

Meeting on deficit scheduled

Times Tribune staff

REV. TIMES 1/22/84
The Belmont City Council will hold a special meeting Jan. 31 to attack one of the city's most serious problems — the \$150,000 budget deficit.

The deficit largely is the result of expenditures the council undertook to make emergency repairs to the storm-drain system, said Michael Shelton, assistant city manager and finance director.

The city hoped the repairs at the Carlmont Village Shopping Center and on Mulberry Court, which totaled about \$150,000, would be re-

Belmont

paid to the general fund by a citywide storm-drain assessment district it initiated. But that hope failed when the city's property owners protested the assessment district Dec. 6.

The protest also left the city without the means of repairing other, long-term drainage problems.

Shelton has made a number of recommendations for trimming the deficit and putting the city in the black.

One alternative is for the city Redevelopment Agency, the formation of which was challenged by the San Mateo County Legal Aid Society, to pay back money the city has loaned it for litigating the lawsuit.

General fund money also could be saved if some expenses could be paid from the revenue-sharing fund instead.

Those two alternatives would give the city a \$123,000 surplus.

Another possibility is having street maintenance paid from the gas tax fund instead of from the general fund.

However, while both of these alternatives would balance the city's budget, the ending fund balance still would be inadequate, Shelton said.

"It has been the policy of the council in the past to maintain a general fund ending balance of approximately \$300,000," Shelton said. Neither of the alternatives would put the budget that far into the black, Shelton said.

Shelton said that amount of money is necessary for several reasons, including the need for contingency funds in the event that anticipated revenues are not received.

Belmont juggles its funds

City eliminates deficit, but surplus will be small

By Phyllis Brown

Times Tribune staff

REV. TIMES 2/1/84
The Belmont City Council called in a loan and juggled figures Tuesday night to eliminate the \$153,000 budget deficit that was projected for fiscal year 1983-84.

The budget surplus is so small, however, that the city will be short of resources in fiscal year 1984-85 unless cuts are made before that budget is prepared, City Manager Edward Everett said.

"Next year is what frightens me terribly," Everett said.

The budget deficit expected for this fiscal year was the result of expenditures for emergency storm-drain repairs and for studies on how to improve the inadequate storm-drain system. The expenditures totaled more than \$1 million.

Emergency repairs consumed \$985,370 in city resources. A study of how the storm-drain problem might be solved — which was to be the basis for a storm-drain assessment district — cost \$104,500.

The city had hoped to recoup the money from both expenditures. The storm-drain repairs were to be paid for with government grants, and the storm-drainage study was to be paid for

through the assessment district. But the federal government would not pay for the repairs, and property owners rejected the assessment district.

The expenditures used up all of the money in the Planned Drainage Fund and depleted the General Fund as well. The city budget was left in the red.

The council did three things to eliminate the general fund deficit, although it acknowledged its actions are only temporary solutions to the budget problem.

The council transferred to the general fund \$40,000 from a recreation fund that collects park and recreation fees. It transferred \$30,000 in expenses from the general fund to the revenue sharing fund. And it called in \$100,000 of its \$197,000 loan to the Redevelopment Agency.

Those actions are expected to give the general fund a surplus of about \$14,000 by the end of this fiscal year, Assistant City Manager Michael Shelton said. That amount is below the \$300,000 the city typically reserves as a minimum general fund balance from year to year, Shelton said.

Everett said it is imperative the council "get the ending fund balance built up" before the end of the fiscal year June 30. He said he is studying how to do so.

Councilman Robert Hoffman suggested the city cut costs by reducing the number of city personnel. Councilman William Hardwick noted 85 percent of city expenses are personnel costs.

"Our biggest expenses are labor. I strongly suggest we look at our staffing patterns and how budget cuts can be realized through attrition," Hoffman said. Hoffman also suggested the city cut back on hiring consultants.

Everett said he will approach the council soon with possible means of building up the general fund bal-

ance before July 1.

The council also determined Tuesday how it will select members of an ad hoc storm-drainage committee that will be charged with finding a way of alleviating the storm-drain problem.

Members of the committee will come from throughout the city. Homeowners' associations, business interests, large landowners and all other important segments of the community are to be represented.

Members must apply. The city will advertise for members in local newspapers and will seek nominations from various community groups. The committee probably will have 15 to 20 members.

The applicants will fill out a questionnaire the City Council will review. Each councilman then will nominate members to the committee. Everett said advertisements should be placed by Monday and council nominations should be made by Feb. 28.

Belmont council rejects plan for more parking

By Phyllis Brown

Times Tribune staff

THE TIMES 2/29/84
The Belmont City Council Tuesday night rejected formation of a 1.7 million assessment district to pay for three new parking lots downtown because a recent study indicated they are not needed.

The council unanimously rejected the 6-year-old proposal because a three-week Police Department parking study found there is adequate parking downtown except at doonetime.

City planners said the downtown shopping district needs at most only 3 new parking spaces. The assessment district would have financed construction of more than 100 new spaces.

