

Chancellor officially shuns Measure A

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SANTA CRUZ — UCSC Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer has agreed to everything except what the city really wants in the fight over a proposed campus electronics research and manufacturing project.

In a politely-worded letter hand-delivered to Mayor John Laird Thursday, Sinsheimer rejected Laird's proposal to give the city planning power over the project.

The chancellor wrote, "I do not believe that the president or Regents of the University would agree" with Laird's request.

"Nor do I," said Sinsheimer.

However, the chancellor said "all of us desire" to go along with the

city's request that the university submit all project plans for review and initiate any necessary annexation procedures.

"This will keep the ongoing review of the project in our local community until all the issues are known and a final scope is determined," he said.

Laird today reacted to the chancellor's letter by saying Sinsheimer is proposing nothing more than allowing the city to "talk about the project."

"I'm not surprised, but I'm disappointed," said Laird. "The (chancellor's) proposal is clearly outside the mandate of Measure A, in which 72 percent of city voters said, 'if we're going to pay a multi-million dollar pricetag for a quasi-private project, then we should have a say in the project.'"

It was Measure A that triggered the mayor's proposal to Sinsheimer.

Measure A, an initiative that handily passed on Nov. 8, was a statement by voters that they wanted the city to maintain veto power over the project, one of the biggest development projects proposed in the history of the county.

In December, Laird asked Sinsheimer to agree to Measure A.

Thursday's reply was the chancellor's first official response. "I am sorry to be so long in my reply," he said, "but this subject is one which is of great interest to the university as well as to the city."

Measure A supporters maintain the project, with a projected 2,000 new jobs, would have a tremendous im-

pact on city services, such as roads, sewers and housing.

But critics of Measure A say the voters' voice had no real legal tone, since the campus is under the jurisdiction of the state, not the city.

"We seem to be faced with a situation where both parties need and deserve to cooperate in the planning and review of this potential development, but also with the need to preserve, on our part, the ability to determine the academic policy of the University," Sinsheimer wrote to Laird.

Critics of the project say it's not an academic pursuit, since manufacturing by private industry has been proposed.

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Sinsheimer suggested an informal meeting "to see if we can mutually agree on the principles for proceeding in a mutually-satisfactory fashion, and then draft a memorandum of understanding for consideration."

Sinsheimer added the campus "does intend to proceed in good faith to work with the city."

Laird said he hasn't "totally given up on the chancellor, but his response just isn't consistent with Measure A

and my overall goal to seek the implementation of Measure A.

"I don't think compromise is what we're looking for right now."

Laird and other Measure A supporters will meet with Assemblyman Sam Farr, D-Monterey, and State Sen. Henry Mello, D-Watsonville, today in Santa Cruz to discuss the issue.

Measure A asked that local representatives to the Legislature not support any money in the state budget for

the project unless it were first approved by the city.

Laird said Mello's staff has told him there would probably be no money in the state budget next fiscal year for such a project.

Laird said the council has received letters from Measure A supporters Hal Levin and Bill Hough requesting the council set a public hearing to which UC President David Gardner would be invited. Gardner is scheduled to be in Santa Cruz later this month.

The supporters have asked plans for such a public hearing be discussed Tuesday during a meeting of the City Council.

Laird said he would place the issue on the agenda for the Tuesday meeting if a council member requests it.

"To me, one of the next steps is to work with the Regents and President Gardner," said Laird. "Now that Gardner will be spending time in Santa Cruz later this month, I intend to ask for a private meeting to discuss this."