for their share of licks, most of the discussion centered on a block-long stretch of Railroad Avenue.

Located just east of the downtown business section, the street is now a blend of commercial and residential development.

Town merchants say the east side of the street is the logical spot for needed commercial expansion, while residents of the nearby residential neighborhoods have vigorously opposed this, arguing for neighborhood preservation.

After the previous town plan meeting, many residents said they

left feeling that a rough consensus had been reached that would allow light commercial development on the east side of the street, while providing plenty of trees and setbacks that blended with residential requirements.

But at Thursday's meeting, howls of protest were raised over what appeared in the draft town plan document. Townspeople charged that consultants working for the Planning Department had misrepresented the group's decisions.

In an attempt to reach a compromise between residents and business people, the draft report had suggested a new category of zoning, Village Commercial/Residen-

tial (VCR), that would allow mixed uses.

However, while many people said there had been a consensus at the previous meeting, in three hours of discussion, no one was able to state exactly what that consensus was.

The VCR category was attacked by business people, who asked that three areas proposed for the new zoning be changed to full commercial zoning.

Two other areas proposed for the Village Commercial/Residential zoning were Pine Street from the post office north to Big Basin Way and the west side of Central Ave-

nue from Flat Street to Lomond Street.

After much discussion, the group voted instead to recommend that both of those areas be zoned for commercial development.

A subcommittee of nearby residents and merchants will study the Railroad Avenue problem and report back at another meeting.

When agreement is reached, the town plan will go to the county Planning Commission for approval and then to the Board of Supervisors for final adoption. It then becomes part of the county's general plan, guiding future planning decisions.

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