

Harbor Dist. Declines To Accept Gift Of Surfer's Beach Land

Half Moon Bay's offer to turn over surfer's beach to the San Mateo County Harbor District was rejected by the county harbor district commission November 2.

The commission, which received a staff recommendation calling for rejection of the offer, unanimously voted to inform the City of Half Moon Bay that it was not interested in taking over the five acres located immediately south of the Pillar Point outer breakwater.

The five acre parcel which the city offered to give to the district is the beach and eroded bluff located west of Highway 1 and between the breakwater and the northern end of Mirada Rd. It is located west of El Granada.

Staff's Rejection

The commission took the action after reviewing a staff memo opposing the acquisition and discussing the matter with the public and among themselves.

The staff memo on the offered property presented a number of arguments against acquiring the property, including:

--"Most of the bluff area contained within the property lines has suffered severe erosion and would require extensive shore protection work and land-fill behind the shore protection to restore the land area to a usable size." The cost of this work is estimated at \$600,000, with \$100,000 potentially from the Coastal Conservancy and the remaining \$500,000 coming from limited funds for the first phase of the Pillar Point Project.

--After noting the property has been discussed as a site to dispose of materials dredged from Pillar Point Harbor during

the berthing project, the memo stated that because of limited funds, the high cost of the land-fill work and the one to two years it might take to acquire permits, acquisition would not benefit the Pillar Point Project.

--Adding the beach and uplands to the area that the harbor patrol must presently maintain would increase man hours for maintenance and add to operational costs, "with no substantial increase in revenues even if parking fees were imposed for the use of this area."

No Dumpsters Provided

--The present physical condition of the five acres is unacceptable both because of the erosion and because of the garbage and litter on the site. "No garbage cans or dumpsters have ever been provided and regular clean-up is non-existent. A one-time clean-up would be a monumental task."

Other Costs

--Installing landfill and shore protection on the property would eliminate the present beach and would require the district to become involved in a continuous and prohibitively expensive sand replenishment program.

Farnow Concerned

Commission President Ray Farnow, after District General Manager Ron McClellan gave a brief review of the 1½ page memo, also noted that there is a concern that the harbor district, if it took over the property, might have liability if ocean erosion damage occurs to adjacent Highway 1.

Mitchell Favors

Acceptance Of Gift

Public support for the idea of the harbor district acceptance of

the property was heard from one person at the meeting, Ray Mitchell of Half Moon Bay.

Mitchell suggested that the district might be able to cut the cost of property maintenance by use of the county sheriff's work furlough program. With this program, said Mitchell, the district's only cost would be providing garbage bags and hauling away the debris.

Mitchell said that the Half Moon Bay City Council has taken action to obtain the services of workers from this program, but said he did not know where they would be used.

The five acres, noted Mitchell, is prime land adjacent to Pillar Point Harbor. With the development of the harbor, the value of this land is going to go up and the city may not wish to part with it later.

Noting the discussion at the district's last meeting about use of the property as a site for dredging spoils, he said it seems like a good idea.

Commissioner Frank Lee also discussed accepting the property, noting that it is valuable but that costs which the district would face are the problem. He suggested that the district might look into joint powers agreement between the city, county and district to maintain the property.

Boerio Opposed

Commissioner Charles Boerio came out strongly against the acquisition of more property by the district.

He noted the problems which the district had in disposing of the El Granada Quarry and noted the surplus property which the district has in El Granada, opposite Highway 1 from Pillar Point Harbor.

Boerio also noted the five acre's eroded condition, the cost to restore the land and the potential for liability for erosion damage to Highway 1.