

Feasibility study ordered on using mansion as library

By BOB SMITH
STAFF WRITER

A feasibility study on the proposed purchase of the old Rispin Mansion for use as a Capitola City Library was ordered last week by the Capitola City Council.

The council lined up solidly behind the proposal made by Mayor Michael Routh that the city look into the purchase of the vacant and heavily vandalized mansion on the banks of Soquel Creek.

"This is a monumental first step," Routh said, "and if we go all the way (with the purchase) we can provide the city with a first class library."

City Manager Steve Burrell was instructed to report back to the City Council with information on what studies besides a seismic safety report will be needed on the old mansion and what the anticipated costs would be.

Burrell said it would take four to six weeks to assemble the information requested by the council.

"The consideration now," Routh said, in carefully direct-

ing the council's action, is not to determine the use but to determine the seismic safety and suitability. Steve (Burrell) also needs to meet with the property owners and Mr. (Howard) Dysle to see what sort of financing terms can be worked out."

But Dysle, who was in the audience and earlier had told reporters that he would be willing to negotiate a sale to the city, was urged to continue with his plans to subdivide the property into 14 homesites.

Routh proposed, in a letter to the council, that the city purchase the building and surrounding land, using money available from the City Redevelopment Agency, and then restore the building and turn it into a city library.

Councilman Bob Bucher suggested the possibility of the city acquiring the property, now owned by Rittenhouse family, and then selling portions to Dysle or someone else interested in developing the land away from the mansion into homes.

"You don't have to have the entire site as a library,"

Bucher pointed out.

"Depending on the price and terms," Routh added, agreeing with Bucher, "Howard could continue with his plans."

Dysle told reporters that his option on the property now calls for a \$1.25 million purchase price.

Routh made his proposal as an alternative to a Midcounty library now being sought by Santa Cruz City-County Library Director Anne Turner and members of a Midcounty Library task force.

The city, as part of its 41st Avenue redevelopment project, has committed itself to building a 7,000 square foot library in the area. The Rispin Mansion has 9,000 square feet.

(The Aptos library, by comparison, is 8,100 square feet).

Turner proposed several months ago that the library should be expanded to 17,500 square feet.

Councilmembers were cool to that suggestion although Turner reportedly does not expect the city to pay for the full cost of the expanded library.

She was not available for comment this morning.