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UCSC - Research Park

Council asks for UC meeting

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SANTA CRUZ — Getting no satisfaction from UCSC Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer, the City Council Tuesday called a meeting with UC President David Gardner over plans for a campus high technology research and manufacturing center.

The council, prompted by a group called Citizens For University Responsibility, voted 5-0 to invite Gardner to a public hearing Feb. 22 on Measure A during Gardner's visit to campus.

On the recommendation of Councilwoman Mardi Wormhoudt, Mayor John Laird will explain to Gardner "the context of Measure A, its history and why people are so concerned."

The council also instructed the city manager to prepare reports "that may be helpful to Gardner in understanding the city's concerns" over the public costs and projected impacts of the project.

The city wants planning power over the project,

although the on-campus site is under the jurisdiction of the state.

By a 72 percent majority, voters in November passed Measure A to ask for city veto power over the project.

Sinsheimer has refused to grant the city such power, but has agreed "to proceed in good faith to work with the city."

The council directed Laird to meet with Gardner the day after the public hearing "in a smaller, more intimate situation" for further discussion.

The site of the project is 100 acres behind Crown College. Plans call for 500,000 square feet of building space to be leased to various high-tech firms in computer, bio-engineering, scientific instrumentation and electronics equipment fields.

Over a 10-year period a projected 2,000 jobs would be produced, triggering an estimated population increase of 1,050 to 2,580 persons.

University administrators have said 60 percent of the project must be devoted to manufacturing in order for the project to turn a profit.

Plans showed a \$16 to \$19 million profit from the project by the end of the century, but project critics, including faculty, say the profit estimates are off by as much as \$15 million.

There are unanswered legal questions:

- How much clout does Measure A carry, considering the campus is out of the jurisdiction of the city?

- How binding are contracts signed by city and county officials to build roads and sewer lines to the university? The agreements were made when the university first came to town in the mid-1960s.

In December, Laird asked Sinsheimer to sign an agreement with the city "not to proceed with any project" until the council approves it.

Last week, Sinsheimer said he would not sign.