

# Opinion

Sentinel Editorial

*Lighthouse Point*

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## More Data Needed

On the basis of the limited information presented at the Santa Cruz City Council meeting this week, it would seem that a great deal more information is required to finalize the proposed city-county-state agreement for the Lighthouse Field park.

On a three-to-three vote, the council delayed action on the proposal which is expected to be discussed again next week.

The preliminary proposal calls for the state to spend \$4.6 million to acquire the Lighthouse Field property along the West Cliff drive for inclusion in the state park system, depending on approval of joint plans with the city and the county.

Included in the property is a parcel now owned by the city which had been intended for use as a convention center before the voters rejected the plan by an overwhelming margin.

The plan calls for the county to participate in the project up to a limit of \$250,000 for development costs. The city would pick up the rest of the development costs as well as handling 75 per cent of the park operating and maintenance costs.

But during the discussion which apparently would put the city in the position of being the "lead agency," there were no cost estimates presented.

It was a highly unusual proposal.

Just what are the development costs?

Would there be a limit of \$500,000 to develop the park with the city and county sharing the cost jointly?

In these days of inflated costs, the sum of \$500,000 does not seem to be an especially high figure. In fact, we have serious doubts about just how far such an expenditure would go in terms of a 40-acre development.

But it does not yet appear to be clear as to whether

the park would be operated by the state as a state park or whether the project would be donated to the city for use as a city park or whether it would be a contractual arrangement with the city handling the operation for the state.

If so, would the personnel be state or city? If the city is expected to provide for "up to 75 per cent" of the maintenance costs, who provides the remaining 25 per cent or more?

Would there be a limit on the maintenance cost on an annual basis, say \$100,000 for starters?

We agree with the proponents of the plan that a park would be preferable to the present situation. We would have preferred the site to be used as a hotel and convention center, but the voters decided differently.

Thus, there is cause for continuing the negotiations in order to reach a reasonable conclusion.

But considering the amount of money involved and the uncertainties about the ultimate development, there is great need for a more detailed discussion of the entire project.

What kind of a park is planned?

Would it require extensive parking facilities and added street development?

What type of structures would be involved?

Would it be a year-round operation, requiring personnel to man the facilities on a daily and perhaps, nightly basis?

Would there be a charge for use of the park? If there would be fees involved, would they go to the state, the city or a joint fund? Would they be available for park maintenance?

The public deserves answers to these questions before the commitment of what now appears to be a blank check.