

PRO BASKETBALL IN SANTA CRUZ

# Warriors deal far from a slam dunk

Planning Commission weighs deal to bring D-League team to town

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SANTA CRUZ — The consideration of a special use permit for the Golden State Warriors to build a temporary pavilion in Santa Cruz was far from a slam dunk as city planning commissioners scrutinized the proposal Thursday.

The \$5.4 million project, which includes a 33,000-square-foot arena with nearly 3,000 seats in a Front Street parking lot between downtown and Main Beach, was discussed by commissioners, who were poised to vote late Thursday on whether to recommend the plan to the City Council.

The council is expected to take the commission's recommendation under consideration when reviewing the project Tuesday and voting on whether to welcome the Warriors' Development League team to town.

About 20 people lined up Thursday in the City

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Council Chamber to offer opinions on the deal. Public comments were evenly divided.

Beach Hill residents, who live within walking distance of the location, voiced concerns largely associated with traffic, noise and fans parking in their neighborhood.

The Warriors D-league team proposed in April moving from North Dakota to Santa Cruz. The city and NBA team would become partners in which the city would loan the basketball team \$4 million from its trust fund for construction.

The Warriors would pay \$1.2 million in capital and equipment costs in addition to loan and rent payments to the city, totaling at least \$2.28 million for the 7-year contract period.

The team has already opened a store with merchandise on Pacific Avenue, which some residents said was presumptuous.

The city would use the temporary pavilion for performing arts, community sports and conventions in basketball's offseason. UC Santa Cruz and the Santa Cruz Roller Derby Girls were mentioned as two groups that have interest in the arena, city planning officials said.

Beach Hill resident Don Webber, president of the neighborhood association, voiced concerns with parking and noise not only by basketball fans but also by those who use the pavilion when basketball is over.

"There will be endless numbers of people looking for parking driving around our neighborhood. Endless," Webber said. "We're acutely aware of the potential negative impacts."

Alex Khoury of the Santa

Cruz Planning Department told commissioners the project would be "desirable" for Santa Cruz, saying there is enough parking within walking distance and expected noise levels during game days is within the allowable limit set in the city's general plan.

The police department's deputy chief, Steve Clark, told commissioners he had done his own research by calling other cities with minor league basketball teams, and found there were no substantial issues that can't be addressed with crowd and traffic management by officers.

Clark said Santa Cruz officers are well trained to handle large crowds, citing the free Friday night concerts the Boardwalk holds in the summer.

"This doesn't throw us a curveball," he said. "The city of Santa Cruz is no stranger to large crowds. I have no interest in bringing in an event to the city that will create negative impacts."

The proposed site is a parking lot with 157 spaces owned by the Santa Cruz Seaside Co., which uses the lot for its Boardwalk employees to park in the summer.

On Thursday, city officials were still negotiating a lease deal with company officials.

City Manager Martin Bernal said the lease should be finalized by today. The city would allow Boardwalk employees to park on the third and second floors of the public parking garage at Front and River streets and pay for the Santa Cruz Seaside Co. to provide more shuttles between the parking garage and amusement park.

There would be no financial payment for use of the parking lot, Bernal said.

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