

Homeless

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# Thorny issues in Santa Cruz

## Homeless raise outcry over proposed shelter

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Homeless people in Santa Cruz are protesting housing for the homeless.

After five years of planning, the Citizens Committee for the Homeless appears ready to move ahead with its proposed Community House, which would provide low-cost housing for about 45

people.

The news has upset many of the homeless who have been allowed to camp during the spring, summer and fall on the vacant, acre-sized 111 Coral St. lot where Community House would go.

Many showed up at the city council's meeting Tuesday, urging the city to let them continue camping there, find a new camp-

ground for them or find another place for Community House. They said they collected more than 1,000 signatures from supporters who signed petitions challenging the idea of "displacing hundreds of homeless in order to build a transitional shelter that will house 40."

"Not everyone wants to or can

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## Homeless protest proposed shelter site

### ■ SHELTER

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live indoors," said Anne Curry, who has been homeless for a year and camping on the property since September. "Our ancestors lived on the land. Why can't we? All we ask is for this little piece of land."

But to Community House project director Darrell Darling, the protest is grating.

"We've made it very clear to the homeless community, and they've known for many years that this is what we intend to do," Darling said.

The city council last week held a special meeting to discuss homeless issues, especially the dilemma over the campground. Mayor Katherine Beiers said prospects for relocating the campground are bleak.

"We looked at a couple of sites, but they're just unsuitable,"

Beiers said.

City officials are still looking into the possibility of finding another site for Community House. But Darling said he is reluctant to move the project because the chosen location is ideal for it. The group in 1990 paid \$350,000 for the Coral Street site because it is near other services for the homeless, he said.

"I cannot conceive that there are really alternative locations," Darling said. "If there are people

who know of an alternative location, it's incumbent upon them to let us and the city know instead of attacking us for what we are able to provide."

Darling said that while more than 200 people have been allowed to camp on the property on a given night, only 70 are allowed under its temporary permit. He said the campground should be relocated and that his group has been looking for possible locations.

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