

Ban on Capitola street vendors due after summer, council decides

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CAPITOLA — Street vendors, hawking such food as ice cream and popcorn, may not be around Capitola after this summer, the City Council decided Thursday night.

The council voted 3-2 to allow street vendors to operate in the village this summer. But, they also directed City Attorney Richard Manning to return in August with an ordinance prohibiting future street vending licenses in the city.

Council members Dennis Beltram and Stephanie Harlan voted against the action, with Mayor Michael Routh and Councilmen Bob Bucher and Jerry Clarke sup-

porting it.

Beltram and Harlan maintained street vendors "added to the flavor" of the city and provided a service to beach-goers. Beltram argued the city hasn't received complaints and that the council shouldn't do away with vendors "in expectation that there's going to be problems."

The council majority, however, expressed concern over that same "flavor." They said the village is maturing and that street vendors shouldn't be selling the same food that can be bought in stores.

Routh was concerned about the "subjectiveness" of the present street vending ordinance.

Of two street vendors which have ap-

plied for this summer — Chinese bun sales and a mobile taco stand — Routh noted, "How is a Chinese bun cart and a taco cart going to pass each other on a sidewalk?" Clarke joked, "There could be an international conflict."

However, Beltram maintained that if two carts passing each other on a sidewalk was the biggest problem the city had, Capitola was in pretty good shape.

City Manager Steve Burrell last month had recommended the existing street vending ordinance be dropped due to excessive staff time required to approve so few permits. In the past year, at least 25 inquiries about permits came into the city, but only one vendor actually followed through and received one.

The council majority's decision only calls for an ordinance prohibiting street vending to return in August. If sentiment remains the same, however, this will be the last summer of roving vendors along the Esplanade.