

Town Clock Price Tag: \$105,000-Plus

The Santa Cruz City Council was told officially Tuesday that the Town Clock project has a \$105,000 price tag — not including finishing costs of landscaping.

Bob Darrow, a leader in the Town Clock project, in a report to the council said the landscape job originally intended for the area surrounding the town clock would cost some \$28,000 in addition to the \$105,000 cost of the clock.

Last year, Darrow and the city's Citizens' Committee on Community Improvement estimated the cost of the clock at \$89,000.

No member of the council

was too excited about putting up nearly \$30,000 to landscape the project, but Darrow came up with an alternate plan of landscaping which would cost about \$2,100 in curbs and gutters and another \$2,500 for "in-kind services" from the city.

So the total cost of the project, barring future improvements and landscaping, is about \$110,000, according to Darrow's figures. The city is paying the lion's share of the project, at least at this time. The city council earmarked

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about \$25,000 toward the project in its early stages, and then earlier this year granted a \$50,000 loan.

That money was to be paid back by donations, but with increased costs and only \$37,069 donated so far, most of the loan cannot be paid back, at least at this time.

Originally, donations were to make up some \$60,000 of the project; with the increased cost, the goal would rise to about \$75,000. That means that about \$38,000 of the \$50,000 loan cannot be paid back until more donations are submitted.

Council members, even the two who opposed the \$50,000 loan, accepted Darrow's report

with not only grace, but also smiles and compliments for Darrow.

Councilman Bert Muhly congratulated Darrow for his "sticktoitiveness" and to the positive community spirit which the project has aroused.

Muhly, along with Councilman Joe Ghio, previously were against the \$50,000 loan. Ghio remained silent during the discussion of the town clock, but smiled from behind his Town Clock button which adorned his shirt.

Speaking of a recent incident in which somebody heaved a bucket of paint onto the town clock, Muhly said he decried such carryings-on, and offered to climb up a ladder himself and clean it off.

Such an offer delighted Councilman Larry Edler, who said he wanted to see such a sight, but warned that he wouldn't dare hold the ladder for Muhly.

Darrow came to the rescue when he reported that the only way to get rid of the paint was by sandblasting, and he had arranged for a sandblasting company to show off its wares by trying it out on the unwanted paint.

Also speaking to the council was Jason Goldstein of Santa Cruz, who complained that the council had not required Darrow to provide enough documentation to allow the public to oversee the finances of constructing the clock with an eagle eye. He said the council would not have allowed any other project to be so lax.

Darrow disagreed, saying that "Goldstein is not aware of the process." He said that the whole project has been run based on a budget drawn up a year and a half ago which put the cost estimate at \$89,000 and that figures have been available regarding the project.