

Symons criticizes homeless relocation

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Homeless
CAPITOLA — Midcounty Supervisor Walt Symons has criticized the city of Santa Cruz for relocating homeless people to New Brighton State Park, calling it a "major social upheaval."

In a letter to Santa Cruz Mayor Mike Rotkin, Symons said his office has been "inundated with calls from Second (Midcounty) District residents who are upset."

"Had the Santa Cruz City Council truly wished to demonstrate compassion, they would have offered their own yards and facilities to the homeless that were relocated

to New Brighton," Symons said.

On Monday, the city of Santa Cruz moved 30 to 40 homeless people from a temporary campground in Santa Cruz to New Brighton. The city is paying the \$14 per campground fee for the people for two weeks.

The move was made without notification to the county, Symons said. State Parks officials, who were also not notified in advance, said the homeless people are welcome to camp at New Brighton for the standard two-week limit.

Campers can stay a second two weeks, but only after leaving the park for 48 hours.

Symons said two people were arrested near the entrance to the campground for intoxication and a candle in a tent started a fire.

George Cook, State Parks district superintendent, said one person was arrested for intoxication and one for outstanding warrants. Nobody was in the tent when it burned, Cook said.

Cook said rangers make arrests at the park from time to time, and what has happened in the last few days is not out of the ordinary.

Symons charged that the city encourages homeless people to live in Santa Cruz and asked these questions of Rotkin:

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•How could the city place its homeless in another jurisdiction without any notification other than to the news media?

•Why didn't the city put the homeless at Harvey West Park? The park already has rest rooms and showers.

•It's the shopping season. Is this a way for the city to remove these people from their commercial area?

Symons said the city "has shown a lack of concern for area residents living around New Brighton."

Rotkin could not be reached for comment this morning.

Because the city paid for the
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