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# Dredging dominates Port District forum

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SANTA CRUZ — The Seabright Neighborhood Association says it would like to see those who run the Santa Cruz Yacht Harbor be more responsive to residents and boat owners.

At a candidates forum Monday at the Santa Cruz Yacht Club, nine of 10 men running for three seats on the five-member Port District Commission, were sounded on the issues close to boat-owners hearts.

The nine candidates present at the forum hosted by 37 members of the Seabright neighborhood, each were given two minutes to make campaign statements. The floor was then opened up to questions.

The key issue for boaters was — who among the candidates would pledge himself to find a way to keep the yacht harbor open year round?

The key issue for residents was — who would take let them take an active part in decisions concerning the yacht harbor?

Boat owners listened attentively as the candidates each gave an impromptu response to the feasibility of a year-round harbor.

Since the Santa Cruz Yacht Harbor is closed four months of the year during annual dredging operations, boaters appeared anxious to see if candidates had any ideas on how to eliminate this problem.

All the candidates agreed with boat owners that they would like the harbor to be open year-round. Some suggested the Port District buy its own dredge. Incumbents Joe Townsend and Jack Meehan were reluctant.

Individual responses were:

Gary Fredrick — said he would like to see the Port District "have our own dredge and a good tug to move it around."

Oswald Lake — said the district would "not come up with a 100 percent solution," but that it should follow what is "most economical and feasible."

Clive Ridpath — said the problem is "not unique to Santa Cruz," and that "the Army Corps of Engineers takes care of the channel."

Jack Keran — said he concurred with Gary Fredrick, that the port has had "an inadequate dredge in the past" and that if the harbor was in control of dredging, "we could keep it open longer."

Tom Carter — said the district needs to "have our own equipment," adding "it's no comfort to me that the money (to dredge the harbor) is coming from the federal government. We contribute to that too."

Dan Page — suggested that the purchase of dredging equipment was "three to five years away."

Joe Townsend — said "the commission hasn't been sitting still on this. The (Army) Corps of Engineers' goal is four dredgings a year, not two. It's been suggested we get into the dredging busi-

ness and relieve the federal government of maintaining a federal channel."

Jack Meehan — said he agreed with Townsend.

Residents of the yacht harbor neighborhood asked commission candidates how they could participate more actively in decisions concerning their neighborhood.

They complained that they were tired of reacting to decisions after the fact.

Candidates, for the most part, said they welcomed input from residents concerning the issues facing the commission.

President of the Seabright Neighborhood Association, Mary Anne Canepa, asked how communication between residents and commission members could be improved.

Incumbent Jack Meehan responded, "read the paper." Clive Ridpath, a candidate who says he has attended every meeting of the commission for the past eight years, said he never had any trouble remembering when the monthly meeting was held.

Other candidates responded that an agenda should be given to the neighborhood association prior to each meeting.

The motel issue was brought up briefly during the forum.

Although the formal presentation for the development will not be given to the commission until Oct. 25, news of the proposed development has spread through the community.

Residents who border Lake Drive are most concerned with the development. However, they have not organized a neighborhood association like residents of the Seabright area on the west side of the harbor.

The Lake Drive residents on the east side of the harbor fear a motel or hotel development will cut off harbor views.

Rachmat Martin of Marine Electronics, one of the businesses along the east side of the harbor that would be moved if the motel idea were approved by the commission, spoke for preserving the buildings. He said he had been on the site for 13 years, adding "some people think the older buildings on the east side set the tone or flavor of the harbor."

Joe Townsend had called these buildings "nonproductive and con-conforming."

Following the meeting, Canepa said residents are determined to spur commission members to be more responsive to all concerned with boating in the harbor and who live in the neighborhood.

"In our dealings with the commission — they have listened to our concerns — agreed to deal with them — and then very little action was taken. They have been responsive in a slow, insensitive manner."

She said she did not want to "create heat between the commission and the neighborhood association," but added that the association wants to see the commission work publicly, rather than privately in solving what she called the "highly technical problems" facing the harbor.