

# Three Proposed Revisions To City Charter Under Fire

By John Elliott  
Sentinel Staff Writer

Santa Cruzans, in addition to helping decide a host of other matters, will be asked one week from today to make known their desire on 16 proposed city charter changes.

The 16, last of a batch of more than 30 revisions advocated by a study committee, include 12 which would amend and four which would repeal existing sections of the charter.

Thirteen have sailed virtually uncontested through hearings leading to their placement on the general election ballot, while three have been attacked, two strenuously.

Measures which will be numbered 8 and 9 on the election ballot have drawn the ire of library and county officials, who contend passage would kill any county vote in expenditure of funds, despite the county's financial participation in the program.

Number 15 would modify civil service charter provisions and has drawn verbal fire for decreasing the preference percentage and time limit given veterans in the examinations for city positions.

There has been no organized or individual public protest against the other 13 measures, which tend generally to place more control with the city council and create some

(Editor's note: This is the first of a two-part series on 16 proposed Santa Cruz city charter amendments to be voted on November 8. Today's story deals mainly with those proposals that have been contested, or which advocate repeal of existing sections. Tomorrow's concluding story will deal with the other eight proposed amendments.)

new positions to be filled when the council deems necessary.

If approved, No. 8 would make the library board an advisory board to the city council, placing final responsibility with the city council.

The library board and county supervisors have objected to the move, pointing out the county has a 30-year agreement with the city library system to serve the entire county.

The county's participation is about 60 per cent, while the city pays 40 per cent.

It is the city's position, that the library is a function of the city, and county service is provided by contract. Jerry Minford, assistant City Manager David Koester, said the charter change will not "change anything in fact. I think it will clean up the operation."

Number 9 on the ballot asks that claims against the library be handled in the same manner as all other claims against the city, rather than requiring approval by the library board prior to payment.

The library board objects, saying approval would remove control of library funds from the library board and also that the county would have no voice in expenditures except by annual review of the budget.

Minford said the two moves, as is the case with some other charter recommendations, are designed to make boards and commissions more advisory in nature, leaving more power with the city council as elected representatives of the people.

Number 15 amends civil service provisions, including clarification and removal of some clauses. But the major change would drop the preference percentage given veterans.

At present, veterans receive an additional 10 per cent on their test score without a time limit. If approved, the charter would set the preference at 5 per cent if the veteran takes the examination within five years of his discharge date.

Unlimited time and 10 per cent preference would remain in effect for disabled veterans.

In their arguments for adoption, the city claims the 5 per cent preference gives the veteran an advantage without destroying the merit principle of hiring.

The 10 per cent advantage is actually greater than that, the city claims, since a veteran has to pass the examination to receive the benefit. Thus, the city argument goes, a veteran might barely pass but still jump nearly to the top of the hiring list because most passing scores range between 70 and 85 per cent.

The measure also would allow employment from among the top five test candidates, rather than the present top three.

The arguments heard against No. 15 point to the war in Viet Nam and that veterans should receive a bigger break.

Following, in capsule form, are the basic provision of five of the other provision of charter revisions:

nel  
our  
but  
the  
are  
e a  
er-  
sco  
of  
ng

e  
d  
1  
e

e

AS  
ess

the his-  
"a con-  
g made  
groups,  
uss the  
commu-

or dis-  
return  
estion-  
ic de-  
and  
local  
govern-  
turism  
th.

ach of

cc  
K  
C  
sh

should receive a bigger break.

Following, in capsule form, are the basic provision of five of the other proposed charter revisions:

#### Number 1

Passage would give the city manager the power to appoint an assistant city manager and assistant city attorney, rather than the city council, and remove from the list of appointive positions those of police judge, health officer and auditorium manager, jobs that no longer exist. A new position of city controller would be added to the list of city council appointments.

Minford said that passage would bring the city closer to a true manager-council form of government.

If approved, Minford said, no new personnel will be hired immediately, although the time is nearly at hand when a controller will be needed, since the city is getting too large for the periodic audits now used.

#### Number 2

Passage would repeal the list of positions subject to appointment and removal by the city manager, since provisions are duplicated elsewhere within the charter.

#### Number 7

Passage would repeal sections specifying the powers and duties of the city engineer, street superintendent, building officer, electrical superintendent and superintendent of water works. The city advocates the repeal of such sections because they "are now obsolete and meaningless" because of progress, improved methods and changing needs.

#### Number 14

Passage would repeal sections providing for a Flood Control and Stream Beautification Commission. The city notes there has never been such a commission in Santa Cruz and existing sections "serve no useful purpose."

#### Number 3

Passage would give the city manager power to appoint an officer of the city as city manager pro tem, to serve in his absence or disability. The council would retain approval or denial of the manager's choice, rather than their present power of appointment. Officials believe the city manager best knows who is qualified to take his place.