

Lighthouse Field Elicits Strong Views

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Santa Cruzans don't want West Cliff Drive moved back from its scenic meanderings past Lighthouse Point and they don't want Lighthouse Field domesticated into the type of park that will attract thousands of over-the-hill picnickers.

It became clear Thursday night at an added fourth workshop to get citizen comments as to the design of the park that the local message isn't getting through to the design committee or its paid consultants.

Back in January, at the third workshop, the audience reached a consensus on West Cliff Drive — that it shouldn't be moved — but that was ignored by the committee, which later decided there was no clear consensus. It proceeded to move the road to three new locations so that citizens would have a choice they didn't want.

Lighthouse Field Committee Chairman Bob Bell told the 100-plus audience at Santa Cruz High School cafeteria that there is "agency" pressure to come up with a plan that includes a minimum 10 acres of turf. Bell said the agencies — city, county and state — wanted at least 10 acres in turf of the 36-acre field.

The turf would tame the natural feeling of the existing park and hobble it into an inter-city

park that would offer its fields to every visiting picnicker.

From the little that Bell said of "agency" pressure, and from past experience with the state's park planning process, it appears there is a fist within that velvet glove offered to gather in the neighborhood's desires.

It is expected that for the \$6 million the state spent on the park, it will want some use of the land for the "people of the state."

A Lighthouse Field neighbor Gene Markowitz brilliantly summed up the audience's will, saying, "Do we have to sit here again and meet and plan the death of this natural area?"

"God gave it a great plan — we don't have to touch it at all ... leave it as it is ... does the battle of Lighthouse Field have to be fought again?"

In an "only in Santa Cruz" happening, the meeting made room for a slide presentation of the field by Bill Giles. He has serenely blended slide film to musical background and a number of the audience commented, "That says it all."

However, there were those who insisted to be politically pragmatic. They feel Santa Cruz better do some planning at Lighthouse Field or it might be done for them by state parks and the coastal commission.

Michaelangelo Rosato, one of the earlier

battlers to save the field from a proposed convention center in the early 1970s, said, "The main reason to move the road is that it's ugly."

He said keep West Cliff Drive, but enjoy it as a promenade. He and others at the meeting want all cars kept out of the state park.

A tough minority wants all cars out of the west side of Santa Cruz and one man wants all the cars kept out of Santa Cruz County and to turn this area into a "Venice" that will attract a lot of foot-folks.

More than two hours of speakers went to the podium at five minutes apiece, and the overwhelming number said to clean up the park, but leave it as it is.

Also, some said to leave West Cliff Drive where it is and if the ocean undermines it and takes it as its own, then that's a statement by nature that we can live with.

It was pointed out that West Cliff Drive is renown as one of the nation's most beautiful drives and one man quietly stated its one of the best experiences a person can have in a car.

One woman said the recent state Supreme Court decision on the Berkeley barricades may prevent the relocation of the road, because the public has the right to keep the road where it is.

The Lighthouse Field Committee was scheduled to meet today at noon to see if it could come up with any new recommendations.

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