

The DeLaveaga Saga

Council To Consider Plan To Return Park To County

By John Elliott
Sentinel Staff Writer

The suggestion that the city of Santa Cruz relinquish its ownership of DeLaveaga park will be brought up "for full (city) council consideration" this evening, according to Mayor Eugene Fleming.

Fleming said today he has asked City Manager Dave Koester to make copies of a letter from Thomas A. Black, chairman of the county board of supervisors, in which Black last Friday wrote he is sure "that the county board of supervisors would be happy to assume the responsibility to the people in seeing that the park is properly developed for their use and enjoyment."

Fleming said copies of the

letter will be given to councilmen this evening and that "I will probably make some recommendations, or at least some comments."

The letter is an out-growth of angry reaction last week by city officials when supervisors split \$217,000 worth of State Proposition 1 funds among two agencies, while denying a city request for funds with which to develop the park.

Mayor Fleming said today the city is serious about developing the park and that if the county is serious, "I see no reason for not giving it to the county."

He said, however, that is his own personal opinion and may not be the feeling of other councilmen.

As a criteria for city release of the park to the county, he said, he would seek assurances the county would follow a master development plan such as the city intended to use.

Miffed, County Offers To Take Back Park

By Wallace Wood
Sentinel Staff Writer

The Perils of DeLaveaga Park, a serialized story, entered another exciting chapter today with Black of the County ready to snatch the 575-acre heroine from its new owners (The City).

Miffed at the city's apparent ingratitude for the gift of its half-interest in the park, County Supervisors' Chairman Tom Black has offered to take the park back.

And the city might give it up without a fight.

In a letter to Santa Cruz Mayor Eugene Fleming, Black declared "I note that you and Mr. Koester (Santa Cruz City Manager Dave Koester) are not particularly inclined to proceed in the development of DeLaveaga park as you had indicated to the Board of Supervisors at the time we granted the county's interest in the park to the city."

Black went on to say the

county had once offered to "receive from the city a deed of its interest in the park and to proceed with the development of the park as a county function."

"I again extend to you this invitation," Black went on, "if you feel that the city might be interested in relinquishing any interest it has to the county, I am sure that the Board of Supervisors would be happy to assume the responsibility to the people in seeing that the park is properly developed for their use and enjoyment."

At press time, there were indications the city council might just consider such an action tonight when Black's letter comes before them.

"I think it might be the best thing we could do," one high-placed city official said.

To recap past chapters, the park was once owned by a Spaniard named Jose Vincent DeLaveaga. When he died in 1894, relatives challenged his will.

The park was finally granted in joint ownership to both the city and county by the courts. There it languished almost unwanted for almost 50 years.

In recent years, the city has taken an interest in it. City officials persuaded the county it would be wise to give up the county's interest so the park could be developed for everyone.

The county agreed a few months ago. Then the city put in a request for funds to improve the George Washington Memorial section of the park.

The county had \$217,000 in state park funds to spend, and supervisors decided to give the Santa Cruz harbor \$125,000 for expansion and give the south county's Pinto lake park the remaining \$92,000, cutting off DeLaveaga without a cent.

City officials became angry at the slight. City Manager Dave Koester predicted a long-term feud and said the county had killed "any prospects for development in the near future—for several years, as far as I can see."

Mayor Fleming said the county's action was "highly insulting" and the county had broken faith with the city.

In return, Supervisor Vincent Locatelli today noted that Koester "made some accusations about the county not giving him money for the park. Well, in my district there were three projects that could have used the money, but I didn't even have them apply because we didn't have enough to go around."

Locatelli continued he had got something for Koester: An embroidered "crying towel." He added he intends to take Koester out to lunch "to show him we're not really mad."

But other board members did not seem to think the matter so funny. Supervisor Robert Burton said he thought Black's letter was "very good," and there were cries of "I agree."

The next episode will continue at tonight's council meeting.

**\$5000
Vandalism**