

Santa Cruz looks to its local resources

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SANTA CRUZ — Councilmembers have decided to save some money and turn to local experts in their search for an improved hotel business in the city.

Early this year, the council paid \$5,000 for an outside firm — Laventhol and Horwath of San Francisco — to study if Santa Cruz can support a hotel of 300 approximate rooms.

A representative from the firm told the council the only location that would support a new major hotel is Lighthouse Field.

The field was targeted for a convention center in the 1970s, but the Santa Cruz community came out and voted against the city's involvement and today the field is a state park.

Councilmembers asked Laventhol and Horwath if they would take another look at the situation.

Tuesday, the council got the news that the firm wants \$3,000 to \$3,500 sit down and talk it over again.

Councilman Spiro Mellis said it was costing too much and that Lionel Stoloff, executive director of the chamber of commerce and Joe Flood, director of the convention bureau, would offer help.

The council decided it would meet with the two men and others at a workshop to determine if a local "blue ribbon" committee could be put together.

A "blue ribbon committee" is one composed of people who know something about the issue being studied.

In an item loosely related, the council agreed to consider funding \$15,000 as a matching grant for the county Cultural Council to look at improvements for the Civic Auditorium.

Earleen Overend of the council said her group was seeking \$15,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts to improve the auditorium for cultural performances.

Councilmembers said they'd try to find the funds, but that they want a "feasibility study" done along with the "master plan" that the council was proposing.

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