

Santa Cruz Council wrap-up

3-24-88

✓ ~~Trees~~ Stinky ginkgo will get the ax

SANTA CRUZ — A street vendor whose location on the Pacific Garden Mall was plagued by the stinky droppings from a nearby ginkgo tree won an appeal before the city council Tuesday night and succeeded in having the tree replaced.

Mature female ginkgo trees produce quantities of large berry-type fruit that smell something like dog droppings. Carlton Hegi, who owns a hot dog and snack vending business on the corner of the Pacific Garden Mall and Walnut Avenue, told the council he has been fighting a losing battle with the nearby ginkgo for several years, as the maturing tree produces larger and larger quantities of offensive fruit.

Hegi brought along a sample of the fruit in a bottle to illustrate his point.

"I've tried to be humorous about it," Hegi told the council. But during the four or five months a year that the tree bears fruit, he has to deal with smell, flies, constant cleaning and turned-off customers. The slippery berries with their round pits are also a hazard to pedestrians on the Mall, Hegi said.

Hegi first took his complaint to the city Parks and Recreation Commission, and offered to contribute \$150

to the cost of replacing the tree. The commission estimated that the replacement cost would come to \$1,600, including the cost of tearing out a brick planter, and agreed to replace the tree if Hegi paid half the cost. Hegi refused.

"I didn't make the mistake of planting a tree that would grow these berries," Hegi said. "I made an offer to pay \$150 to show good faith ... but I don't think any business should have to pay for this."

The council agreed unanimously with Hegi, and voted to replace the tree before it begins bearing fruit this year. The council also agreed to accept Hegi's \$150 contribution.