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## **COPA's Community Organizing Delivers New Housing Construction County Supervisors approve 2nd housing project in General Plan**

On Tuesday, August 17, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved \$3.15 million dollars in Redevelopment Agency Housing Funds for the Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition (MPHC) to construct the "Aptos Cottages," a 100% affordable housing project of 40 rental units available to low income families.

"Affordable housing is now becoming a reality in Santa Cruz County. The fruits of our many years of organizing by COPA and other groups, is finally producing results; giving families new opportunities for housing they can afford," said Meg Campbell, COPA leader from St. John's Episcopal Church of Capitola.

The Miller site, located across from the Rancho del Mar Shopping Center in Aptos, is one of the six sites rezoned in the General Plan Housing Element passed in June 2009. It is the second housing proposal approved for construction by the Board of Supervisors. The first project, also initiated by Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition, will yield 88 units of rental housing on Minto Road in Watsonville.

Communities Organized for relational Power in Action (COPA) led a 3-year organizing effort to demonstrate widespread support for passage of a General Plan for affordable housing. After 20 years of inaction, the Board of Supervisors passed a Housing Element of the County General Plan in June 2009 to provide for over 600 new housing units with at least 40% for low and moderate income families. With passage of the General Plan, the county became eligible for state funding for housing, receiving \$1.6 million to date with another \$2.6 million pending.

COPA leader Dean Lundholm of the Live Oak Family Resource Center stated, "This is an important milestone to see the potential for affordable housing becoming a reality. Everyone who worked toward or supported the Housing Element should be excited - and looking forward to the next project."

The project will be called the Aptos Cottages. The historic Castro house located on the site will be preserved and used as the community building.

**About COPA:** Communities Organized for relational Power in Action (COPA) is a multi-issue, nonpartisan organization consisting of 22 member institutions across Santa Cruz and Monterey counties, including congregations, synagogues, schools and nonprofit organizations. Founded in 2003, COPA is affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation Network, a network of 60 community organizations nationwide. For more information, contact Joaquin Sanchez, COPA Lead Organizer, 277-3521.