Instead of building three new lots, the council directed the city's staff to improve a city parking lot in Twin Pines Park. The improvement would include 22 new spaces.

The council also directed its staff to place time restrictions on park-

ing on Sixth Avenue between Hill Street and Ralston Avenue to limit its use by commuters and make it available to shoppers.

The council rejected forming the district on the advice of City Manager Ed Everett. Everett said the new lots would be an unnecessary expense at a time when the city faces serious financial difficulties. As part of the agreement, the city would pay half the costs of the district.

The city is trying to finance repairs to its storm-drain system that may cost \$15 million. The city says it has no money to make the improvements.

If the parking proposal had passed, between 120 and 160 parking spaces would have been built. Each new parking space would have cost \$12,100. Half the cost would have been borne by the city

and half by the downtown property owners.

Everett suggested the city review its overall plan for downtown development before making such an expenditure. The city's future parking needs are likely to be addressed when a downtown development plan is undertaken.

The council action angered two longtime proponents of the district, downtown property owners Charlotte Nissen and Wiletta Steventon, who have told the council repeatedly there is a desperate need for more parking downtown.

"You are whitewashing this whole thing. You are saying we don't need parking when anyone who visits here knows we do need it. I think this is a disgrace. It's disgusting," Nissen said.

The district first was proposed by the Chamber of Commerce in 1978. The idea remained just that until 1981, when former City Manager James DeChaine proposed two lots be constructed near the intersections of Ralston and Sixth avenues and a third be built on Ralston Avenue between Sixth Avenue and El Camino Real.

To form the assessment district, 60 percent of the downtown property owners had to sign petitions agreeing to participate in the district.

Everett said that although there is a strong "perceived need" for parking downtown, there is little data to support that perception. He asked that another study of parking space be conducted.

The study counted use of 348 parking spaces between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on 18 days. Each weekday was studied at least once, and Saturday was studied four times.

D2— San Mateo THE TIMES Wednesday, April 11, 1984

Belmont council reviews \$4 million 1984-85 budget

BELMONT — A new municipal budget projecting nearly \$4 million in expenditures from the city's general and revenue-sharing funds for next fiscal year was presented Tuesday to the City Council.

The city's general and revenue-sharing funds will total \$4,119,526 for the year, slightly larger than the \$3,979,735 in expenditures projected by Finance Director/Assistant City Manager Michael Shelton.

Shelton gave council members a step-by-step review of the 1984-85 budget which estimates \$890,000 in sales tax revenues; up to \$958,000 in property tax revenue; \$246,750 in hotel taxes; more than \$162,000 in franchise revenue; \$200,000 in vehi-

cle code fines; \$130,000 in business licenses; and up to \$571,000 in motor vehicle license income for fiscal year 1984-85.

The new budget also projects that the Belmont Fire Protection District will have an \$1,719,987 ending fund balance at the close of the fiscal year.

City staff noted, however, that the boundaries of the fire district are not the same as the city and the fire district is a separate agency whose excess funds cannot be transferred to the city's general fund. (Belmont shares its fire protection services with San Carlos in the South County Fire District).

City Manager Ed Everett emphasized to the council that city staff is

trying to be as accurate as possible in projecting expenditures and revenues for the coming year.

If everything goes according to plan, Belmont's general and revenue-sharing fund will have a surplus of nearly \$140,000 at the end of the year, according to city staff.

The balance could grow to \$640,450 with the addition of other funds, such as a loan "payback" of \$323,914, to the city from the local redevelopment agency.

The 1984-85 budget also projected "total resources" of \$2,596,722 for the city's sewer and sewer improvement fund, but city staff said total expenditures for the coming year are not yet known.

Institutional zone killed in Belmont

By *M. THOMAS* 3/21/84
By *LAN QUATE*

Times Staff Writer
BELMONT — After months of debate on how the city might tighten its controls over new construction at psychiatric hospitals and other institutions, the City Planning Commission Tuesday killed a proposed institutional zoning ordinance.

The commission action followed a warning by Deputy City Attorney Steve Carpol that the proposed institutional zoning law could spawn lawsuits against the city.

Furthermore, Carpol said city statutes are "in place now" — such as provisions for planned unit development — that gives Belmont the necessary controls over proposed expansions of psychiatric hospitals, schools, and community centers.

"There just doesn't seem to be a need to create an additional statute," Carpol said.

None of the commissioners disagreed with Carpol's legal advice, but Commissioner Mary Janet Collins did comment on the timing.

"I wish the city attorney had been here 10 weeks ago when we went through monumental discussions," she said. "Now we're back to square one."

The proposed institutional zoning had drawn criticism from Belmont Hills Psychiatric Center. The City Council banned any new construction at the center while the city considered a new zoning law.

Harley Fleischmann, an attorney representing Belmont Hills, told the commissioners that "it's fair that you want to have controls" but he added that the center wants to move forward with plans for new office construction.

In other business:

- The commission approved grading plans for the multi-million dollar Creekside Office/Retail Commercial Development on Sixth Avenue. The development will straddle Belmont Creek.

