

PHCD to facilitate Dutra forum

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The Petaluma Health Care District will facilitate a community forum on March 17 about health care concerns related to the proposed Dutra asphalt plant just south of Petaluma.

The forum will take place from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Petaluma Community Center in Lucchesi Park, at 320 N. McDowell Blvd. It was proposed by Joan Cooper, a founding member of Friends of Shollenberger Park and Clean Air, as she raised concerns about the project during the PHCD board of directors meeting on Jan. 14. The proposed plant is located on the banks of the Petaluma River, opposite Shollenberger Park.

"She asked the board to facilitate and convene a community health forum regarding health-related issues that may be of concern because of the asphalt plant," said Daymon Doss, executive director of the PHCD. "The forum will focus on health issues, not zoning or whether the project is within the urban-growth boundary.

"We have no jurisdiction on this issue. Our goal is to provide an opportunity to bring up any potential health-care issues."

The forum will consist of presentations on health-related issues, followed by a question-answer period. All of the members of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors will be invited, along with several other people, including representatives of Dutra and the people who prepared the final environmental impact report.

During the PHCD meeting on Jan. 14, Mayor Pamela Torliatt also spoke about health concerns related to the Dutra Asphalt Batch and Recycling Plant. The Petaluma City Council voted 7-0 to send a second, more strongly worded letter to the board of supervisors regarding the concerns.

Cooper asked the PHCD board to consider writing a letter to Supervisor Mike Kerns, who represents southern Sonoma County regarding the proposed project. The board unanimously passed a motion to send a letter to Kerns requesting that the board of supervisors complete all necessary EIR reports pertaining to the project and that appropriate health issues be addressed prior to the approval of this project.

On Feb. 3, the board of supervisors, by a 4-1 vote, approved a proposal that stipulated stronger oversight conditions could allow the plant to operate well within its surroundings. Shirlee Zane voted against the proposal.

The board is scheduled to take a formal vote on the proposal on March 24.

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