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## SCC board approves Tubac plan

By Jesse Froehling

John and Chris Crowley hopped another hurdle Wednesday when the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors approved the preliminary development plans for their proposed housing development in Tubac.

The Santa Cruz County Planning and Zoning Commission approved the plan June 28 and recommended that the board follow suit. The preliminary plan calls for the development to be south of Chavez Siding Road and east of the railroad tracks across the Santa Cruz River from the Tubac Golf Resort. The 1,400-lot development would have a golf course, a community center and several hiking trails. It would also remain relatively open. Seventy-five percent of the property is slated to remain undeveloped.

Although the supervisors approved the preliminary plan, the Crowleys, the brains behind Tubac de la Montanya, had to address several concerns from Tubac residents and the supervisors themselves before the board gave the Crowleys its blessing.

At a public hearing prior to the vote, 12 people came forward to speak. Eight of them opposed the development, two had serious concerns about it and only one said he favored it.

For the most part, the complaints fell into three general categories. First, residents were concerned that the county was bending zoning regulations to accommodate a golf course planned for the area. Second, residents worried that the infrastructure needed to accommodate core services, especially flood control, which are not up to snuff. Lastly, the mesquite bosque is extremely rare. Scott Wilbor of the Tucson Audubon Society confirmed their contention.

"The tall structured forest bosques along the river bottoms are probably the rarest in the state," he said. "They are the best unaltered example left along the Santa Cruz and the San Pedro."

Bill Cox, a Rio Rico resident for 19 years, said that development is necessary for Santa Cruz County.

"Development is a word that gets everyone concerned," he said. "But we live in the smallest county in Arizona. Two-thirds of the county is in state hands. That leaves a very small area to generate revenue."

Cox noted the absence of a hospital and few parks. He said he has heard numerous complaints about the lack of a strong police presence and firefighters. Development is necessary to bring in the funds for those services, he said.

At least one person disagreed with Cox.

"I'd like to address the thought that rooftops bring in money," said Nancy Bohman. "For every \$1 the county brings in in revenue, the county spends \$1.09," she said. Her husband, Rick Bohman, is on the Santa Cruz County Citizens Council. He said that initially, the group was concerned that the county was skirting zoning regulations by allowing the Crowleys to implement the golf course. That problem, however, had been taken care of.

"Staff addressed our concerns," he said. Instead, Bohman said the citizens group worried that the extra traffic on Bridge Road would have a bad effect on the rest of the community.

"When this is built out, the population (of Tubac de la Montaya) will probably exceed Tubac's," he said. He suggested that Bridge Road should be preserved for non-vehicular traffic except in the case of emergency vehicles. That, he said, would help preserve some of the character of that area.

Others were concerned about the character as well. Namely, development infringes on the rural vibe mandated by the county comprehensive plan for the northern part of the county, they said.

Bill Green, a 23-year resident of Tubac, put it bluntly.

"If you do this, you'll have to change the name from Tubac to Too Bad, because that's what people will be saying," he said. Others were a bit more diplomatic.

"I worked on the comprehensive plan," said Joan Ellinwood. "I don't see why we're ignoring all that hard work." Specifically, the golf course does not comply with zoning regulations, the residents said.

County officials say they're not ignoring anything. The property was rezoned in 1984 and, according to a memorandum from Mary Dahl, the county community development director to the planning commission, the fact that the development is a planned area development as opposed to a subdivision, while giving the property owner unfettered rights to the densities conferred in the zoning and development code. It also provides the flexibility to propose additional uses such as a golf course. In other words, planned area developments are structured with more flexibility to vary lot sizes and uses in order to promote more creativity and

imagination in design.

Most opponents disliked the golf course for environmental reasons, but ironically, the Crowleys say that the mechanism that allows them to build the golf course is the most environmentally friendly. A planned area development will allow them to shift houses to leave the largest and most precious of the mesquite, they said.

In the zoning commission's recommendation to the supervisors, the commission listed several stipulations relating to this, as well as a few other concerns.

For instance, no more than 1,400 lots shall be allowed. This is an absolute cap. In addition, the Crowleys have one year to file the final plan. They also must follow the riparian area conservation and mitigation plan.

The supervisors approved the preliminary plan unanimously.