- The commission continued a proposal for a conditional use permit for off-site parking for a proposed office building at 544 Ralston Avenue.

- The commission continued a proposal to combine two existing lot parcels at 513 Mountain View Avenue where Wilbur Harbold proposes to build a warehouse.

Belmont drainage may be studied

By **Phyllis Brown**
Times Tribune staff

VEN. TIMES 1/31/84
The City Council tonight will discuss the formation of a task force that will seek ways to upgrade Belmont's dilapidated storm-drain system.

The council will meet at 7:30 in the council chambers in City Hall, 1365 Fifth Ave.

The discussion will be based on the recommendation of City Manager Edward Everett that the task force be modeled after the widely respected Belmont School District committee on school closures.

The council decided it would form a task force to study the storm-drain problem in December, after its own solution, an assessment district, was rejected by citizens.

Everett has recommended the task force should be charged with finding solutions to the storm-drain problem and should present them within six months. Its members also should be prepared to implement their recommendations, Everett said.

The storm-drain problem is one of the city's oldest and most seri-

ous. Breakdowns in the 50-year-old system have resulted in millions of dollars in damages that have sapped the city's resources the past several years.

Everett said the task force, in order to solve the problem, should be modeled on the school district committee, which he noted was an effective body whose recommendations were accepted without much opposition. The school district committee recommended which elementary schools should be closed. On its recommendation, Barrett, Cipriani and McDougal schools were closed in 1982.

To have credibility, the task force, like the schools committee, should represent all major segments of the community, Everett said. Members of the task force should represent different neighborhoods, different business interests, private institutions and major landowners. The task force also should have as members individuals with specific applicable skills, such as engineering and finance, he said.

The most difficult problem the

council will face is selecting the task force members, Everett said. He has recommended task force members be selected through a number of methods.

The council should advertise the availability of membership through local newspapers. It also should ask each homeowners' association to nominate several candidates from its area. In addition, it should ask

businesses and institutions to nominate several candidates, Everett said.

Those interested in serving on the committee might be required to fill out a questionnaire indicating where they live or work, what special skills they would bring to the group and what specific ideas they have to solve the problem.

Everett also has suggested the task force, once chosen and given its mission, be provided with the resources to be successful. The resources might include advice from consultants, for example.

A 'no' to parking plan

S.M. TIMES
2/29/84

By ALAN QUALE
Times Staff Writer

BELMONT — A longstanding plan to develop several public parking lots in the downtown area was dropped Tuesday night by the City Council.

It would have cost \$12,100 for each new parking space in the proposed parking assessment district, reported City Manager Ed Everett. "It is felt that the development of 140 parking spaces at a total cost of \$1.7 million is not advisable," he reported.

Furthermore, a recent survey of parking by the city staff found that there is a deficiency of only 19 parking spaces in the commercial area near Ralston Avenue, west of El Camino Real.

While voting unanimously to kill plans for for a \$1.7 million parking district downtown, the council members said they would support the development of 22 new parking spaces in adjacent Twin Pines Park. This new parking could be developed under the city's proposed redevelopment agency, councilmen said.

Downtown business people were visibly angered by the council's action.

"You're white-washing this whole thing to try to show that we don't need parking," said Charlotte Nissen who owns a business in the area. "We do need parking and we need it badly."

Another businesswoman, Willetta Steventon, accused the council of "renegeing on a public parking district that was planned over a six-year period."

"There is a lack of parking," Mrs. Steventon added. "I think you should implement a parking district. It is something you promised to do six years ago."

"You should take care of your little business community," she admonished the council.

Councilmen responded that, indeed, they are very

concerned about the future of Belmont's downtown area, presently one of the smallest central commercial districts on the Peninsula.

"We are as concerned about the downtown as you are," said Councilman Joe Green. "We are not trying to pull the wool over your eyes."

Councilman Robert Hoffman noted that "the dollars just are not there, at this time, to establish a parking district."

Councilman Donald Heiman added "I have always been supportive of the business district. There are times when the price tag is too high. This may be one of those times."

Despite the council's dropping of the parking district, Mayor William Moore said he believes "a more viable downtown" will emerge in future years after the city's proposed redevelopment agency generates the necessary "funds to develop our downtown."

Everett, who assumed the city manager's post only one month ago, told the council that "unfortunately, there has been no overall conceptual plan for the economic growth of the downtown business district in Belmont."

Everett noted that parking plans must be coordinated with plans for economic development downtown.

In other business, the council:

- Approved a mid-year transfer of \$30,000 from the general fund to the revenue sharing account.
- Continued a proposal for the city to annex 1.7 acres owned by F. Ong on the north side of Ralston Avenue, west of Christian Drive.
- Continued a proposal to amend the city's zoning ordinance.
- Approved a resolution amending the evaluation procedures for the city's building allocation program.

Belmont City Council defers Sixth Avenue parking limits

S.M. TIMES 3/28/84

BELMONT — The City Council tabled a plan Tuesday to impose two-hour parking limits on Sixth Avenue between Ralston Avenue and Hill Street.

