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Capitola City Council approves erosion project

CAPITOLA — The city will soon be looking into an innovative erosion control project that involves the use of synthetic seaweed for shoreline protection.

The City Council Thursday night unanimously approved direction to City Manager Steve Burrell to further investigate the use of "Seascape" — the synthetic seaweed manufactured by the DuPont Co.

The system was recently installed by the city of Long Beach and has successfully been used in both Cape Hatteras, N.C. and along the Great Lakes.

The city is looking at the synthetic seaweed for protection around its bluffs, particularly along Grand Avenue in the Depot Hill area. Last March, a 100-foot-long by 12-foot swath of Grand Avenue fell away, prompting the city to close a portion of the street.

According to Burrell, the system could possibly be installed from the eastside of the main beach around the bluffs to New Brighton State Beach for less than \$250,000. Rock rip-rap protection would cost 10 times more.

The concept is "extremely simple," said Burrell. It involves the use of a fabric bag that floats. Synthetic seaweed streamers hang down to slow down sand that is being washed away, allowing the sand to drop to the ocean floor.

"The results of the sand dropping to the ocean floor are over a period of time a beach would build up that would serve to protect the bluffs from

the scouring action," said Burrell.

The system acts somewhat like an "underwater snow fence," in that it traps sand offshore in much the same manner that snow fences trap snow except this method forms a reef.

Burrell's study will not only investigate whether the system would work in Capitola, but also what permits would be required, possible funding sources and contributions property owners might make.

In other business, councilmen denied two requests to place advertising banners on 41st Avenue. The requests were from the Santa Cruz County Fair Board to advertise the fair and one involving the Shakespeare/Santa Cruz Festival.

Other business included:

PLANNING DIRECTOR — A resolution of appreciation was passed for Planning Director Dick Steele, who will be leaving the city next week after more than four years.

Steele will become project manager for the engineering and planning firm of George Nolte and Associates in San Jose, which specializes in industrial development.

SENIORS COUNCIL — Councilmen reappointed former Councilman Bob Garcia as its representative to the Seniors Council Advisory Board. It will be a two-year term.

MOBILE HOME BOARD — A vacancy exists for a public member on the city's Mobile Home Rent Review Board. Persons may apply at City Hall.