

# Business Dist. Downtown Promotion Plan Dies In Battle

5-29-68

By Don Righetti  
Sentinel Staff Writer

Santa Cruz City Councilman Eugene Fleming delivered a tongue lashing to businessmen who opposed a downtown promotions district last night, but went on to vote against the measure himself because it appeared a majority of the businessmen wanted it that way.

Fleming commented caustically that downtown businessmen often have to be led by the hand, but in this instance, it appeared they didn't want to be. "I was sure we were doing you businessmen a favor in this matter," he said. But he added that he would not force the district on them.

"You've done nothing in the past, and you don't want anything to happen now" he concluded.

Opponents of the measure got their wish. The Council turned it down by a 4-3 vote.

The district would have collected \$3 annually from downtown businesses for each parking space required of them by the off-street parking ordinance. The approximately \$10,000 to be collected by the plan would have been used for general promotion of the downtown area.

The measure came before the council at the request of the Downtown Association.

Principal spokesman against the district last night was Harold Sundean, owner of Saving Sam.

Sundean labled the district unfair, claiming that its principal benefits would go to the

downtown core on Pacific Avenue, while businesses at the fringes of the district would pay for it at the same rate as the Pacific Avenue merchants.

"As far as my own costs go," Sundean declared, "I wouldn't even miss it. It's just that it's unfair."

Sundean produced a petition reportedly signed by 142 merchants opposing the district.

Referring to proponents' arguments that the promotional activities would be a tool to prevent outlying shopping centers from laying waste to downtown, Sundean argued that the centers couldn't be stopped regardless of what action downtown takes.

He declared that proponents "want everybody to pay for what they (the supporters) get," and noted that more than 50 per cent of the merchants he contacted on Pacific Avenue itself had signed his opposition petition.

Ted Schipper, co-owner of Schipper-Dillon, said "I didn't know so many were riding on our coattails. I though it was more like 30 or 40 per cent."

But he added that the opponents "should start paying their share of downtown promotions. I don't think they deserve any more free ride."

Mack Ingram, president of the Downtown Association, said his group didn't claim it was going to stop the shopping centers. "We're not trying for any one thing," he said, "just general progress."

Referring to Sundean's claim that the bulk of district bene-

fits would go to Pacific Avenue, Ingram said, "Sure, every town has a main street, and that's what brings the traffic downtown."

Sundean countered that a frequently heard comment during his opposition efforts was that businessmen didn't mind contributing to downtown promotions on a voluntary basis, but they didn't want the city to collect the funds.

Councilwoman Lorette Wood agreed that the district was too large and that businesses on its fringes had legitimate complaints.

Councilman Samuel Leask, a staunch backer of the district,

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