

Scotts Valley - 1990

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# SV tightens curfew: 11 p.m. for all minors

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SCOTTS VALLEY — A long-standing curfew for juveniles was tightened Wednesday in an effort to mirror other ordinances in Santa Cruz County.

The City Council voted 4-1 to adopt the new ordinance formally at its next meeting. Michael Shulman cast the dissenting vote because he worried the new law was too restrictive.

The most obvious change in the ordinance is that anyone under 18 years of age cannot loiter on the streets between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m.

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— *police Chief Steve Walpole*

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For many years, Scotts Valley has had a two-tiered ordinance: a 10 p.m. to daylight curfew for minors 13 years and under, and a midnight to daylight curfew for those 14 to 17 years old.

"I do believe the ordinance is a

stronger one," said police Chief Steve Walpole. "It's more defensible, and it's more definitive, which will help police officers make good, sound judgments in making stops."

Walpole said he brought the new ordinance to the council not only

to match Scotts Valley's law with those proposed elsewhere in the county, but also because he believed the city's current ordinance was not clear enough to withstand a judicial challenge.

"It's a better-written curfew," said Walpole in answer to challenges from Shulman, who worried that civil liberties could be in danger from some of the wording in the new ordinance.

"The issue is always fairness under the law," said Walpole. "It's not fair for juveniles to have to guess the times (depending on what part of the county they're in)."

Watsonville and Capitola already have curfew ordinances similar to the one proposed Wednesday, and the county of Santa Cruz is considering one. The city of Santa Cruz has opted not to enforce a curfew because of civil-liberty concerns.

Shulman worried that clauses in the new ordinance could put a teen-ager who stops at 7-Eleven for a soda on the way home from work in danger of being cited for violating the law.

He also worried that linking the Scotts Valley ordinance to others in Santa Cruz County would put it

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in danger of being reversed by the court if other departments go too far in enforcing it.

"Our current ordinance is sufficient," said Shulman.

But Walpole defended the revised ordinance, as did Councilwoman Peggie Lopez, who pointed out its main purpose "is to help protect the kids."

She challenged the city of Santa Cruz to take another look at the ordinance. Walpole echoed her challenge, saying that Santa Cruz "will likely become an island where more and more kids go to."