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LAFCO okays New Brighton annexation

Capitola's annexation of a portion of New Brighton Beach state park and 4.65 acres of vacant land along McGregor Drive has been unanimously approved by the county Local Agency Formation Commission.

The city has been trying for the last four months to annex the vacant land as a preliminary step to purchasing it, at a price of \$465,000, and developing it as a Capitola Village beach shuttle bus parking lot.

The purchase was contingent on the city annexing the land. The LAFCO approval last week allows the City Council to complete the annexation process.

LAFCO delayed action on the city annexation after Santa Cruz Superior County Judge Harry Brauer challenged LAFCO's guidelines for reviewing annexations, telling the commission that it did not have standards that met the requirements of the state's annexation laws.

The commission adopted temporary standards at its June 11 meeting and will hold a public hearing Aug. 1 on a set of permanent rules that commission executive director Pat McCormick believes will meet Brauer's

requirements.

The commission remained deadlocked over the appointment of a public member to replace Watsonville land surveyor Stan Nielsen.

The commission is composed of two representatives of the county Board of Supervisors, two representatives of the cities and a public member. The city and county representatives appoint the public member and an alternate, but three of the four representatives must agree on a choice of a public member.

They have been splitting along city-county lines over their choices of the public member for the last four months. The deadlock continued this month with the city representatives voting for former Capitola Mayor Ron Graves and the county representatives splitting, with one vote each going to Soquel resident Leonard Greenberg and Capitola Planning Commissioner Robert Garcia.

Garcia was appointed as the alternate public member last month but was told by the County Counsel's office that he had to resign his seat as a city planning commissioner before being allowed to vote as a LAFCO member.