

City Commended For 'Housing Element'

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Sentinel Staff Writer

The city's recently adopted "Housing Element for the General Plan" has been given unusual praise by the California Department of Housing and Community Development.

In a letter to the city's planning department, James Hicks Jr., chief of the state agency, saluted the city for having "one of the few good housing elements which were submitted to us."

Hicks said also, "It appears that much time, thought and effort have been expended in preparing this well-documented. All those who provided input should be commended."

The unusual praise was noted by Vice Mayor Bert Muhly at Tuesday's session of the city council. Muhly said that he is in a position to know, as a professional planner and as a professor of planning, how difficult it is for a small city such as Santa Cruz to win such recognition for its planning work.

"I hope the press will give this praise the very broad publicity it deserves," Muhly said. "I, for one, wish to commend our planning department highly."

City Planner Phil Jones has in the past given credit for the housing element to Associate Planner Steve Russell, the staff and interested members of the public.

Other business at the Tuesday council meeting included the following:

HUGHES - - The council accepted "with deep regrets," the recent resignation of Janet Hughes from the city planning commission.

Councilman Ernest Wicklund Jr. deplored loss of Hughes' services and called her resignation "a sorry reflection on the actions of the council that

caused it." He added: "She is one of the most conscientious, dedicated planning commissioners we have ever had."

Wicklund asserted that some of the council actions "give the lie to any representations we are interested in the people," and he concluded his tribute: "This resignation is a great loss to the city, a loss we will all have reason to regret having caused."

Muhly defended the council for recently overturning a planning commission approval of a cluster development for Goss Avenue and Elk Street, a council action that triggered the Hughes resignation. He called the resignation an "overreaction." He said the proposed housing would have been unusual in the neighborhood, that the council is accountable to the people, that the council actions on housing "are in no way as irresponsible as inferred." He predicted the planning commission will continue to get frustrations if the council continues to get recommendations that do not accord with needs and wishes of the city.

"I do not feel we are in a defensive position on this issue," Muhly said. "We were elected last April by people who felt we were dedicated to the proposition of not allowing commercialization of the neighborhoods. Mrs. Hughes campaigned vigorously for election to the council, also."

CLEANUP - - The council accused the Sentinel of having "overplayed" the recent mess left at Harvey West Clubhouse and Scout Room by celebrants of a 21st birthday.

Council member Sally DiGirolamo asserted: "The taxpayers don't have to pay for this, as the story said. The city goes after the people responsible for

the damage."

The city has not yet collected for the damages, the council was told by City Manager David Koester, but he indicated a bill will go to Sue McCarthy, who rented the facility.

At the time of the incident, the Sentinel was told by a city official "the taxpayers will have to pay for this because that's what happens and it's just not right."

SATURDAY MARKET - - The council referred spokesmen for the William James Association to the city off-street parking commission for information and possible action on an association request for space for a "Saturday Market" at which artisans and hobbyists could display and sell their wares on a regular weekly basis.

Albert Johnsen, a lecturer at Cowell College and a distinguished potter, told the council that this type of market has been highly successful in Eugene, Ore.

Specifically, the association wants to rent space on the top deck of one of the parking garages, and it wants a city commitment to the project to insure a full year's trial.

The council noted that the off-street garages are maintained by the people in the parking district, and that authority to rent space is lodged only with

Bomb

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) - A passenger discovered a 3½-pound time bomb rigged in a gasoline can aboard a bus two minutes before it was set to explode today, police reported.

the off-street parking commission.

ROUTES - - The council authorized City Manager David Koester to inform the state division of highways the city wants a proposed Route 100 left in state plans. The council did not go into the question of whether it ever really wants the so-called "beach loop" built, but Muhly recommended the city "keep our options on this open."

The council took no action on a state request for information on its wishes concerning another proposed route, Route 4, which would swing around the city.

The state has recently indicated a desire to drop plans for both routes.

SCRATCHED - - Council action on widening of Western Drive and possible purchase of a 4.5-acre site near Harvey West Park for a ballfield were held over for at least two weeks.

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