

# Santa Cruz Will Establish Affirmative Action Panel

The city of Santa Cruz will use an Affirmative Action Task Force to provide more job and career opportunities for women, other minorities and the handicapped.

The Santa Cruz City Council Tuesday ordered the formation of a seven-member citizens group to help improve the "poor" results of the city's Affirmative Action program.

Vice Mayor Bruce Van Allen said it is easy to criticize the city's Affirmative Action program "because it is so poor."

Councilmember Mardi Wormhoudt said that the city's record over the past eight years "reconvinces me we have made no progress at all. Only 22 percent of our workers are women and this is in an area where 51 percent of the population is female. It is time we took more action. It is long overdue."

In 1980, the city had 515 authorized positions, of which 112, or 22 percent, were held by females, according to a report from Kent Rice, Santa Cruz personnel director. This compared with 17 percent female workers in 1976.

In 1980, the same report shows, there were 52 other minority workers on the payroll, or about 10 percent of the total personnel. This compares with 5 percent in 1976.

The City Council divided 4 to 3 on the issue of creating the task force, but no members spoke in opposition to the concept of hiring more women, minorities and handicapped people.

Councilmember Joe Ghio said he is concerned "about the recent proliferation of commissions. They are all taking time

and money and staff. I would rather use existing commissions than create new ones."

Councilmember John Mahaney urged that the whole Affirmative Action program be referred to the Civil Service Commission first. "If they say they can't handle it, then we can appoint. But I do think they should be asked if a special program is needed."

Councilmember Spiro Mellis questioned that the city has a poor Affirmative Action record, as Van Allen had claimed.

"It's a matter of opinion. I have been told the city has one of the best records of any agency in the county. I think you are trying to rush things."

Mayor Michael Rotkin commented, "If we are the best agency, then we are in real trouble."

Rotkin, Van Allen, Wormhoudt and John Laird beat down an effort by the conservative minority to get more information on the proposal.

Laird said it is a matter of priorities, that if the city is not reaching its goal of hiring more women, minorities and handicapped workers then it should do something to reach the goal.

Wormhoudt originally asked for a commission to be formed, but she reduced this to a task force that would be put together to achieve the specific purpose of aiding the city to improve its program.

There would be an advantage, Laird said, in having another citizens group reaching out into the community to help the city with a problem.

Each councilmember will appoint a representative to the task force.

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