Some 150 persons attended Wednesday's concert.

6-21-84

Zayante dam, reservoir proposal fades

SANTA CRUZ — The importance of a proposed Zayante dam and reservoir — once one of the most explosive water issues for the city and San Lorenzo Valley — has faded due to other city water projects now being pursued.

The City Council Wednesday tentatively approved a capital improvements budget for the water department that emphasizes smaller projects over development of a dam at Zayante — a proposal, that was once considered to be the answer to the city's water needs of the future.

For the past few years, the council has been moving away from commitment to the dam project and Wednesday's commitment to a three-year $10.4 million capital improvement plan for smaller projects, considered to be more environmentallys-sound than the Zayante proposal, confirmed a lessening interest by the city in the Zayante dam proposal.

Smaller projects in this year's proposed $4.7 million water budget include additional surface water sources on the North Coast, groundwater sources in Live Oak wells, and potential groundwater sources in the San Lorenzo River basin close to downtown.

It is estimated the smaller projects will fill water needs for 20 years.

The city still has an applicatin on file with the state Water Resources Board for water rights for Zayante.

The city is first in line for water rights, said Mayor John Laird, followed by an application from the San Lorenzo Valley Water District.

The City Council recently asked for a one year's extension for the water rights application to keep it alive at least until results are completed from an ongoing study of north county water demands and supplies.

Laird said it will be "a major policy decision" later to decide how to protect the Zayante watershed should a large water district, such as the Santa Clara water district, decided to pursue future water rights at Zayante.

City staff will prepare a report comparing the Zayante proposal to the smaller projects.