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Sentinel

Council Approves Peddler Statute For Santa Cruz

Santa Cruz City will soon have its own street peddler ordinance, and the councilmembers who are bringing it about are saying it's only experimental.

Three of the councilmembers don't want to try it even as an experiment and Councilman Spiro Mellis says it's "unfair competition" to regular store owners such as himself. He owns Mellis' Market on Mission Street.

Mayor Michael Rotkin authored the ordinance and said it's worth a try and he got his regular backing from Councilmembers Bruce Van Allen, Mardi Wormhoudt and John Laird.

The ordinance states the vending from carts and bikes can be done only in residential and industrial areas, 300 feet away from schools and that only ready to eat food can be sold.

Also, the vendor cannot use amplified sounds, but can ding-a-ling bells if that is done in a calm manner.

"The vendor may sell only fruits, vegetables or food stuffs described in the application filed (and) no street vending in congested areas where it may impede or inconvenience the public or create a traffic hazard," the ordinance states.

Vendors must get business licenses and also have their applications approved by the City Council.

Rotkin predicted it wouldn't create a massive new economy, saying he doubted that many people will be able to make a living from it.

Wormhoudt said she felt certain that if it created a nuisance, the council would hear about it from the neighborhoods.