

11-30-77

Weather

Fair Through Thursday With Patchy Low Clouds Or Fog; Slightly Cooler Thursday
Details Page 2



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Lighthouse Field Buy Advances

FROM PAGE 1

Lighthouse Field Buy Over Hurdle

By BILL NEUBAUER
Sentinel Staff Writer

A dramatic, cooperative effort by concerned local and state officials Tuesday in Sacramento finally won approval from the state Public Works Board for acquisition of 37-acre Lighthouse Field for a state park.

Approval for the acquisition is required from this board before negotiations for the property can be undertaken by the state Parks and Recreation Department.

And approval for the state to try to acquire the city of Santa Cruz property on the field - some 4.6 of the 37 acres - was jeopardized by the contention of a legislative analyst that Coastal Bond Act funds couldn't be used to buy land already owned by the public.

Councilman Bert Muhly alerted the Santa Cruz City Council and others to this contention which, if upheld by the board, could have resulted in a delay or a hassle over the park project.

Then on Tuesday Councilwoman Charlotte Melville and Supervisorial Aide Andrew Schiffrin, representing Third District Supervisor Gary Patton, went to the Public Works Board hearing on the issue.

Melville told the council during a study session late Tuesday afternoon that the board seemed to believe the \$4.6 million allocated by the state for the park purchase was only to buy the non-city parcels on the field, which are held by Teachers Management and Investors Corp.

"Had we not gone and made a presentation," Melville said, "they would have made a decision not to buy the city property."

Schiffrin told The Sentinel that another question in issue was that there was no indication in the state allocation of funds for site purchase that city-owned property would be included.

Schiffrin said: "It was a cooperative effort that got the full information to the Public Works Board. Russell Cahill of the Parks and Recreation Department came out very strongly on the statewide importance of Lighthouse Field. Assemblyman Henry Mello, who was ill, sent a strong letter of support. Leroy Bennett, aide to State Sen. Robert Nimmo spoke very effectively. Bob Marani of TMI urged the board to go forward and expressed willingness of TMI to sell at fair market value. We got good help from David Jannssen, member of the board."

The fate of the purchase was in jeopardy because of legal arrangements covering future development, operation and maintenance of the proposed park.

The city entered into an agreement on this with county and state with the express condition it would not be obligated to participate if the state did not buy the city's acreage at Lighthouse Field.

This information was called to the attention of the board members by Schiffrin, Melville and by Muhly in a long letter.

Muhly noted in his letter that a commitment by the state to buy the city's land was made by Herbert Rhodes, former director of the state Parks and Recreation Department.

Melville told the council study session: "Andrew Schiffrin said after the hearing in Sacramento that the next big problem is getting the price on the land."

Mayor Joseph Ghio responded to that: "All the TMI literature to the investors says there is no way they will sell at that price."

Schiffrin told The Sentinel this morning: "The question of fair market value involves different interpretations. The price is subject to negotiations. The Public Works Board's approval of the acquisition will led to the negotiations."

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