

Move Continues For Cooperative Boulder Creek Theater Purchase

The Santa Cruz Mountain Community Theater group, pushing to buy the Boulder Creek Theater for community use, has approached the Boulder Creek Recreation District for help. The community theater

group has asked the recreation district board for help in meeting the final \$27,000 payment due Feb. 21.

In exchange, the recreation district could have use of the theater during the day for such events as dance classes and other functions, Barbara Day, program administrator for the recreation district, said.

She also suggested that the Valley Players, a local drama

group, could use the theater for performances and be sponsored by the district.

No decision has been made, however, as the recreation district directors investigate the question: Can a public agency like the recreation district use public funds to help out a private, non-profit organization?

A gift of public funds is prohibited by the constitution, Assistant County Counsel John Wittwer said. This has been interpreted to mean that a public agency can give public funds for a public purpose, he said.

The recreation district giving public monies in order to use the theater for its events has a decent chance of being legal, Wittwer added.

He suggested that the district either lease the building for its activities or get some interest in the property as being a better approach. In this manner, there would be no question about its legality, Wittwer said.

Lane Liroff, attorney and member of the board of the community theater group, said the group doesn't want to name

any specific figure it desires from the recreation district because this might sway the vote of the directors against the cooperative effort.

"I feel the goals of the community theater and of the recreation district are mutual," Liroff said. "They run parallel in that we're trying to improve recreational facilities in the San Lorenzo Valley or Boulder Creek area.

"It was our attempt to see if they would like to assist us with a grant to reach our goal in purchasing the theater."

Liroff said there should be no fear that the recreation district would give the money and then the community theater would not be able to meet its financial obligations.

He said the theater group wouldn't request the money until it was near close of escrow and all the recreation district funds would do was bring the community theater to the point of making the escrow payment.

Once the escrow payment is met, the community theater group should have no problem meeting its monthly mortgage payments because the rent from the two offices at the theater should pay for the mortgage, Liroff added.

The total cost of the theater is \$190,000. The escrow payment of \$10,000 due Dec. 21 has been nearly taken care of through donations and benefit concerts, but the Feb. 21 payment looms ahead.

Garden Of Eden In SC County

A project to bring a bit of the Garden of Eden to Santa Cruz County has been proposed to the county Parks Department by Clay Olson, a resident of Santa Cruz.

Olson said his project would need the cooperation of county

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