

Nine Charter Changes On SC Ballot Nov. 4

Nine Santa Cruz City Charter amendments will go to the municipality's 29,768 registered voters Nov. 4 with the endorsement of the Santa Cruz City Council.

No arguments against the measures have been presented to the city clerk to counter arguments favoring them, all of which have been signed by Mayor Joseph Ghio on behalf of the council.

Most of the amendments are said to be "housekeeping" changes to eliminate sexist or obsolete terms or requirements. But three measures will affect the membership of various city boards, commissions and committees as follows, according to summaries prepared by the City clerk's office:

MEASURE B - This amendment allows the City Council to appoint alternate members to city boards and commissions. Alternate members would serve in place of regular members who are absent or who disqualify themselves because of a conflict of interest.

The City Council argument asserts: "In some instances, city boards and commissions must conduct business with less than a full contingent of members for extended periods of time due primarily to long, excused absences of members. This proposal allows the commissions to function more effectively by having a full component of members."

MEASURE D - This measure would allow the City Council to increase the number of members of any board or commission established pursuant to the Charter by ordinance.

The City Council argument asserts: "Many of the boards and commissions enumerated in the City Charter have experienced a significant increase in work since the Charter was adopted in 1948. This increased workload prompted the city Planning Commission to request this amendment. In addition to handling a greater amount of items, members of the Planning Commission serve on the Zoning Board on a rotating basis."

"The intent of this measure is to ease the workload of volunteer members of city boards and commissions so that the city can attract and retain qualified persons for advisory bodies. It allows the City Council to act quickly to meet the rapidly changing conditions."

MEASURE G - The City Charter states that the water director serves as a voting member of the Water Commission. This amendment would remove the water director as a voting member of the commission and put another public member on the commission.

The City Council argument asserts:

"These changes are needed for the following reasons:

"1. All other boards and commissions do not have staff persons serving as voting members. This revision would make the role of the Water Commission's staff consistent with the staff function for other

city boards and commissions.

"2. The water director is placed in an awkward position. The director is responsible for submitting staff reports on major water use issues to the Water Commission for its consideration. As a member of the commission, he or she is then required to vote on his or her own recommendations. This measure would remove the conflict that currently exists in the role of the water director.

"3. Members of the Water Commission are required to live in the city of Santa Cruz. However, since the water director serves as an automatic member of the commission it is possible that he or she may not live within the city limits. This is inconsistent with the intent of this section of the charter."

The other charter amendments proposed are as follows:

MEASURE A - The amendment would remove references to gender in Section 808 of Article VIII of the charter. No other changes would be made.

MEASURE C - The amendment would update Article X, Section 1006 of the charter by making the following changes: (a) references to gender would be eliminated, (b) a provision which states that a commission may close a meeting to the public if it determines that such an action would serve the public interest would be deleted, and (c) the mayor, instead of the city manager, would be designated to call the first meeting of any new board or commission.

MEASURE E - The amendment would revise Section 1011 of Article X of the charter to delete a requirement for an active council liaison with the Planning Commission and deletes requirements for the city engineer and city attorney to attend Planning Commission meetings.

MEASURE F - The amendment would officially change the name of the city Recreation Commission to the generally accepted name of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

MEASURE H - The amendment would revise Section 1607 of Article XVI of the charter to change the date of the annual organizational meeting for the city Board of Education from the first regular meeting in July to the first regular meeting in December.

The change is proposed because by state law Board of Education elections have been rescheduled to November and the board now elects its officers in December.

MEASURE I - The amendment would repeal Section 1004 of Article X and Section 1611 of Article XVI, which relate solely to matters that were relevant in 1948 and 1965 but which have been made obsolete.

The matters are concerned with the first terms of the first boards and commissions of the city and with the first election of the Board of Education in 1948 and 1965, respectively.