

## Naples developer offers compromise

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In a victory for Gaviota coast preservationists, the owner of Naples told the county Board of Supervisors on Tuesday he would prepare one environmental report for his entire project of 55 homes, just west of the Bacara Resort & Spa.

Matt Osgood, an Orange County developer, was seeking to apply for five homes on the north side of Highway 101 without undergoing comprehensive review -- a proposal that opponents said would encourage sprawl.

Then came Tuesday.

"It is a stunning example of an offer to cooperate," Mike Lunsford, president of the Gaviota Coast Conservancy, told the board.

The supervisors also heard a staff report Tuesday on multiple zoning violations at Naples. Mr. Osgood, they were told, will now be required to obtain after-the-fact permits for improperly widening a road, digging a trench for water lines, enlarging water pipes and stockpiling dirt.

Mr. Osgood told the board he would now check with county staff before beginning any new grading or other work on the property.

Tuesday's hearing followed a noon rally at the county Administration Building by members of the Naples Coalition, an alliance of eight preservationist groups, including the Sierra Club, Surfrider Foundation and League of Women Voters. The coalition members won their demand for a consolidated review of the Naples project.

But they did not succeed in convincing the board to look into a transfer of development rights for the 485-acre property before the review begins.

Such transfers, in which a developer agrees to leave land in open space in return for the right to build elsewhere, have never been used to preserve land in Santa Barbara County. Under a transfer program, the developer usually is allowed to build more homes on the "receiver" site than would normally be allowed.

Mr. Osgood is expected to formally submit the Naples project for county review in the spring. He is proposing to build 38 homes on the north side of the highway, in addition to one he already owns there. On the south side, he is proposing 16 homes, including nine along the edge of the bluffs.

Next to the housing at Naples, Mr. Osgood is proposing to operate a working ranch with avocado and olive orchards, lavender fields and a herd of cattle. There would be a public parking lot and trails.

The Naples project, still in its early stages, represents an attempt by the county to settle 20 years of lawsuits over the number of homes that can be built there. The property, some of which still belongs to the Morehart family of Carpinteria, is zoned for one home per 100 acres.

The Moreharts, however, have claimed the right to build more than 400 homes, based on a subdivision map drawn up by speculators in 1888. The map delineates hundreds of small lots for a township called Naples that never materialized.

At the end of Tuesday's hearing, Mr. Osgood said that because of the high price of land at Naples -- up to \$580,000 per acre -- the chances for any transfer of development rights to another property within the urban limits were "slim to none."

"It's a long shot, but we'll look into it," he said.