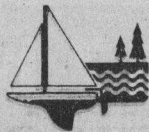


Local



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Council to discuss disputed hostel project

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Sentinel Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — The Santa Cruz Hostel Society will try to convince the City Council Tuesday to convert Carmelita Cottages on Beach Hill into an overnight hostel for travelers.

Beach Hill residents, citing traffic and congestion problems, are opposed to the hostel.

Siding with opponents to the hostel, city Zoning Board members have denied the Hostel Society's request for a permit. Dissenting votes were cast by board members Jeff Oberdorfer and Cynthia Mathews.

Proposed conditions of the permit would

require a notice to be posted in hostel handbooks, saying visitors to Carmelita Cottages must arrive by bicycle, on foot or via public transportation and no automobile parking is available.

Other proposed conditions would require visitors to arrive between 5 and 8 p.m., and leave by 9 a.m. the following day. The cottages would be closed from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., but grounds would be open to the public for use as a park.

The Hostel Society hopes to develop a 45-bed facility over a 10-year period, with quarters for up to four full-time staff members.

Through the years, there have been several proposals for the property, including

demolition of the buildings, a historical park, and bed-and-breakfast inn.

Board members ruled the transient nature of the hostel would not be in keeping with the nature of permanent residences on Beach Hill.

The six dwarf-like cottages are tucked under a bower in a courtyard reminiscent of Victorian times. They contain what is believed to be the oldest existing building on Beach Hill.

The cottages, an example of small beach resort hotels at the turn of the century, were built between 1870 and 1910 by Capt. Joseph Roberts, an early building contractor in Santa Cruz. They are now a city landmark.

After Roberts' death, the property fell into the hands of longtime resident Lottie Sly, who deeded the property to the city upon her death in 1955 with the condition it be used as a park. Stanford University is executor of the will.

There has been disagreement over whether the hostel would fulfill the condition of the will about park use.

The city attorney has said a hostel would probably comply with the condition of the will, but negotiations are continuing between the city and Stanford about the fate of the property.

The council will consider the appeal at a 7:30 p.m. meeting Tuesday at City Hall council chambers.