

## 41st Avenue median OK'd

Median strips on Capitola's 41st Avenue between Capitola Road and the Southern Pacific railroad track were approved by the Capitola City Council last week.

But residents and business owners alike were not pleased.

The council will hold a public hearing May 9 to discuss the neighborhood parking problems in the area surrounding the new Spa Center on 41st Avenue.

In the meantime, plans for the \$315,000 median strip project will be submitted to the state for approval, City Public Works Director Craig French said this morning. It will take approximately six weeks for the state to approve the plans, French said. The city will probably advertised for bids in mid-June.

City officials have been meeting the Harry Jenkins, owner of the Spa, about the parking problems. City Planning Director Steve Russell refused to

publicly tell the council what those discussion had produced, but Mayor Michael Routh told the council and audience that he had "heard" that the Spa owners were negotiating with the church on the corner of 41st Avenue and Brommer Street for employee parking, and also acquiring land next to the Spa for additional parking.

Residents on Melton and Reposa Avenues have complained that customers and employees at the Spa are spilling over into their neighborhood because the Spa parking lots are too small.

Now, businesses across 41st Avenue from the Spa complained to the council last Thursday, Spa employees are parking all day in front of their businesses — preventing their customers from coming into their smaller stores.

The council ordered 24-minute "green" parking zones set up in front of The Frame Shop, the Capitola Auto Parts

Store, and O'Neill's Surf Shop.

Several of the complaints raised by individual or groups of business owners were addressed in the redesign, including elimination of the median strip in the block between Reposa and Melton, a special slot in the median strip north of Jade Street to allow ambulances from Santa Cruz Ambulance to make left turns through the median strips into the northbound 41st Avenue lanes.

Traffic engineers also changed the left-turn openings for the King's Plaza-Orchard Supply Hardware complex, closing one originally proposed for the driveway between the Shell service station and Tiny's Restaurant, but making larger ones for two entrances between the restaurant and Consumer's Distributing.

The council rejected arguments from several 41st Avenue business owners that elimination of the on-street parking to accommodate a bicycle lane would severely injure their businesses.

"We are not here to address on-street parking problems of 41st Avenue," Mayor Michael Routh said.

"We don't have a parking problem on 41st Avenue and if there is (one), it's the businesses' problem to fix, not our," Councilman Robert

Bucher added.

Councilman Dennis Beltram voted against it, calling for more study of the problems along the lower portion of 41st Avenue, particularly the parking problems around the Spa and the announced development of 135,000 square feet of retail commercial space on the Shaffer Tropical Gardens and the "Pumpkin Patch" property adjacent to it.

"I'd rather look at it in July, or even a month from now — after the Spa issue is settled," Beltram said.