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# City to consider joining in lawsuit over the census

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The Watsonville City Council will hold a special meeting tonight to begin discussing whether it should join other cities in a lawsuit against the federal Census Bureau.

It's not likely the council will make a decision tonight, because the city staff has not prepared a resolution. Also, the Complete Count Committee, a group that has been working on the census and advising the council on census issues, has not yet made a recommendation.

City Attorney Luis Hernandez said he has been in touch with the city attorney in Los Angeles on the issue at the request of Mayor Todd McFarren.

New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, the state of California, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and others filed suit against the Census Bureau last year.

The suit charged that an inaccurate count, especially of minority groups, was inevitable because the Commerce Department had refused to allow the Census Bureau to use statistical techniques to correct an alleged traditional undercount.

Since the Census Bureau released its initial figures about two weeks ago, many cities and counties have said they were vastly different from the local government's own figures.

A congressional subcommittee on the 1990 census will hold hearings Tuesday on the matter, and will hear testimony from the mayors of New York, Baltimore, Kan-

sas City and other cities.

McFarren said that if Watsonville chooses to become part of a new lawsuit against the Census Bureau, the suit probably wouldn't cost Watsonville any money because the attorneys from the larger cities would take care of arguing the case.

The council will try to determine whether taking part in such a lawsuit would be of some benefit to Watsonville, McFarren said.

Initial census figures for Watsonville were 29,764. City staff members and the state Department of Finance believe a more accurate figure is 30,882. The city has counted more than 80 housing units that the census-takers missed.

Even a few uncounted residents can make a big difference in how much money local governments get each year from federal and state agencies.

The discussion on the census lawsuit will probably continue Tuesday at the council's regular meeting. The Complete Count Committee is scheduled to address the council then, committee chairman Ray Vigil said.

City Clerk Lorraine Washington said the reason for calling the special meeting for today was that the council had to formally announce a public hearing Oct. 9 on its intention to abandon a strip of Second Street between Rodriguez and Main streets. That action is part of a larger project that has been in the works for some time to straighten out the intersection of Second and Main streets.

The council will also meet in closed session to discuss personnel matters after the public part of tonight's meeting.