City staff proposed the parking limits following complaints from downtown merchants who claim there is not enough parking available in the area.

But when Sixth Avenue came up for discussion, it spawned yet another debate over the whole issue of downtown parking.

"Downtown Belmont has a parking problem," said Art Ruddy, a downtown merchant. "We need some help from the council now."

He said merchants would also like the city to issue parking permits so that employees can parking longer and closer to their jobs.

Kathy Mainini, president of the Chamber of Commerce, said merchants were disappointed with a recent staff report that suggested

downtown doesn't have a parking problem.

"Nobody talked to any merchants when they took the survey. We really have to address the parking problem. Bite the bullet."

Police Chief Floyd Sanderson criticized Ruddy's proposal for parking permits, noting that permit parking in San Francisco has become a "nightmare in terms of enforcement."

City Manager Ed Everett said the two-hour parking limit on Sixth Avenue was meant to help, but if merchants don't want it, the city will drop it.

Councilman Donald Heiman said

merchants can do several things to alleviate parking problems, including encouraging car pools and parking farther from their businesses.

Heiman suggested tabling the Sixth Avenue proposal, then meeting "with the business people to explore some ways of solving this problem."

City officials have been debating downtown parking for several years.

Following a recent survey of parking, Everett said it would cost \$1.7 million to develop 140 more parking spaces.

That's \$12,100 per space in a proposed parking district. Such an expenditure "is not advisable," Everett said.

Belmont won't maintain pathways

By ALAN QUALE

S.M.T. TIMES 11/11/84
BELMONT — If you'd like permission to clear a pathway in your neighborhood, don't ask City Hall. City fathers would rather not be bothered — at all.

Such was the message delivered Tuesday night by the City Council, following a citizens' request to clear pathways from lower Hillman Avenue to Mezes Avenue and from

lower Hillman Avenue to Ridge Road.

Members of the Central Homeowners' Association said the pathways should be cleared of shrubs and vegetation that obliterate many areas. Some portions are impassable because of encroaching fences built by adjacent homeowners, the group added.

George Keene, president of the homeowners' group, said in a letter that the paths can provide safe routes for children, rather than "the hazardous roadside walk along Hillman."

Keene urged that the pathways "not be allowed to fall into disuse."

The council has expressed concern over the city's liability on the paths, many of which are dangerously steep.

City Attorney Kenneth Dickerson said the legal ownership of the paths, many of which have not been used by the public for many years, "is up in the air."

Public Services Director John Hopkins recommended that since the

paths in the central area are not used and would be expensive for the city to clear, "no city action should be taken at this time."

Sheila Chacon, a homeowner from Winding Way, said she and other homeowners living next to the path do not want them cleared. "We don't want people coming onto our property," she said.

Another homeowner indicated residents might take it upon themselves to begin clearing the steep paths.

This possibility prompted a warning from Dickerson: "If you fall down and go boom, it's your fault."

Belmont has numerous other pathways, outside the central district, that criss-cross the hilly community. It inherited some of them with incorporation, but others have not been formally accepted.

Referring to the ongoing use of some trails, Dickerson said, "The fact that there is a public easement does not mean there is a city easement."

PEN. TIMES Belmont 1/8/84

The City Council will meet Tuesday at 8 p.m. in the council chambers, 1365 Fifth Ave. The new city manager, Edward Everett, is scheduled to attend the meeting. The council will discuss creating a citizens' committee to find a way to repair the city's storm drain system and purchase of closed Belmont School District sites.

Two lawsuits involving the Belmont School District and Trustee Charles Paetzke are scheduled to be litigated in San Mateo County Superior Court Monday at 9 a.m. in the Hall of Justice and Records in Redwood City.

PEN. TIMES Belmont 1/22/84

At 8 p.m. Tuesday, the City Council will meet in the council chambers in City Hall, 1365 Fifth Ave., to discuss the acquisition of surplus Belmont School District property and the proposed downtown parking assessment district.

PEN. TIMES Belmont 1/29/84

The City Council will meet at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday to discuss how to form a citizens' committee to resolve citywide storm drain problems and how to resolve a budget deficit resulting from expenditures for emergency repairs to the storm drains. The meeting will be held in the City Council chambers in City Hall, 1365 Fifth Ave.

PEN. TIMES 2/6/84 Belmont

The Planning Commission will meet at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday to discuss a change in the General Plan that would require the city institutions to develop 10-year plans outlining future growth.

At 8 p.m. Monday the board of trustees of the Belmont School District will meet in the district board room, 2960 Hallmark Drive. The trustees will discuss the status of negotiations between the city and the district on the uses of the three surplus school sites.

A drug- and alcohol-abuse information night will be held at 7:30 p.m. Monday night at Ralston Intermediate School, 2675 Ralston Ave. The event will feature showing of the film "The Epidemic," which deals with chemical abuse, and discussions with representatives of the Belmont and Redwood City Police Departments.

