



THE TAOS NEWS

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Commission postpones moratorium vote

By Matthew van Buren

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After having delayed a vote on the matter July 20, the Taos County Commission decided to postpone voting on a proposed subdivision moratorium until December. Assistant county attorney Jake Caldwell said because the commission did not set a December date to hear the matter again, the moratorium is effectively “tabled indefinitely.” He said the commission could hear it again as long as it meets notification requirements.

The proposed moratorium would affect subdivisions, multiple-family developments, major developments and some commercial uses in Ranchos de Taos, Los Córdovas, Llano Quemado, Tierra Blanca, Talpa and Taos Overlook area — though projects the county had approved before the moratorium took effect would be allowed.

The commission decided the controversial issue needs further review. The proposed moratorium would last for two years and give the commission the option to extend it for another two. Its intent is to give the county time to conduct hydrogeological studies of the target area, which the commission has been told is “geologically complex” and full of fault systems.

At the July 20 meeting, a number of real estate agents, contractors and developers argued that a moratorium would hurt their businesses. They said the current economy has imposed a de facto moratorium on large developments, anyway. Town of Taos leaders, including Mayor Darren Córdova and Council Member Rudy Abeyta, said a moratorium is unnecessary, with Abeyta saying it could lead to legal challenges. They offered the town’s help with studies of the area, however.

Those in favor of the moratorium have argued that it is necessary to protect water quantity and quality in the area, saying wells drilled into unknown fault systems could have disastrous consequences.