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


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Posted on Wed, May. 11, 2005

Castroville, Boronda, Pajaro plans approved

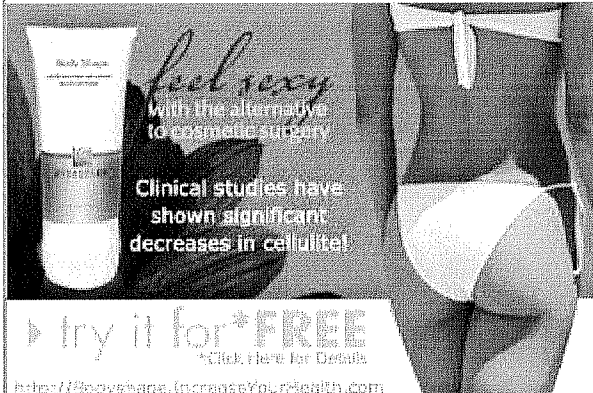
By LARRY PARSONS
 Herald Staff Writer

Despite misgivings from the city of Salinas and a Pajaro community leader, Monterey County supervisors endorsed new five-year redevelopment plans Tuesday for Boronda, Castroville and Pajaro.

The plans outline a \$22 million mix of road, drainage, landscaping, facility and other community projects. They were approved unanimously, overcoming reservations by Supervisor Fernando Armenta.

Citing a letter from Salinas City Manager Dave Mora questioning possible plans for hundreds of homes in Boronda just west of Salinas, Armenta suggested delaying the vote.

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"This is the kind of thing that gets us in litigation," he said. "We are moving prematurely."

But Armenta changed his mind after Supervisor Lou Calcagno and county redevelopment chief Jim Cook said the redevelopment plans can be changed and are different from still-evolving community plans for Castroville and Boronda.

"I believe we can work these issues out," Calcagno said.

The proposed Boronda community plan calls for an extension of Rossi Street west of Davis Road and building about 400 homes on farm fields in south Boronda. The 20-year Castroville community plan identifies sites for up to 1,600 new homes.

Supervisor Dave Potter said the city and county have different visions for how Boronda should be developed.

The community plans are preliminary and still must go through environmental reviews, Cook said. He said county officials would work closely with Salinas officials.

The redevelopment plans approved by the board cover ongoing and less-dramatic projects to be financed through redevelopment property taxes raised in the three areas.

"The projects recommended are good projects... (that) we've been working on a long time," Cook said.

The redevelopment plans -- the third set laid out by county and community advisory boards since 1990 -- cover housing and community improvement projects through 2010.

Pajaro community leader Sister Rosa Dolores of the Casa de la Cultura said the county should be putting together a wider-ranging community plan for Pajaro in addition to those for Castroville and Boronda.

"We, as a community, don't want a Band-Aid approach. We want it to be a planned community," Dolores said.

But Ed Kelly, a Pajaro-area farmer, complained that owners of farmland near Pajaro haven't been notified about community development plans. He warned supervisors that growth of Pajaro would hurt growers.

Calcagno said the overriding issue for Pajaro is finding a long-sought solution for flood control. The Pajaro River flooded the community in 1995 and again threatened to inundate Pajaro in 1998.




Highlights of redevelopment plans • Pajaro -- \$1.5 million for a new community center; \$1.3 million for new traffic signals and streetlights; and \$1.4 million for a proposed Pajaro passenger train station. • Boronda -- \$4.5 million for new storm drains and street improvements; \$2.3 million to help finance the proposed Rossi Street extension; \$486,000 for various improvements, including possible reuse of Boronda Elementary School. • Castroville -- \$3.4 million for a new southbound offramp at Highway 1 and Merritt Street and other parts of a new "Artichoke Avenue" to route traffic around Merritt Street; \$1.6 million for the new downtown plaza and Japanese School projects already under way; and \$132,000 for a community "gateway monument."

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