Views law will get one more chance

S.M.T. TIMES 1/18/84

By ALAN QUALE
Times Staff Writer

BELMONT — The City Planning Commission will try again to put together a Views Preservation Ordinance, even through the City Council refused to adopt such an ordinance.

"I would like to see a workable ordinance," commission Chairman Densel Lawhern said Tuesday.

When the commission began formulating a Views Preservation Ordinance several months ago there was no public opposition, Lawhern noted.

"The opposition (to the proposed ordinance) has come to the council," Lawhern added.

Council members said they feared the ordinance could place the city in a no-win position of trying to resolve disputes between homeowners. Councilmen voted unanimously in November to return the ordinance to the Planning Commission.

Although many residents lobbied against the proposed Views Preservation Ordinance, other homeowners who have lost their views to fast-growing trees and hedges on adjacent properties have lobbied for such an ordinance.

The initial ordinance stated that when neighbors quarrel over trees that have grown up and blocked

views, the dispute can be brought before an arbitrator. The arbitrator's decision — whether to have the trees trimmed, removed or left as is — would be final.

City Attorney Kenneth Dickerson had warned that the proposed ordinance might be unenforceable, especially the provision that disputes be brought before arbitrators.

Commissioners Joseph Hannauer and Adele Della Santina have agreed to contact the persons who spoke for and against the proposed ordinance at previous hearings and then try to put together a new ordinance that would be more acceptable to the community.

In other business Tuesday, the planners began reviewing a newly proposed ordinance which would establish "institutional districts" for such things as private schools and colleges and hospitals for patients with physical and/or mental illness.

The proposed ordinance would require master plans for expansion of any such institutions.

The proposal to set "institutional districts" in the city is partly the outgrowth of a City Council ban on any new construction at Belmont Hills Psychiatric Center.

Belmont planners delay decisions

by Robert Gilbert
Times Tribune staff

The Belmont Planning Commission Tuesday night was unable to resolve two issues handed over by the City Council — view preservation and institutional zoning — and will continue discussion of them at future meetings.

In September, the commission had recommended council approval of an ordinance that would allow the city to trim or remove property owners' trees if they obstructed neighbors' views.

Late last year, the council returned the proposal to the commission after the city attorney found it could be illegal to force arbitration between those involved.

On Tuesday, the commission members supported creation of a committee to resolve the view-preservation problem and suggested

that staff study similar ordinances in other cities, including El Cerrito. The commission members differed, however, on whether both sides of the issue should be represented on the committee.

The commission also got its first look at a preliminary zoning change outline that would impose restrictions on the expansion of the Belmont Hills Psychiatric Center, the College of Notre Dame and other large institutions in the city.

In October, the City Council adopted an emergency ordinance delaying for one year the expansion of the psychiatric center under present zoning ordinances.

The action came in response to neighbors' complaints about problems with mental patients and city worries about increased traffic and business congestion on Ralston Avenue, which fronts both the center and the college, City Planner

Jerome Podesta said.

The proposed change calls for creating a new "industrial" zoning category that would restrict the expansion of institutions such as hospitals and parochial schools.

The commission members were divided on the consistency of restricting these institutions while implementing more flexible ordinances for public schools, churches, monasteries and public and private charitable organizations.

Podesta said the psychiatric center and the College of Notre Dame could be considered different because they have a greater impact on the surrounding community.

The commission postponed calling for a public hearing on the zoning issue until it can review more information on the proposal.

Belmont planners discuss ordinance

B.M. TIMES 2/8/84

BELMONT — Planning commissioners said Tuesday that they may not recommend a proposed ordinance requiring a 10-year master plan for any expansion projects at local institutions like psychiatric hospitals.

Instead, the city might modify zoning laws to accomplish the same controls, commissioners said.

The proposed institutional districts ordinance has been discussed by commissioners for several weeks following the City Council's ban on construction at Belmont Hills Psychiatric Center.

The council's moratorium followed complaints that patients were wandering and into neighbors' yards.

Officials from the center have said they're willing to discuss any problems with neighborhood groups. They also have told the city that the center needs a new office building to relieve crowding.

The City Council, however, has

said Belmont needs controls for future expansions not only at the psychiatric center but at other institutions like private schools and colleges.

Planning Commissioner Mary Janet Collins said the agricultural ordinance contains many of the needed controls.

Commissioner John Stuebbe agreed.

The commission might propose adding the master plan requirement to zoning laws, but Commission Chairman Densel Lawhern said it is still in the preliminary stages. Lawhern said any proposals will be forwarded to the council for its review before the commission sets a public hearing.

Meantime, Owen Bruce, representing the City School District, said the proposal to put controls on institutions is making the potential buyer of a closed school "extremely nervous."

Belmont tries to control expansions

S.M. TIMES 3/7/84

BELMONT — City planners agreed Tuesday to give the City Council a draft ordinance that could require a master plan for expansion projects at local institutions like psychiatric hospitals, schools, churches and community centers.

