

Mobile home parks taken out of discrimination law

Final adoption of an ordinance that would ban discrimination in rental housing against families with children, or on the basis of age, was delayed Tuesday when Santa Cruz County supervisors discovered that as it is written it could conceivably apply to mobile home parks.

When the board adopted the ordinance in concept last week, it left out any reference to mobile home parks. The assumption was that doing this would amount to exempting mobile home parks from the law.

But Supervisor Dan Forbus said Tuesday he had been informed that simply making no reference to mobile home parks in the law might be construed by the courts as in fact including them in the law. County Counsel Clair Carlson implicitly

agreed when, in answer to a question, he said it would "probably be useful" to add a provision to the law specifically exempting mobile home parks.

But Supervisor Gary Patton said he would not go along with adding such a provision. He said he had voted for the ordinance as it is now written because the county's Mobile Home Commission had recommended that no mention of mobile home parks be made, but he said he did so reluctantly.

"I believe the ordinance ought to apply to mobile homes," the Santa Cruz supervisor said, adding that he had voted for the language in the existing ordinance only because of the recommendations of the commission; he was not willing to go beyond that. If the language is vague, so be it, Patton indicated. "I am willing to

leave it up to the courts," he said.

However, the board voted 3-2 — with Chairman Joe Cucchiara joining Patton in opposition — to have new wording inserted in the ordinance that would specifically exempt mobile home parks, and have it brought back next week for final action.

The issue of "adult" mobile home parks, and how to define "adult," has become a hot one among county mobile home park residents, as well as among many who would like to be mobile home park residents.

Many mobile home parks have established arbitrary age limits for residents and no matter what action the board finally takes on the matter in this county, the issue is likely to be finally resolved at the state level.