

# City Council to take another look at plan for Beach Flats housing

Beach Flats

9-2500

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City Council members will again look at purchasing the Lee Apartments for its Beach Flats affordable housing plan at Tuesday's council meeting.

The Lee Apartments, located at 124-126 Leibrandt Ave., were removed from the proposed

**SANTA CRUZ** affordable housing project in July after months of wrangling with the owners and tenants over terms and guarantees. The Dolphin Apartments, located at 136 Leibrandt Ave., and the Rex Court Apartments at 131-133 Leibrandt Ave. are still part of the plan and those properties are listed for discussion in closed session as well.

Redevelopment Director Ceil Cirillo did not return calls seeking comment Friday. City Manager Dick Wilson said the agenda item is meant only to allow the council to bring up the issue again and does not necessarily signal an intent by the council to change their minds.

But Julee Costanza-Gomez, property manager of the Lee Apartments and daughter of owner Vernon Lee, said she didn't know it would be on Tuesday's agenda but isn't surprised. In July, she told the council she would place a moratorium on the sale of the property to anyone else while Beach Flats property negotiations continued.

"We're having an appraisal done of the property and I figured it would be on there around the time the appraisal is done," she said. The appraisal was supposed to be completed by the end of the month but now she said she's not sure when it will be done. "We're con-

tinuing to keep the offer (not to sell to anyone else) open and we aren't taking offers from anyone else right now."

Purchase discussions have gone forward on the Dolphin Apartments, owned by Terry McElroy, who has stated since the beginning that he wants to sell. Tenants of the Dolphin have also gone public recently with their support of the project, despite months of argument by Residentes Unidos, a tenant group, that both Lee and Dolphin tenants didn't want the sale if they didn't receive guarantees that they would all be admitted into the new housing project without regard for their criminal or credit histories.

In August, it became public that Nena Ruiz, the leader of Residentes Unidos and granddaughter of Vernon Lee, has been charged with two felony drug possession counts. The last of those happened at the Lee Apartments.

"We're here to let you know that almost all the residents of the Dolphin agree with the purchase by the city," Dolphin tenant Angelica Marquez told the council in Spanish at its Sept. 12 meeting. "We want you to do it as quickly as possible."

*The property purchases will be discussed at 11:30 a.m. Tuesday in closed session and any decision made on the property will be announced in open session at 7 p.m. Residents can attend the meeting at City Council Chambers, 809 Center St. or watch the proceedings on Community TV of Santa Cruz, Channel 25 on AT&T Cable.*

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