

# Beach parking lot will become a park

An old parking lot at the edge of Capitola's beach will be turned into a park next year at a cost of \$160,000.

The City Council voted last Thursday night to spend the money in a move that came as a total surprise to city staff members who were recommending a scaled-down version of the landscaping project.

The city had \$77,000 committed to the project, and City Public Works Director Craig French submitted a project that would have cost an estimated \$126,000.

French had asked the city council to approve spending an additional \$50,000 for the work, but was flabbergasted when the council authorized another \$34,000 for the project.

French told the council that consultant Richard Peterson of

Aptos originally came up with a design for the lot at the end of The Esplanade and Monterey Avenue that would have cost an estimated \$160,000.

French asked Peterson to cut the cost because the city had only \$77,000 budgeted for the project. But the council told French and consultant Richard Peterson of Aptos to go ahead with the project as first conceived by Peterson at a cost of \$160,000.

The city has commitments from the California Coastal Conservancy to pay \$25,000 towards the project, \$22,000 from the Santa Cruz County Sanitation District, and \$10,000 from the County Transportation Commission.

The remainder will be paid by the city although French will

ask the council and the Coastal Conservancy for larger contributions.

The design features a double row of London Plane trees in planter boxes along a walkway surfaced with "concrete paver blocks," a new seawall, lawn and a planter box next to the bluff.

French, as a cost-cutting measure, had suggested eliminating the planter boxes around the trees, substituting asphalt for the very expensive paver blocks, and to replace the bluff planter box with sand.

The council, led by Bob Bucher and Michael Routh, told French to go ahead with the better plan. "I'd like to add another \$100,000 to the budget," Bucher said, "do it right and not screw around."

"I'm behind you 100 percent," Routh told Bucher. "This is a focal point for the whole village. If we cheap out here, we've blown it."

Councilmen Jerry Clarke and Dennis Beltram sided with them. Clarke called the parcel "the most valuable piece of real estate in the county and we should do this job right."

Beltram agreed. "This will set the tone for the beautification of the whole Esplanade."

The lone dissenter was Mayor Ron Graves. "I think that spending \$160,000-170,000 for landscaping in front of a restroom is exorbitant. I've never found a restroom that is a focal point."

Routh defended the plans and the cost saying that the cost estimates include "a little more than landscaping. There are seawalls and sidewalks."

The motion to spend upwards of \$160,000 passed on a 4-1 vote with Graves casting the dissenting vote.

The landscaping is the final phase in the reconstruction of the Capitola Village sewage pumping station.

The pumping station was rebuilt by the Sanitation District in the city-owned parking lot.

In other business, the council:

✓ Denied on a 5-0 vote an appeal by Larry Vosti, owner of the Crossroads shopping center, 820 Bay Ave., to keep product signs on awnings at the shopping center.

✓ Approved a proposal from City Manager Steve Burrell to prepare a general plan, coastal plan, pre-zoning and annexation applications for the 4.65 acre parcel on McGregor Drive next to New Brighton Beach state park the city wants to buy.

The city is continuing to negotiate for the land and Burrell said the purchase could be completed this week.

✓ Approved the formation of street improvement districts for the West Hill and Derby-Trotter neighborhoods, and told the city staff to have engineering plans prepared for the curb, gutter and sidewalk improvements. Public hearings on the assessment district will be held when the plans are completed.

✓ Approved an application for upwards of \$25,000 from the Coastal Conservancy to help repair the city wharf. The money was made available to cities under legislation sponsored by State Sen. Henry Mello.

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