The ordinance would set up an institution zoning district. It has drawn criticism from the Belmont Hills Psychiatric Center, where the City Council recently banned any construction following complaints that patients sometimes wander into neighbors' yards.

"This (ordinance) covers some institutions but not all of them," Hartley Fleischmann, an attorney representing Belmont Hills, told the commission. "I don't think it is fair, fellas."

Commission Chairman Densel Lawhern said he also has reservations about the ordinance, but said that he would support sending it to the City Council for informal review.

In other business:

• Commissioner Joseph Hannauer said an ad hoc committee will soon draft a views preservation ordinance. Commissioners have been discussing such an ordinance for several months.

Belmont

City Junks Parking Assessment Plan

Time ran out on the proposed parking assessment district when Belmont City Council rejected the plan at last week's meeting.

The \$1.7 million plan to develop 140 downtown parking spaces, at \$12,000 per space, was considered too costly at a time when other projects, like repairing the storm drainage system, are still not completed.

A three-week-long survey, conducted by Police Chief Floyd Sanderson, concluded a parking problem only occurs during the noon hour on weekdays.

The council agreed with City Manager Ed Everett's recommen-

dation that the city proceed with a plan to develop the Twin Pines parking lot and impose time restrictions on Sixth Avenue between Hill Street and Ralston Avenue.

The downtown area is 53 spaces, not including two public lots, below the zoning requirements, according to the report.

The Twin Pines lot would be expanded by 22 spaces for a total of 45 spaces, at a cost to the city of \$75,000, or \$3,400 per additional space.

Restricted parking on Sixth Street would make another seven or eight spaces available, according to the report.

Charlotte Nissen, a downtown property owner, accused the council of "whitewashing the whole issue to make it look as if we don't need parking, and we need it bad."

Willetta Steventon, another property owner, said "you can't sweep it under the rug. The plan shows a complete lack of insight."

Councilman Donald Heiman summed up the council's position by saying, "There are times when the price tag is too high. This may be one of those times."

Under the assessment district

plan, the city would have paid half of the \$1.7 million price. Local property owners would have paid the remainder.

The parking situation has been a continuing issue since a 1978 report indicated the area needed 19 more spaces.

Mayor William Moore agreed with the report's recommendation that the issue might best be resolved by the Redevelopment Agency as part of the overall redevelopment plan.

Belmont refuses to play 'musical cars'

By Phyllis Brown

Times Tribune staff

NEW TIMES 3/11/84
The Belmont City Council Tuesday night postponed discussion of a plan to create more parking for downtown employees when it learned they oppose aspects of the plan.

The idea had been placed on the agenda for approval as a routine matter. It was removed from the agenda with little discussion when a representative of a number of downtown employees handed the council a petition asking that the item be removed.

The downtown employees said a two-hour time limit on parking on the street would simply cause them to play "musical chairs" with their cars to avoid receiving parking tickets.

The issue will be discussed, with downtown merchant and employee input, at the next council meeting March 27.

There currently are virtually no time limits on parking on Sixth Avenue between Ralston Avenue and Hill Street, near the core of the central business district. Yet many downtown workers complain they have no place to park.

That is because commuters park their cars on the street and walk to the CalTrain Depot at the intersection of Ralston Avenue and El Camino Real.

Commuters' cars frequently are parked there from early in the morning until late in the evening, according to a February Police Department survey.

The time limit was proposed to discourage

commuters from parking on the street. But the employees said on the petition that two-hour time limit on the short stretch of Sixth Avenue would not go far enough to solve their parking problems.

Mike Rodman, owner of the Coastal Copy Center, 926 Ralston Ave., told the council that a two-hour parking limit would create more problems than it would solve for the downtown merchants, who must fight shoppers and commuters for parking spaces.

"This would only mean the employees downtown would have to play musical chairs with their cars," Rodman told the council.

Downtown business owners have complained

(OVER)



Gerry Younkin
... tension among employees.



Lynette DeGante
...no place to park.

for more than a decade that there is a need for more parking in the shopping district. Several years ago a downtown parking assessment district was proposed to raise money to finance new parking lots downtown to amend the problem.

That proposal was scrapped only two weeks ago, when the City Council was told that the need for parking is not great enough to spend the thousands of dollars required to build new parking lots.

The Police Department survey found there is a lack of downtown parking only during the time between noon and 3 p.m., when restaurants and banks are busiest.

So, the two-hour parking limit was proposed to eliminate some of the commuter parking and make room for more employees and shoppers.

Gerry Younkin, owner of the Ralston Florist shop at 936 Ralston Ave., said Sixth Avenue between Hill Street and Ralston Avenue is

filled with cars by the time she arrives for work at 8:30 a.m. That leaves her and her employees only one- or two-hour parking spots for parking. That is creating tensions between employees who must compete for spaces.

"We park in the Walgreen's parking lot (at the corner of Ralston Avenue and El Camino Real) sometimes, and I know they eventually are going to kick us out," Younkin said.

Next-door, Lynette DeGante, at Michelle's Beauty Boutique, 940 Ralston Ave., said she and the eight other hairdressers who work in the shop also are frustrated about the situation.

