

# City ponders pit-bull law

## Recent incidents prompt council's concern

By NANCY BARR  
STAFF WRITER

In light of a recent attack on a small child by a pit bull, Watsonville Councilman Dennis Osmer has recommended the city either place restrictions on their ownership or prohibit them altogether.

In Morgan Hill two weeks ago a child was mauled to death by a pit bull and last week Watsonville police reported that an 8-year-old boy was nipped on the arm by a pit bull.

"We should consider now how we can prevent a death rather than waiting for one to occur," Osmer said at Tuesday's City Council meeting.

Osmer acknowledged that it may be difficult to outlaw pit bulls because they are not a

pure breed, and therefore it is hard to define just what kind of dog is to be outlawed. The city staff agreed to investigate Osmer's proposal.

The staff was also asked Tuesday night to work on proposals to form two new committees, one on economic development and one on beautification.

Councilman Joe Marsano had asked the staff before for information on economic-development committees in other cities, and for advice on how Watsonville can form one. Marsano repeated that request Tuesday.

Planning Director Bud Carney assured Marsano his staff is researching the matter.

The request for the other committee came from Mayor

Betty Murphy, who said during her recent campaign she wanted to revive the beautification committee, defunct since the 1960s, to instill pride in the city among its residents. The committee used to give out awards to those who did exceptional landscaping jobs or made other aesthetic improvement on their properties.

In other action at Tuesday's meeting, the council:

- Agreed to give the Association of Watsonville Area Seniors an additional \$5,000 to meet this month's expenses. The council was reluctant to grant the request because the city has already given the seniors more than \$20,000 this year. It made the grant after warning association president Philip Larscheid that next year the city

will give \$20,000 and no more.

- Acting as the Redevelopment Agency, agreed to give the remaining businesses on the 200 block of Main Street 60 days to move out after the property is sold. City Manager John Radin is negotiating the sale of that property to developer Barry Swenson, but said the sale likely won't be completed until the end of August or September. The council agreed that as a condition of the sale, the businesses will be given an additional 60 days to move.

- Approved an application to the federal government for a \$200,000 grant to support the city's rental-rehabilitation program. Over the last two years, the city received \$150,000 to fix up houses and apartments rented by low-income families.