

Task force to meet about museum site

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SANTA CRUZ — The task force charged with making a recommendation on the best location for a new natural history museum will meet for the final time on Wednesday.

The site for the 7:15 p.m. meeting has changed. It will be at the Santa Cruz City Museum of Natural History, 1305 East Cliff Drive.

A controversy has heated around the task force's work now that it's clear Lighthouse Field is the location ranked No. 1 on the basis of criteria laid out by the Museum Association.

It's clear, however, that task force members are aware Lighthouse Field would be difficult to sell to the community, which includes many residents who remember the fight to save it from development 25 years ago.

Other sites being reviewed are a privately owned parcel near Arana Gulch, the old railroad depot on Washington Street, Natural Bridges State Park and land at UC Santa Cruz.

Approximately 2.5 acres are necessary for the museum, which would start at 15,000 square feet. Officials hope it eventually would grow into a 25,000-square-foot facility, including parking, walkways and landscaping.

Wednesday's meeting is open to the public, but public testimony will be limited because task force members listened to nearly two hours of comments at their last meeting.

Signed letters also will be accepted. E-mail comments to scmuseum@cruzio.com, or mail them to Museum Location Task Force, 1305 East Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz 95062. The fax number is 469-4371.