

# Freedom Boulevard Hospice project OK'd

Hospice  
SENTINEL STAFF REPORT

2-12-03

The Hospice Caring Project can go forward with plans to build a 13,000-square-foot headquarters on 3 acres on Freedom Boulevard.

So ruled the county Boards of Supervisors at the conclusion of a 1½-hour discussion Tuesday, with Supervisor Ellen Pirie the lone dissenter.

Pirie sided with residents who said they feared allowing the hospice headquarters to be built in an area zoned for residential-agricultural use would open the flood gates for more large buildings in the largely rural area.

"We have these laws for good reason," Pirie said before casting her no vote. "We need guidance on the environment and land-use issues so we can make well thought-out decisions not (during) heated discussion."

The new hospice space will house meeting and conference rooms, as well as a reference library and kitchen. The plans also call for a parking lot for 79 vehicles.

County planners maintain the proposed project fits within the scope of the general plan.

Tuesday's discussion came at the request of the Rural Aptos Community Association, which appealed the county Planning Commission's decision last October to allow the hospice plan.

Association members claim the project violates zoning laws, and they reiterated concerns from the Central Water District that the project would be built on a water recharge area and further tax a system already seeing salt-water intrusion from the ocean.

Supervisor Tony Campos urged the dissenters to think about what the group does — counsel those dealing with death.

"The Central Water District letter raised a red flag with me, too, but what I'm seeing here is a case of 'not in my back yard,'" he said. "That offends me. If anyone here had someone who was sick or dying, they would not think the same way."

The supervisors who supported the project reminded the group that the groundwater and quality-of-life issues raised would be dealt with as the project moves ahead.