



the reactor

by Paul Azevedo

Zoning laws are probably a good idea. If there had been a zoning law in Santa Rosa when I was growing up, the tannery probably would not have smelled up the town periodically.

Of course, the zoning law wouldn't have given jobs to the tannery workers during the depression. The factory did.

To quote Peter Loeb of the Friends of Pacifica: "The PURPOSE of zoning laws is to restrict the use of land in the best interests of the community." (Emphasis mine.)

That's the way it's SUPPOSED to work. In the real world people sometimes use zoning laws to get their way. The new ordinance proposed by the Friends is an initiative. It's also a trap, because once we've voted it in, it's locked in, for practical purposes, for 10 years, whether it turns out good or bad.

If we pass this monstrosity, we won't be able to change ANY zoning of hillside or agriculturally zoned property without an election. You know it's too damn expensive and complicated to build, as it is. How much more time, and how many more thousands of dollars will it take to build your dream home if you have to call an election first?

That's not planning. That's paralysis.

7-1-81

Under this initiative, home building will involve an interminable, competitive battle for the few permits the "Friends" condescend to allow.

The "Friends" are smart. They don't spell out the criteria for choosing one man's project over another's. They leave that dirty job up to a city council they are usually so quick to condemn.

What will happen when you want to build a home? You'll have to compete for scarce permission slips. What an opportunity for every form of prejudice, bribery, collusion, and petty personality clashes to come into play.

If a black man with a lot in Linda Mar wants to build, will he be treated fairly in the competitive battle for those 70 precious permits?

Who knows? Maybe yes. Maybe no. If he is rejected, was he the victim of prejudice? If he passes, did the committee do it out of fear of being thought bigoted?

Will the selection process be a lottery? What does that do to the value of your building lot? Are your chances of getting your permission slip one in two? One in five? One in 100? No one knows now, including those who drafted this miserable initiative.

Do you own a lot in Pacifica? The value of your property just went down. Kerboom! Today! July 1. Because the total number of permits allowed over the next four or five years is only 70 per year, STARTING TODAY. Only if the initiative fails, or the committee can't get enough signatures within the time limit will the value of your property return to June 1 values.

Don't bother to complain to the Friends when your son or daughter can't find a place to live in their hometown. The Friends initiative will keep housing stock scarce in Pacifica, and if that forces your kids out of town, that's tough.