

# City protection for the

# laguna

Sounding like staunch environmentalists, the Sebastopol City Council unanimously agreed Oct. 7 to place about 250 acres of city land in the Laguna de Santa Rosa into a so-called Wetlands zone despite an eleventh hour appeal to hold off a decision.

Scott Carter, a Walnut Creek broker who manages Fircrest Mobile Home Park, said if Fircrest parcels are rezoned into the Wetlands, "it would wipe out any chance" of future development for his clients.

"There's a natural extension to creep out a little further," Carter said, adding his clients have talked about expanding to accommodate RVs.

But a stern council rejected Carter's theory and his call for a two-week continuance.

The new Wetlands District does put "additional constraints" on development, Mayor Howard Reeser said, but it "doesn't prohibit building anything."

Cooper Road resident Richard Nichols said the city's action provides "a buffer for a

cancer known as Santa Rosa." He said the Laguna is the second largest fresh-water marsh in the state. Jennifer Joel, whose Cooper Road property borders the Laguna, told councilmembers, "I hate to see the Laguna go a piece at a time."

She said the Laguna wildlife refuge needs protection from developers. City councilmembers have often complained about Santa Rosa's growing developments on Fulton and Hall roads, once county land on the Laguna's fringe.

Nichols also criticized Sebastopol Ready-Mix's plans to buy a Morris Street parcel in the Wetlands District for expanded operations. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency placed restrictions on Ready-Mix waste, if it were to dispose in the Laguna.

During a city council meeting last month, Ready-Mix said its wastes would not be adverse to the Laguna environment.

The council agreed to place

the 1.87 acres Ready-Mix wanted to buy into the Wetlands zone. A compromise, calling for the "westerly half" of the property to be deleted from any Wetlands zoning, was agreed on.

The council also agreed to push for continued protection

of the Laguna by establishing a 12 person citizens advisory group on the Laguna. The group would report back to the councilmembers in nine months.

The council will formally adopt the new Wetlands law at its Oct. 16 meeting.