

# City Assures Musicians No Troubles On Mall

1-25-78

Street musicians won't be roused off the Pacific Avenue Mall if they abide by the same rules and regulations all other citizens and visitors are expected to honor.

That assurance was given by the Santa Cruz City Council Tuesday to a big audience of musicians and their supporters following a long hearing at city hall on problems now faced by the musicians in plying their arts for the public.

During the hearing, the council accepted a petition signed by more than 4,000 persons urging council support for the musicians. The signatures were collected on the mall by the Coalition for Street Performers of Santa Cruz.

Steve Bennett told the council that of 138 businesses along the mall which had been approached for petition signing, 89 had signed.

Bennett drew long applause after he said: "The coalition wants a clear, strong policy of support for street musicians on the mall because they are an asset to the community."

Numerous speakers came to the lectern to plead the case for the musicians and other street performers.

Jim Ryan, a poet, told the council: "I came here in 1975 to your poetry festival, which was the largest in the nation."

Ryan said you can get a police citation for reading poetry on the mall, and then he read one of his works, "Street Poet Blues," that details satirically some societal attitudes concerning street poets.

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# Council Calms Mall Musicians

FROM PAGE 1

Councilman Bert Muhly broke into the public commentary to state his puzzlement over the concerns being expressed by the musicians and their supporters.

There was nothing before the council, he announced, that would alter the current status of musicians on the mall. Muhly and Councilwoman Carole DePalma stressed their belief the musicians and other street performers are a welcome and valuable addition to the mall.

Actually, the council was merely to get a briefing on mall conditions since its action last year on a petition from another citizens group for more police coverage on the mall.

But the musicians and their supporters were apparently confused by a long list of "recommendations" in a report by Police Chief Geno Pini that was given to the council last November.

These recommendations were intended to provide the council with a broad range of options to choose from to handle behavioral problems being complained about by Citizens Worried About Downtown.

One option related to musicians was that of prohibiting musicians. Others included limiting musicians to selected blocks, letting them stay but prohibiting "open case" solicitation of money, letting them play and get donations at certain locations, and closing the mall block between Locust Street and the plaza during weekdays to allow nonbusiness mall activities such as street performances.

Muhly stressed that the council had chosen not to take any of the actions on the musicians under the varied options presented.

But the speakers continued to come forward, men and women of all ages, not one of them

opposing musicians or street performers on the mall in any way.

Vicki Carter said she was not old enough to play in bars, that she is not a beatnik and that she gets only a little money. Dorothy Garmo, a writer, said "music has been a great contribution to the mall. By no means do the musicians create hostility."

Lee Wilson saluted Mayor Joseph Ghio as his former 10th grade typing teacher, then said he never expected to be a musician but that he liked the guitar and so he played on the street, that he was not begging but just playing, and that the music "makes other people feel good, too."

Max Walden, Cooperhouse developer, told the council: "Street musicians are an absolute necessity to maintain the commerce we have. Any attempt to regulate the musicians will hurt." And Walden again urged the council to clean up the mall trash and dirt, maintain the plantings and give the police instruction in public relations.

Muhly warned the musicians it is their mall, too, that they "are your brother's keeper" and they should help to maintain the mall as a pleasant place to be.

DePalma said flatly that the petition presented last year by Citizens Worried About Downtown did not ask for any action against street musicians.

And after Ghio had said there would be no council action on musicians, Bennett got the microphone again and as spokesman for the musicians pledged to cooperate with the city to the degree possible to keep the mall a pleasant place.

By BILL NEUBAUER

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