

# ✓ Homeless Campground advocates vow to fight

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SANTA CRUZ — Supporters of a campground for the homeless vowed to continue fighting despite a City Council vote rejecting their plans.

They blasted Mayor Mardi Wormhoudt and council members John Laird and Jane Yokoyama for opposing the campground, announced a fast by homeless activist Sandra Loranger and said they would continue to work for a campground.

"There was never any serious intent to look at the proposal as a viable possibility," said Sherry Conable, coordinator of the Coalition for a Safe Place to Sleep, which wants to establish a campground behind the River Street homeless shelter. "I think that represents the feeling of May-

or Wormhoudt, Mr. Laird and Ms. Yokoyama."

Conable on Friday charged that officials "stonewalled" the project.

Standing outside City Hall, coalition members said they were not consulted by city staff about the campground and that council members never intended to consider the proposal.

By opposing the campground, the three progressive council members broke ranks with the Santa Cruz Action Network, which voted almost unanimously Sunday to support the plan. SCAN arose out of Wormhoudt and Laird's first elections to the council and has since backed progressive candidates and causes.

Don Lane and Katherine Beiers cast the council's two "yes" votes.

Several members of the council ex-

pressed concern about the project from the beginning, Wormhoudt said Friday, adding that a city staff report also raised serious concerns.

"None of the testimony addressed the staff report," she said. "There was no attempt to address the practical problems that were raised."

Minutes after voting down the campground project, the City Council unanimously approved two other programs designed to aid those without shelter.

One proposal would support a temporary motel-voucher program for about 15 families. The other calls for city staff to work with the county to come up with a proposal to build transitional housing for 50 to 100 people.

Transitional housing will be expensive and will take time to build, said Margaret

Marr, a member of the coalition.

According to Marr, the temporary voucher program also has problems.

"What do we say when the 30 days are over?" she said.

In protest of the council's action, Loranger, a homeless activist who went to jail last year after she refused probation for serving soup at the Town Clock without the necessary health permit, said she has begun a fast.

She said she will continue to fast until "there is a moratorium on ticketing homeless sleepers in Santa Cruz and until they are provided with safe and legal options."

The options must be negotiated with the homeless, and a civilian police commission must be established, she said.

According to Conable, the fight for homeless facilities is far from over.

Conable pledged the coalition will approach the council again when new members are elected in November.

She also said there is talk about a "sleep-in" protest in the city and plans to continue looking at other possible locations for homeless projects.

One possible site is by Beulah Park near Scotts Valley, Conable said.

As members of Coalition for a Safe Place to Sleep discussed their plans, homeless activist Jane Imler watched nearby.

A leader in the homeless rights movement, Imler was banned from attending a coalition meeting on Thursday.

Conable said Imler and Robert Norse, another activist, have never been a part of the coalition's work. Norse has also been barred from attending coalition meetings.