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# Hostel At Natural Bridges Not Dead Yet

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The controversial question of whether a hostel should be sited at Natural Bridges State Park may be considered anew by the Santa Cruz City Council.

A strong bid for an official hearing on the project was made Tuesday by Councilwoman Charlotte Melville after City Clerk Norma Hislop read a telegram from Steven Steinhour, deputy director of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, urging the council to take no "negative" action on a proposal to site a hostel here.

Previously, the council has refused by a 4 to 3 vote to support construction of the permanent hostel in the park as part of a pilot project by the state.

But Melville said, "I don't think the proposal ever got a fair hearing at the council level."

Other councilmembers indicated they may be interested in holding such a hearing if their questions on the statements in the telegram are clarified by Steinhour.

The telegram was addressed to Mayor Joseph Ghio. It reported that consideration of eight sites for the chain of hostels were under consideration by the state Joint Legislative Budget Committee and said that the public would be invited to participate in the planning process for the hostels prior to any construction.

Councilmen Larry Edler and Jim Hammond noted there was no comment in the telegram about public participation here in the selection of the site itself.

Ghio said that the siting of a hostel at Natural Bridges

would be a significant land use decision that would affect nearby areas.

Edler said he would not participate in any hearing by the state if "it is a de facto" hearing.

But the council agreed the first order of business is for Ghio to get a clarification of the telegram so everyone will know if a future hearing will include site approval or just plan approval.

The project is opposed by the Citizens Committee to Protect Natural Bridges State Park, a group that asserts it represents more than 400 residents of the western city area.

Strong backing for the project has come from other citizens and from state officials.

The state may go ahead with the hostel regardless of the council's views, but there has been no indication to date that it would do so.