

4-8-87

# Council gives final approval to Lighthouse Field park plan

By JOAN RAYMOND

Sentinel Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — After ten years of committees, public hearings and different proposals, City Council members Tuesday unanimously approved final plans for the Lighthouse Field State Beach project. The parkland covers the 33-acre field off West Cliff Drive and three acres on the beach side of the drive at Lighthouse Point.

Final park plans include a restroom, two beach stairways, four landscaped parking lots, an "observation area" at Steamer Lane surfing spot, a "native plant interpretative area" and some landscaping.

A majority of the members commented they weren't completely happy with the plan and saw it as a string of compromises.

"This isn't my favorite plan either, ... but I believe we ended up with something that reflected a wide number of concerns," commented Councilwoman Mardi Wormhoudt.

The plan will make minimal changes to the field, and Wormhoudt said "at least it preserves all op-

portunities" for future projects, such as a more-developed park.

The project will cost up to \$1 million.

Councilman Joe Ghio said he was "dismayed" by the final design. He cited a lack of picnic tables and lack of an improvement plan for Pelton Avenue — "one of the worst streets in the city."

He said designs basically leave the field as is, at a high cost to the city. The new parking lots will "merely formalize" parking areas that already exist, he said. The city's budget share is \$250,000.

Councilwoman Katy Sears-Williams was perturbed the dead trees on the field would not be removed.

The small ones will go, but the large ones won't, replied City Parks and Recreation Director Jim Lang.

"You mean the greatest eyesores will stay?" asked Sears-Williams.

"One person's eyesore is another person's piece of wood sculpture," replied Wormhoudt. Councilman Michael Rotkin added the fallen limbs were good for children to play on.

But he acknowledged "there are parts of the plan I don't like either."

Rotkin made a motion to make last-minute changes, but got no second.

Mayor Jane Weed concluded, "We should be celebrating this, rather than hanging all our heads low at all the compromises that have been made."

Council members also approved final plans to build a seawall along West Cliff Drive and to move the Drive away from the cliffs in two spots to control erosion and make way for parking areas. Cost is estimated at \$172,000.

In previous public hearings, a citizens' group had objected to any realignment of the drive, because they consider it to be a historic, scenic route along Monterey Bay.

But state officials argued it would be unwise to keep the road as it because of erosion.

A 1974 city ballot measure stopped the development of the field, where a convention center had been proposed as a city-county-private venture. Six years later the state bought the field from Teachers Management and Investment Co. for parkland for about \$6 million.