"We can't park in back of the building because it's reserved for customers, we can't park across the street at the (Wells Fargo) bank because that's reserved for their customers. There's no place for us to park," DeGante said.

Younkin, DeGante and Rodman said they believe four-hour limited parking on Sixth Avenue would be preferable to a two-hour parking zone. Perhaps employees could be issued permits for a two-hour zone, Rodman said.

Belmont petitioners settle for a stop sign

Times Tribune staff
PEN. TIMES 5/23/84

Fairway Drive in Belmont will not become a one-way street as requested by some residents, but will acquire a new stop sign instead, the City Council decided Tuesday night.

Members of the Barrett Homeowners and Residents Association and other area residents had asked the city to convert Fairway into a one-way street or install a stop sign in order to reduce speed and slow bus traffic along the thoroughfare. However, the city staff and the South County Fire Authority opposed making Fairway a one-way street.

The council agreed and directed

that a stop sign be placed at the intersection of Fairway Drive and Avon Avenue instead.

In other action Tuesday night, the council:

- Issued a resolution of appreciation to Rick Silva, recreation supervisor, for his work in making the city's first art and wine festival a success. The festival, held last weekend at Twin Pines, resulted in a \$7,500 contribution to the city and drew so many people that supplies of wine and glasses ran out.

- Appointed Rich Haffey, director of recreational services for Belmont and vice mayor of South San Francisco, as Belmont's representative to the San Mateo County Council of Mayors Legislative Com-

mittee.

- Approved a budget item of \$12,000 to finance interpretation of studies on future storm drainage needs as requested by the Storm Drainage Task Force.

- Allocated \$5,000 for a geological survey in the San Juan Canyon area.

- Denied an appeal by Lex Fletcher for a variance to allow a larger house than permitted to be built on a steep hillside at 2935 San Juan Blvd.

- Adopted an urgency ordinance requiring a special use permit to be obtained for building on 30 to 40 parcels throughout the city that are presently not zoned in conformance with the general plan.

Parking consensus is elusive

Council and merchants are at cross purposes

Times Tribune staff

VEN TINES 4/1/84

The Belmont City Council last week shelved a proposal to place a four-hour time limit on parking on Sixth Avenue between Hill Street and Ralston Avenue because it met with opposition from the downtown merchants it was designed to help.

The four-hour time limit was proposed by the city staff as a means of limiting the amount of commuter parking on the street and making it available for downtown employee parking.

The theory was that commuters would avoid parking on the street because they would be unable to move their cars and would therefore be ticketed.

The downtown employees, however, said the four-hour time limit would only force them to play mu-



Belmont

Times Tribune staff photo by Sam Forencich

sical chairs with their cars and would be an inadequate solution to their problem.

The council, in its Tuesday night meeting, tabled the proposal and directed its staff to meet with the downtown merchants to develop an alternative plan.

Some councilmen clearly were annoyed with the merchants' response to their suggestion.

"I spend a lot of time down there.

This view of a section of Belmont's Sixth Avenue between Hill Street and Ralston Avenue gives an idea of the prevailing situation. The City Council this week decided not to set a four-hour

I have gone downtown at various times during the day and I have yet to find a parking problem," Councilman Robert Hoffman said.

Consideration of the parking problem had been set in motion by complaints by downtown business owners that their employees could not find parking spaces because of

commuter parking.

The merchants' dissatisfaction had been the impetus for circulation of a petition to form a parking assessment district to build three new parking lots. The district would be financed jointly by the city and the downtown property owners.

parking limit on the street. The limit was proposed by city staff members in response to complaints from local merchants, but merchants then said they did not like the proposed solution.

Petitioning began in the 1970s, but enough business owners' signatures were not gathered until the end of last year.

Although most of the owners indicated they would be willing to finance the district, City Manager Edward Everett decided that, since

the issue was last studied during the 1970s, the need for parking should be reviewed again.

The result was a staff report stating that, except for the time between noon and 3 p.m., there is no substantial downtown parking problem and new parking lots are not needed.

City Delays Action On Parking

CALL ENO 3/21/84
A petition signed by angry business owners and employees protesting the proposed parking restrictions on Sixth Avenue prompted the city council to delay action on the matter until next week.

The council was also given a list of 30 applicants for the storm drainage task force at last week's meeting. City Manager Ed Everett asked the council to narrow the field of applicants to 15, from which the task force will be chosen.

The petition, with 104 signatures, was given to the council by Mike Rodman, owner of Coastal Copy Center. Rodman asked the council to hold a discussion before taking action.

The plan to restrict parking comes on the heels of the council's decision to scrap the proposed downtown parking assessment district — a plan downtown property owners supported. Instead, the council gave the go-ahead to impose parking restrictions and improve the Twin Pines parking lot.

According to a staff report, the two-hour time limit would rid the area of commuter parking and make an additional seven or eight spaces available.

The time limit would also force business owners and employees to find parking elsewhere in an already crowded downtown area.

