

# Calaveras dissolves half of subdivision

*Lots restored as developer flops*

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SAN ANDREAS - In a rare procedure, the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors reversed part of a subdivision Tuesday, creating a single lot near Lake Tulloch where there had been 38 home lots ranging from a half-acre to over 2 acres.

The developers of La Cobre Mina in Copperopolis told county officials two years ago that they could not finish the second phase of the housing project, said Deborah Mullen, an analyst for the county's Public Works Department.

"The property is currently in foreclosure," she said.

Mullen said the last work done on Phase II was the grading for house pads and streets, completed in July 2007. Under the development agreement for the project, which is typical of such agreements, the developer has to post a bond to ensure he or she will finish improvements such as streets and water lines or be able to provide the money required if the county has to step in to complete the work.

It is unclear, however, whether that bond is still in effect. Even if it is, county officials might have to go to court to get the money. And anyone who would purchase one of the individual lots could press the county government to finish the work, even if the county had no money to do so.

Rather than face that prospect, the Board of Supervisors voted 4-1 to dissolve the second phase of the subdivision and restore it to a single lot.

Supervisor Russ Thomas of Copperopolis cast the dissenting vote. Thomas said eliminating the individual lots where house pads and rough-graded roads already exist unnecessarily reduces the value of the property, whether to a bank or some future owner.

"This is not going to go back to grazing land. Somebody is going to come along eventually and build this project out," Thomas said.

While other supervisors said they sympathized with Thomas, they also did not want to leave the cash-strapped county holding the bag. With the subdivision dissolved, any new developer would have to file a new map application and make a development agreement to cover infrastructure before proceeding, they said.

"Really, there is no option for us to do nothing," board Chairwoman Merita Callaway said.

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