

# City confirms support for hospital site

## Council responds to pilots' injunction to delay rezoning

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The City Council last night restated its belief that a plan to relocate Watsonville Community Hospital near the municipal airport is both safe and prudent.

The city was issued a preliminary injunction delaying the rezoning of the Seagate Technology site on Airport Boulevard for hospital use until noise and safety problems had been mitigated. The council voted 5-2 to adopt a resolution that those issues had been addressed and that the proposed hospital use posed no such hazards.

The city will now file to dissolve the injunction.

The Committee for Responsible Airport Management and Policy filed suit July 21 seeking the injunction, claiming the hospital relocation could limit airport use.

CRAMP also alleged the city and Santa Cruz County violated state law by not having an airport land-use plan or an airport land-

use commission, but the court rejected that claim.

Council members Betty Bobeda and Al Alcalá voted against the resolution, as they had on the rezoning. Both stressed that they were voting not against the hospital but against the loss of the 27-acre site, which was rezoned from industrial to public use.

"We need that land to provide jobs," Alcalá said. "It's choice property."

The rezoning was approved as part of changes to the city's General Plan, and not to allow specific use as a hospital. Even if the hospital relocation plans were to proceed, they would need numerous reviews by the airport manager, city staff, the FAA and Caltrans.

Watsonville resident Dewey Beaudette, who is a pilot, cautioned council members that "one at a time, the City Council is allowing developments that are closing in the airport." He also cited safety problems, and lost jobs and

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tax revenues as reasons for opposing the hospital relocation. Giving up industrial land is "setting a bad precedent," he said.

Councilman Todd McFarren, who voted for the resolution, returned Beaudette's comments, saying, "CRAMP and the pilots are single-minded when it comes to land use around the airport. We can't let pilots make land-use decisions for us."

Councilman Tony Campos, although opposed to losing industrial land, also voted for the resolution. "We've been sitting on the Seagate property too long," he said. The council should require the hospital to submit a letter, Campos said, promising "they won't complain about (airport) noise six years from now." He also said he wanted assurances from the hospital that there is "a game plan" for finding the money to buy the Seagate property.

In other action, the council:

- Voted to freeze \$30,000 of Watsonville Library's 1993-94 budget that is allocated for book acquisition.

Due to revenue losses from the state, the county library system is anticipating a 46 percent cut in funding. The county has notified Watsonville that it may not be able to live up to its agreement to pay the city for use of the Watsonville Library by county residents. The library budget freeze is to compensate for what the city expects will

be a loss of between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in revenue.

In his report to the council, City Manager Steve Salomon stressed that his recommendations "are interim and clearly do not accommodate all of the potential revenue loss." Salomon said additional measures might be necessary in the future.

- Approved an agreement with forestry consultant Edward Tunheim to prepare plans for a timber harvesting operation at a city-owned 200-acre site at Grizzly Flats.

According to a preliminary analysis, Tunheim estimates the city could net between \$330,000 and \$390,000 by a "light harvest" of mostly redwood and Douglas fir on about 65 acres of the property.

In his report to the council, John Cooper, Public Works director, said Tunheim has a reputation as a forestry expert with "very professional handling of public hearings on the timber harvesting issue." The actual harvest has not been authorized and the plans will have to come back to council at least one more time.

During his interview with the city for the contract, Tunheim indicated he wouldn't take on a project that wasn't going to be approved, said Embert Knauss, Public Works supervisor. Tunheim's fees will be a percentage of the city's harvest profits.

The city acquired the land in 1920 with the purchase of the water company. The initial plan to construct a dam was found to be infeasible.