"For those seven or eight spaces, the rest of us are going to play musical cars for life," Rodman said.

"We have inadequate parking. I've seen customers drive up, find no parking, then turn around and leave."

Besides the lack of customer parking, Rodman said most of the leases for downtown business prohibit employee parking in the customer lots.

Rodman said he plans to recommend imposing a four-hour limit or the use of special permits for business owners and employees.

Either method would allow the business to operate without the disruption of moving cars every two hours and would solve the commuter parking problem.

Rodman said it only took two hours to gather the 104 signatures, and there was unanimous support against the restrictions.

Rodman anticipates a large turnout at next week's meeting. "I'm not big on forming organizations or committees," said Rodman, "but maybe it's time to reorganize a downtown merchant's association."

The formation of a storm drainage task force was first proposed in January after the proposed assessment district was overwhelmingly rejected by Belmont citizens in December.

Everett recommended the task force be representative of residents, business owners and property owners from all areas of Belmont.

Car-repair firms protest city policy

J. HINES 6/27/84
BELMONT — The owners of some auto repair shops on Old County Road objected Tuesday to a new get-tough policy in their area.

They stated their case before the City Council, which previously had ordered a cleanup along Old County Road, north of Ralston Avenue.

The council has given the small businesses there 60 days to tidy up. If they don't, fines will be imposed.

Spokesmen for the shops objected, and put forth arguments in their favor, among them:

- That the shops were there first, well before apartments were constructed along the street.

- That only a few of the repair businesses sully the region to any marked degree.

- That the west side of Old County Road, where the shops are, has no sidewalks and just a couple of street lights.

- That the shops are so small that owners are forced to work on some cars and trucks outside.

- That communication with the city on all this has been minimal.

- That Belmont wouldn't be Belmont without the auto-repair firms.

The council, responding to complaints, has ordered the shops to keep their vehicles inside and to remove junk, scrap and other debris creating what is seen as a blight in that part of town.

Nine speakers, one of whom referred to himself facetiously as "the blight of Belmont," criticized the council's action.

The council was urged to seek some sort of compromise with the repair firms.

Mayor William Hardwick recommended that the issue be placed on the council's July 10 agenda for further discussion.

Councilman Joe Green reminded his colleagues and the audience that the question of the condition of the Old County Road neighborhood has been a council concern for at least three years.

In other business, the council:

- Agreed to have the city staff seek proposals for a site for a senior citizens center. Five locations have been mentioned by Rick Haffey, recreation superintendent.

- Adopted the city's 1984-85 budget. The new budget totals just under \$6.5 million. In approving the budget, the council also decided to bow out of membership in the Association of Bay Area Governments. The cost of that membership was \$2,200. Only Councilman Donald Heiman opposed that move.

- Examined a \$1.6 million 1984-85 budget for the Belmont Fire Protection District. The budget is scheduled to be approved at the council's July 10 meeting.

Belmont puts the brakes on hot rodders

By Phyllis Brown
Times Tribune staff

DN.TIMES 5/8/84
Belmont's hot rodders would find a fast route to traffic court under a proposed ordinance making it illegal to squeal tires and leave skid marks on streets and in private parking lots.

The City Council tonight will consider enacting an ordinance outlawing "burning rubber." The law, one of the few existing on the Peninsula, was proposed by the Police Department in response to an increase in the number of "squealers," usually youthful motorists, and an increase in complaints about the practice.

City Manager Ed Everett said he believes the council will adopt the ordinance. The council will meet at 8 p.m. in the council chambers in City Hall, 1365 Fifth Ave.

Police Chief Floyd Sanderson said a violation of the law would be an infraction resulting in a citation. If approved, the law will go into effect in mid-June.

Sanderson said the law is necessary because the state Motor Vehicle Code does not give police enough power to address the problem.

"Officers of the Police Department occasionally encounter motor vehicle operators on public and private property who accelerate in such a fashion as to cause the tires to lose traction and squeal noisily," Sanderson said in a memorandum to the council.

"I'm sure you are familiar with the phenomenon," he said.

The driving practice is a potential threat to pedestrians, Sanderson said.

"If someone should step in front of the car, it would be very difficult for the motorist to stop," he said.

The state Motor Vehicle Code

prohibits "exhibitions of speed" on public roadways. It does not outlaw excessive acceleration that causes tires to break traction, squeal and leave skid marks.

Police in other cities, however, said the new law was unnecessary in their cities because "burning rubber" is covered under the vehicle code's speeding categories. Sunnyvale police Capt. Al Scott said when a driver punches his accelerator from a full stop and starts fast enough to burn rubber, the car's wheels spin so fast that the driver cannot control them.

Therefore, police can cite motorists for exhibition of speed or driving at speeds greater than reasonable — both infractions under the vehicle code.

Palo Alto, Los Altos and Sunnyvale police all said they have cited drivers under the vehicle code for exhibition of speed.

San Mateo, however, outlawed excessive acceleration of a motor vehicle in 1979, with a fine similar to those for other traffic infractions, said San Mateo police Sgt. