

Mayor vs. city manager

Battle of the budget looms

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Another battle is looming as the Watsonville City Council continues its review of the proposed city budget tonight.

Mayor Betty Murphy has said she is "distressed" over the way City Manager John Radin handled two particular items — a proposed park and the widening of Rodriguez Street — in his proposed budget for 1987-88.

Last week, during the council's first budget study session, council members were irked that Radin had failed to follow through on a council action taken last year.

The council had raised the city's hotel-motel room tax from 4 to 8 percent and specified the increased revenue would be set aside for social service programs.

When Radin prepared this year's budget, he used the entire revenue from the hotel tax to balance the city's general fund. Radin said that had he not used that money to balance the budget, he would have had to dip further into the sales-tax reserve fund, a fund he said is already getting dangerously low.

The first thing the council did last week was to reaffirm its decision about the hotel tax and

tell Radin to again set aside half the tax money for social service programs.

The council is likely to have a similar discussion over two other items in this year's budget.

Radin budgeted \$900,000 for the city to buy 52 acres near Salspuedes Creek for a park or golf course. The City Council has voted several times on that proposal, turning it down each time.

Murphy is angry that Radin included it in the budget.

"I figured he should have presumed from the vote that a park would not be contem-

plated," Murphy said this week.

Murphy is equally upset about the proposed reduction of funding for the widening of Rodriguez Street in the downtown redevelopment area.

During last year's budget review, the council voted to put \$500,000 of the city's revenue-sharing funds into the redevelopment fund, specifically for the reconstruction of Rodriguez Street. The widening of Rodriguez is considered essential if the city is to divert traffic from Main Street as part of redevelopment.

Despite last year's council action, Radin has proposed reducing the funding available for Rodriguez Street. This year's budget proposal shows only \$275,000 for Rodriguez Street.

"I felt this was settled," Murphy said, "but he can make his recommendations."

Murphy said that while the city manager can recommend anything he wants, she didn't think Radin should include items in the budget contrary to previous council action.

Radin declined to discuss the budget for the Rodriguez Street project. He said he didn't want to talk about it before it was reviewed by the council during the budget sessions.

Although the council has taken a stand on both the proposed park and the Rodriguez Street funding, it's possible the council will change its mind. Since those two items were decided on split votes, the votes of the two new councilmen — Dennis Osmer and Tony Campos — could change the outcome.

Nevertheless, it is clear the mayor will try to reaffirm prior council action on the park and Rodriguez Street, since she was in the majority of both council decisions and still feels strongly about the issues.

Tonight's budget study session is to begin at 7 at city hall. The council is scheduled to discuss the budgets of the planning and building departments, the library, the council itself, the city manager and several administrative departments.

Redevelopment and revenue sharing — the fund categories in which the park and Rodriguez Street fall — are not specifically listed on the council's budget review agenda, but could come up tonight. If not, the council will get to them during further budget sessions Monday and Tuesday.