

Garage site readied



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Workers have started taking down trees at UC Santa Cruz for the parking garage, a project opposed by the Santa Cruz City Council.

Negotiations with Santa Cruz don't stop preparation

By DAN WHITE
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — The city and UC Santa Cruz are still negotiating over a planned parking garage on campus, but that hasn't stopped the university from cutting down trees to prepare for its construction.

Santa Cruz City Council members said Thursday they weren't surprised that site preparations had begun even though, under a negotiated agreement, the city has until Sept. 15 to file suit to stop construction of the six-story garage.

'They do what they do, and we don't have a lot of control over that.'

— Tim Fitzmaurice, Santa Cruz city councilman

Mayor Katherine Beiers said the tree-cutting would not affect negotiations, which focus on the city's claim that the environmental review of the parking project was inadequate.

"That doesn't stop any of our options," she said. "We're working hard to reach a settlement."

If the city files suit, and the garage is

blocked, "the worst-case scenario is (UCSC) ends up with a cleared piece of land."

Thursday, a dozen employees of Williams Tree Service were working heavy machinery at the site. A supervisor said UCSC's physical planning and construction department gave his company the go-ahead.

Dozens of redwoods were chopped down and more than a dozen more had orange "X" marks indicating they would be removed. About 50 logs lay in a pile at the site near Heller and McLaughlin drives.

Two workers said they did not know how many trees would come down. They were working around the edge of a parking lot that would be removed to make way for the proposed 500-space concrete building.

Campus spokeswoman Elizabeth Ir-

Please see GARAGE — BACK PAGE

Garage

Continued from Page A1

win said there was nothing about UCSC's negotiations with the city that prevented site preparation from moving forward.

"We have to have the hope and good faith, the assumption that we would be able to proceed," Irwin said. "We need to prepare that site."

She said there was good reason for the preparations to begin.

"This is time sensitive," she said. "We have other construction projects. To have the physical science (building) construction going on at the same time as this would be tremendously disadvantageous."

Councilman Tim Fitzmaurice, a UCSC lecturer, said the tree removal was hardly a shock, "although it kind of demonstrates the university tends to work on its own assumptions. They do what they do, and we don't have a lot of control over that."

Although the university is in the city limits, city officials have no jurisdiction over the campus because it is a state-run facility.

The city could go to court in an attempt to stop the work, but Fitzmaurice said city officials saw that option as "closing any kind of negotiations. We are trying to be reasonable. They know we still have the option (to file suit)."

"Unfortunately, they are trying to move forward," he said. "An injunction is not a simple procedure, and it's not a foregone conclusion. We have to do what's best for the city."

Councilman Christopher Krohn said the council's

Meeting on dorm project lightly attended

Sentinel staff report

SANTA CRUZ — The first public meeting on UC Santa Cruz's largest planned student housing project in 10 years drew a tiny crowd and few comments Thursday night.

Eight people showed up and three spoke, one raising concerns about changes to traffic patterns. The others asked planners to consider "sustainable growth" measures and energy-saving features.

The meeting was scheduled to run from 6 to 8 p.m. but was adjourned in an hour because of the lack of speakers.

The project would consist of six residential build-

ings for a total of 807 students. The complex would be centered around the dining hall, which would include cooking and eating facilities for undergraduates and a club that caters to faculty, staff and alumni.

UCSC Student Assembly representative Kenneth Burch expressed concern about the complex's location close to McHenry Library and whether that would interfere with shuttle traffic. He also asked planners to research the effects on wildlife in the area.

The residence halls would take up 127,000 square feet and the dining hall an additional 30,500 square feet.

thing except this."

The UC Regents, with the exception of a UC Berkeley student regent, were united in approving the parking garage last month.

Their approval capped months of discussion, in which the once-obscure issue grew into one of the more heated town-and-gown debates in recent memory.

The university and its supporters argue a garage is long overdue to serve the faculty and staff on Science Hill since ongoing construction is gobbling hundreds of existing spaces.

Objectors including an unusually unified City Council say the parking garage would create an influx of traffic that would harm the Westside neighborhood, while student opponents say construction contradicted UCSC's ecologically oriented roots.

course of action depends on what happens Friday, when the university is expected to give City Hall its formal response to the city's objections.

Irwin said the tree-cutting would continue through Monday and that other site preparation would continue well into next month.

As a result of the negotiations between City Hall and the university, the city's deadline to file suit has been extended to Sept. 15. Partly to ward off a lawsuit, campus officials agreed to extend the deadline until then while representatives of both sides discussed the city's concerns.

Asked what UCSC would do with the logged area if a lawsuit blocked construction, Irwin said, "The long-range (development plan) calls for a structure there. I don't think the site is being prepared to anticipate any-