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4-23-69

# Proposed Mall Gets Preliminary Approval

The Pacific Garden Mall—designed to turn Santa Cruz' main street from the Post Office Plaza Cathcart Street into a garden lot—rolled easily past its first y hall obstacle Tuesday night.

City councilmen agreed unanimously to give preliminary approval to mall plans and call for bids for its construction. A public hearing on the project is slated May 27.

Architect Kermit Darrow made the mall's presentation, pointing out features of the proposed project on a 15-foot-long map.

Public Works Director Bill Fieberling reported mall backers face a tough scheduling problem in getting the work done in time. The mall must be finished this year, or it is feared inflation will push its price past the \$100 per foot maximum agreed to by Pacific Avenue property owners.

If that happens, the project may be torpedoed for all time, since recirculating the petitions could be a monumental task.

But if the mall is started this year, it will have to be finished before Thanksgiving to spare merchants a vast loss in Christmas shopping revenue. That means construction will have to begin in June.

Fieberling estimated the project's cost at \$337,489, plus an additional \$29,000 contribution from the city.

Mall Committee Chairman Ken Wenzel said, "We've been studying means of revitalizing downtown for three years. In our opinion, this is the best way to do it. The mall is not the total answer, but we're already working on others."

Other items to come before the council included:

**DAMAGE CLAIMS**—The city denied six separate \$5000 claims filed by residents of Green Valley Road in the Scotts Valley area. The landowners claimed improper grading of the city's Sky Park Airport had resulted in erosion damage to their property.

Councilman Ernest Wicklund said he had examined the area and did not see how the damage could possibly have resulted from the airport construction.

**ZONE CHANGE**—Councilmen turned thumbs down on a request by Dr. Stanley Monteith to rezone property on the Hanover Street cul-de-sac to allow construction of medical offices

near Community Hospital. In doing so, the council upheld a previous decision by the city planning commission that the office use would be in conflict with the surrounding residential area.

**EAST SIDE PARK**—Architect Ed Wood presented plans for improvement of a traffic island at the intersection of Soquel Avenue and Water Street. The island is the former site of the east side branch library.

Wood's plan would turn the area into a small park centered by a 25-foot-diameter fountain. The East Side Businessmen's Association has requested the city to perform the improvement.

Wood estimated the cost of the project at \$12,000, and Councilman Samuel Leask recommended the city attempt to work the price into the next fiscal year budget.

**HELICOPTERS**—Councilmen still like the plans of John Moore of Aptos to offer heli-

copter rides to summer visitors to Santa Cruz. But the landing pad site picked by Moore—on city owned property on San Lorenzo Boulevard near the Riverside bridge—is out.

The city received a petition signed by 40 residents of the area protesting the operation. Councilmen suggested Moore might be able to use the site of the proposed convention center temporarily. The city staff will investigate the new site.

**PRICE HASSLE**—City Manager Dave Koester said the city and county are still \$20,000 apart on a price agreement for the old courthouse on Pacific Avenue. The city wants the site as a park adjunct to the Pacific Garden Mall, but not at the price the county is asking—\$90,000.

Koester suggested an independent appraisal of the building and site, and the council agreed to pay half the \$500 cost.

**COURT FIGHT**—The city

voted to donate up to \$100 to fight a court battle whose outcome, according to City Attorney Rod Atchison, could "do away with the whole concept of home rule" for cities.

A court decision has held that any city employee working on a municipal construction project must be paid at the same rate as private contractor workers employed on the project. San Jose now is leading the fight against the decision in the state appellate court, and the Santa Cruz donation would join that of other cities in meeting the cost of filing the brief.

Koester called the court decision "an extremely revolutionary concept."

**WATER STREET**—The city approved a \$30,000 project to widen Water Street in a block-long sector between May and Market Streets. The work would eliminate a narrow bottleneck on the much traveled Water Street thoroughfare.