

City gets another offer on historic Heiner House

By KAREN CLARK
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Council members will be asked this afternoon to consider a last-minute proposal for moving the Heiner House that would give the city more money than if they accepted a Community Housing Corp. plan.

The CHC proposal, submitted before the mid-August deadline, was the only bid received for moving the city-owned house from the corner of Chestnut and Church streets.

But last week, a proposal from Santa Cruz architect Michael O'Hearn was distributed to council members.

O'Hearn has offered to pay the city \$2,500 for the historic house, move it at his own expense, pay all costs for moving the utility wires out of the way, and clean up the site.

He proposed moving the house to 116 Myrtle St., renovating it to "its original historic grandeur both inside and exterior" and renting it as a duplex.

CHC also has agreed to pay all moving and cleanup costs, but the city would receive just \$1 for the title transfer.

'I sensed that another offer may not be out of line if it would provide benefits to the city above the only other offer that was presented. ...'

— Michael O'Hearn
Santa Cruz architect

The non-profit housing corporation proposed moving the house to 419 Center St., and renovating it for use as a group home at permanently affordable rents.

Rental priority would be given to the elderly and people displaced by the Loma Prieta earthquake, the CHC said.

City staff members have told the council that accepting CHC's proposal would require them to approve several permits and variances because the Center Street lot is a substandard size.

The Historic Preservation Commission also would have to review CHC's plan to remove the non-historic rear addition to the house and build something "architecturally consistent with the remainder of the house."

CHC estimated it would cost about \$276,495 to move and renovate the house. Officials have applied for a loan from the California Disaster Assistance Program.

O'Hearn said he had tried to get his proposal in before the Aug. 14 deadline, but was unable to find the right site in time.

"Although the deadline for the acquisition of the structure has elapsed, I sensed that another offer may not be out of line if it would provide benefits to the city above the only other offer that was presented ...," O'Hearn said in his letter to the council.

He said his Myrtle Street site is large enough for the house, plus the set-back and parking requirements.



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel file

The city's Jim Lang and Debbie Lee pass the boarded-up Heiner House.

The city would have to approve a planned development and design permit for the relocation of the duplex to the site, he said.

O'Hearn estimated the purchase and moving costs to be about

\$40,000, and said renovation costs would be another \$100,000.

The city wants to sell the earthquake-damaged Heiner House because it would cost more to repair it for office use than to simply

build another structure on the site.

The issue will be considered by the council at its early session, which begins at 3:30 p.m. in the council chambers at City Hall, 809 Center St.