

Council Tonight Will Study Weed Abatement Proposal

What would you do—or have done—about weeds?

City councilmen will resume consideration of a revised weed abatement ordinance tonight.

Virtually everyone agrees weeds are unsightly. They are a fire hazard. They can be a health hazard.

But councilmen may not have the scratch to get enforced clearance done on a citywide basis. City Manager Peter Tedesco will appraise them of the situation tonight.

"The program will be self-sup-

porting once it's under way," Tedesco told the Sentinel today.

"But the city will have to make advances the first year (next spring)."

The present city staff would absorb the tasks of surveying weed-blanketed lots, notifying owners and inspecting abatement work. But someone has to get out there and knock the weeds down and the contractor probably won't wait for assessment collections with the tax bill.

"It boils down to the fact that we will have to pay the contractor the first year," Tedesco said.

He indicated he will recommend that the weed abatement ordinance be adopted but with the proviso that if abatement bids are too high—say around \$20,000—next spring that the actual program be put off another year.

As it is, the ordinance would not become effective in time to be of benefit this summer. It is keyed to tax collection and this list closes August 10. So, first application would be late next spring.

Basically, the ordinance would permit the council to contract for clearance of all weedy lots, costs to be a special assessment and lien on the property.

Property owners would have the option of having the work done on their own or letting the city contractor do it and paying immediately or with tax bills.

"Weeds" would be defined to include accumulated garden refuse, cuttings and other combustible trash. Abatement would be done by discing, cutting or chemical spraying. Procedures would call for three public hearings by the city council.

The council meeting tonight will begin at 7:30 o'clock in city hall chambers.

Other items on the agenda include:

First hearing on an ordinance adopting an amendment to the San Lorenzo Park redevelopment plan. This would permit the proposed county courthouse at Ocean and Water streets, six-story buildings in commercial areas, 10-story structures in the cooperative apartment parcels, planned development (P-D) zoning for the courthouse and apartment sites, and a new parking ratio for the apartments.

Final reading of an ordinance giving the planning commission and/or director authority to approve use permits for boarding homes for the aged, day care homes, and foster homes in which not more than seven boarders or youngsters are involved.

Planning commission recommendations on extension of a 461-foot cul-de-sac into the block bounded by Frederick, Windham, Darwin and Windsor streets; sale of city-owned property on the easterly side of South Branciforte avenue near Buena Vista avenue; and designs for the proposed Alamo avenue, Western Santa Cruz, and Coral-Encinal improvement projects.

Umunhum Fire Still Is Dying

Despite a minor setback last night the 7000-acre Mount Umunhum and Loma Prieta brush and timber fire continued to die today.

Fire boss George Britton now termed the eight-day burn 75 per cent contained.

The hot spot which threatened to enter Santa Cruz county on the southeasterly corner of the fire—roughly where the Summit road meets the Loma Prieta road to the lookout—has been controlled.

Elmer Osterman, state fire prevention coordinator, said this noon: "The Santa Cruz side looks good and is holding very well. We backfired from the bulldozer fire lines back to the approaching fire."

The only real trouble spot remaining is on the other side of Loma Prieta around Mount Chuai.

"We didn't make as much progress last night as we had hoped," said Osterman. "Erratic winds flared up the line northeast of Loma Prieta causing the fire to jump a 60-foot bulldozer line and burn about 10 acres east of the line."

"Hand crews were rushed into the breach and were able to stop it from spreading further. There was nothing to stop it beyond that if the men had been unable to catch that slop over."

In the rush to smother this blaze a crewman from the Murrietta conservation camp near Coalinga was burned on both hands.

Britton said he hoped the fire in general would be contained by tonight.

It was also reported that a 30-year-old San Quentin convict, Leon Hurd, had disappeared from the fire line yesterday afternoon.

A majority of the some 1000 fire fighters are inmates of various conservation camps throughout California. Hurd is five feet five inches tall, 120 pounds, with