

DeLaveaga Course Fees In 16.9 Per Cent Hike

The basic fees at DeLaveaga Golf Course were boosted 16.9 per cent and the cost of annual passes was increased by 30 per cent by order of the Santa Cruz City Council Tuesday.

The council also ordered termination of all free passes.

Then in a related action urged by Mayor Joseph Ghio to give the council a stronger control over the municipal course, the council changed the procedure by which members are appointed to the golf course committee.

The actions followed debate of more than an hour on golf course finances, the contract with the concessionaire, the philosophy of having a golf course, whether the course is subsidized or otherwise, and the ethics of allowing only 276 pass holders play some 26,000 of the 68,075 rounds logged totally for the year 1975-76, the last year for which there is a complete record of actual usage.

Council members Carole DePalma and Bert Muhly voted against the new rate structure,

while Ghio, Larry Edler, Jim Hammond, Charlotte Melville and John Mahaney voted for it.

DePalma and Muhly wanted to delay action on the package for another round of study of issues they raised.

DePalma said she found it "incredible" that the concessionaire is only making around \$21,000 to \$22,000 a year, as reported by the city staff.

Throughout the discussion Muhly kept referring to a city "subsidy" of the golf course and he said: "The whole operation should be subject to an in-depth review by the council before determining what rate should be charged."

Muhly termed it "absolutely frightening" that the golf course is approaching maximum capacity (he set it at 75,000 rounds annually) and yet rates have "to be raised some more. He doubted, too, that the concessionaire is making only the amount asserted by staff.

Al Tosta of the golf course committee told the council under questioning by Edler that if the city were to use revenue sharing funds to pay off the debt on the course then the course would return about \$80,000 a year on the investment. Tosta pointed out the big problem at the golf course is that from proceeds a return of principal and payment of some interest on the bonded debt is charged to operations.

Melville took sharp exception to some of Muhly's and DePalma's statements on the golf course and the claim the city is subsidizing the course and the players.

"The golf course was never intended to make money but to provide recreation," Melville said. "We don't count the number of people who use the tennis courts, the number of swimmers in our pool and ask these facilities to make money. I don't use the pools and I don't play tennis, and I don't play golf. My exercise is calisthenics. But I don't see why the golf course must meet all your parameters about costs but no other recreational facility in the city is expected to."

Muhly said he agrees with Tosta there is no way the golf course can ever pay off and he said he thinks the course is a good investment and a fine asset for the city.

Edler finally got the successful motion through by saying the longer the raise is delayed, the more money the city will lose.

Discounts on senior citizen and student golf rounds will be given under the agreement approved.

