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Laguna protection ordinance ⁽¹⁴⁾ to control future development

Developers are carefully eyeing the Laguna, so Sebastopol City Councilmembers Aug. 5 agreed to place tighter planning controls on future development near the waterway.

The council passed the so-called Wetlands Ordinance which provides guidelines for future development adjacent to the Laguna.

"This does not prevent the use of property," said planning consultant Bruce Aspinall. He said the Wetlands Ordinance will "protect the Laguna" while the area is developed.

But not everyone liked the idea of the new city law. Vincent Siano, a Laguna property owner, called it just another layer of bureaucracy.

"It's already covered by a flood ordinance," he said of the Laguna area. Rather than new

planning laws, Siano said "We need greater enforcement" of existing laws which prevent hunters from tracking game in pristine areas of the Laguna.

Richard Nichols, though, praised the Wetlands law, "It provides a vital step in what should be a long-range plan to protect and rehabilitate the entire Laguna region."

But Siano countered saying proponents of "open space" should take other measures. "If they want it, they should buy it," he said of open space district backers.

Councilman Bill Roventini said the current zoning is adequate. "It's a little too drastic for me," Roventini said of the Wetlands law. "I'm inclined to think our General Plan does allow us to administer these lands already."