City Council OKs parking-fee hikes

SANTA CRUZ — Tourists and city residents will soon being paying more to park their cars in the downtown area, the wharf and along the beach roadways.

Councilmembers late Tuesday night increased fees to increase the city's revenues from approximately $463,000 for parking to more than $650,000.

Fees in the downtown area will go from five to 20 cents an hour to 10 to 25 cents. In the 10-cent zones, a bargain rate of three hours for a quarter will be offered.

A small group of wharf workers sat through the long evening's agenda to have their say about increases at the wharf.

Speaking for the workers, Ruth Porter said that during business hours, some employees will be unable to find open parking at 25-cent an hour meters and will be stuck with new meters at 50 cents an hour.

Other workers said they wouldn't be able to survive as workers if they had to pay the $4 a shift fo parking.

A representative from the wharf's businesses said the Seaside Co. that runs the boardwalk is providing a shuttle bus from town to the boardwalk and wharf on which workers can ride free.

Workers said that was all right, but pointed out it ran only on weekends.

Councilman Michael Rotkin said that if it turns out that workers cannot get to the 25-cent meters during weekdays, then the city should try to get the wharf businesses to run the shuttle bus for employees on weekedays.

In the beach areas, Councilwoman Mardi Wormhoudt was successful in getting the council to keep meters away from residences.

The council approved changing most of the wharf's meters to 50 cents an hour, approved the changes for downtown and are taking a look at where meters on the residential streets will be converted to 50 cents an hour. Present plans include 174 meters.

The council's action was unanimous.