

Proposition 13

11/15/82

Su Furl

Water commissioners, Laird air differences

By PAUL BEATTY
Sentinel Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — City water commissioners and Councilman John Laird quietly aired their differences over the latter Proposition 13 at the commission's early meeting this morning.

The differences began on Oct. 18 when the commission took a stand against the proposition, the water initiative on the Nov. 2 ballot, not knowing the council had earlier supported it.

Councilmembers at their Oct. 26 meeting took the commission to task for its presumption.

Laird also took them to task for opposing the water conservation initiative.

The issue escalated last week when Laird said he wanted to review two of the commission seats that are up for re-appointment.

The seats are held by Commissioners R. Frank Thomas and Don Haile, and both men have agreed to serve a second term. Usually, the term would be granted automatically.

Haile was absent when the commission voted on Proposition 13, but this morning said he would have also voted against it.

The proposition would have required conservation plans in use before major water transfers would be allowed.

Most water districts and other water purveyors opposed the in-

itiative because it transferred more authority to the state.

Conservationists and environmentalists supported it as did Laird.

Commissioner Michael Freitas said, "I felt it was completely within the realm of the commission (and) I don't think there was any reason to be attacked by council or councilmembers."

He said the commission was never made aware of the council's support of the initiative that was expressed in the spring.

Haile said he agreed with Councilman Spiro Mellis' admonition that the council should have submitted the initiative to the commission before the council took action.

Haile and Freitas said they agreed the commission should have "free rein" to express their opinions on water issues.

Laird said he felt the timing of the commission's action was "most political" coming as it did just prior to the Nov. 2 election.

At the time he decided to take a second look at the re-appointments to the commission, Laird also said he was disturbed that the commission supported moving along on the Zayante Dam project, a direction that Laird resists.

The Zayante Dam was not discussed this morning, nor was Laird's review of the appointments.

While the commission had to suffer a reprimand, it did come out on the winning side of the issue of Proposition 13. It lost.