

Financial Boost For Town Clock

By TOM HONIG
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The Town Clock project can now be considered an official city-financed project which receives outside contributions after the city council Tuesday voted to guarantee a loan of

\$50,000, City Finance Director Ray Rupert said today.

Over the "no" votes of Councilmen Bert Muhly and Joe Ghio, the council gave the green light to project chairman Robert Darrow to continue coordinating work on the structure toward its projected July 4 completion date.

The cost of the project will be somewhere in the range of \$80,000, and so far the clock committee has received some \$21,000.

Rupert said that the city has guaranteed that it will fork over a maximum of \$50,000 to the Town Clock committee so the project can be completed by July 4.

Darrow told the council at its meeting Tuesday night that "the Town Clock committee does not feel justified in incurring debt without a clear indication from the city council backing the project financially. Solicitation of donations will continue in any event until the goal is reached."

In the event that contributions cannot pay for the construction of the clock, the city will have to make up the difference, at least up to \$50,000. In the meantime, Rupert explained, the city will be loaning the committee money to meet current construction costs.

Even if contributions eventually come in and the loan is repaid, he said, it will be done on a no-interest basis.

Muhly, a long-time foe of the project who once commented, "If there is a conflict between human services and the clock, I know where I'll be," remained silent except to register his "no" vote. He was joined by Ghio, who commented that he thought the money could go to a better use.

In voting in favor of the loan, Vice Mayor John Mahaney said he is "sure that the community will support it." That argument had earlier been advanced by Darrow, who also said that the reason the clock committee needs the money now is that workers on the clock need to be paid in order to continue.

In 1974, Darrow assured the council that the clock would not be the council's obligation, but added that he would appreciate any help from the city that general citizens could not do. At that time, the city kicked in \$2,500 to get the project going.

The Old Town Clock marked the beginning of the 20th Century atop the IOOF building on the mall. It is being restored by volunteers, for the most part, for erection on a steel structure which will rise over the Fred Morris Memorial Fountain at the head of the mall.

Donations should be sent to the city finance office, Santa Cruz City Hall, 809 Center St.