

# County Mobile Home Commission suggests three separate types of mobile home parks

SANTA CRUZ — The county Mobile Home Commission has suggested forming three types of mobile home parks in the unincorporated area to combat the practice of park owners setting arbitrary age restrictions.

Commissioners are asking county supervisors to set criteria for three types of parks — those for adults (18 and older,) those for seniors (45 and older) and those for families with children.

To protect long-established senior-only (55 and older) parks, commissioners recommended that senior-only parks established prior to Jan. 1, 1981 be allowed to remain with the 55 and older restrictions.

The criteria they are asking supervisors to set would involve such things as the facilities needed for certain age groups. For instance, a park allowing families with children may be required to have a playground.

Commissioners also are suggesting to allow the renting out of mobile homes for one year in cases of hardship. They further want to see a continuance of the restriction against space rental being increased upon the sale of a mobile home.

All these suggestions were made Monday by the commission after a series of public hearings. Supervisors

asked the commission for recommendations on age restrictions, rentals and resales in parks.

Setting up criteria for three types of parks not only is seen as a way to solve problems caused by arbitrary age restrictions, but also as a way to solve problems created recently when many parks restricted themselves to those 55 and older.

Fearing a court case known as the Wolfson decision, outlawing discrimination against families with children, about a dozen parks here recently hiked their age restrictions to those 55 and older.

There are about 60 mobile home parks in the unincorporated county, with approximately 25 restricted to those 55 and older, according to Gloria Lorenzo of the county Consumer Affairs Office.

Many park residents feared that reaction to the Wolfson decision would banish young people from mobile home life.

The controversy over setting specific age limits was reflected in the commission's 4-3 vote.

Those wanting criteria set for three types of parks were Commissioners Ted Colton, Herb Foster, I.E. Sweet and Bob Taren. Opposed were Commission Chairman Edith Brown and Commissioners John Pacheco and Bob Baird.

Commissioner Frank Evans was absent.

On the issue of age restrictions, Brown said, "let the courts decide."

She said it isn't fair to place specific age limits on every park when only about a dozen caused problems by changing to senior-only (55 and older) parks, she added.

"I don't see it as any solution to say 'Give it to the courts,' " Foster stated. Having the courts decide, he said, is costly and time consuming.

The same commission split came on the vote suggesting mobile home rentals be allowed under hardship circumstances.

Commissioners recommended an ordinance recognizing the right of an owner or the heir of an owner to rent out a mobile home for not more than a year. The rental could only take place when, for reasons beyond their control because of hardship, the owner or heir cannot live in the mobile home.

Most mobile home park owners don't allow the rental of mobile homes.

This has caused problems when an owner, perhaps due to illness, can't live in a mobile home and still must pay rent. It also has caused problems when an owner dies and the heirs can't live in the home, but can't rent it out while it's up for sale.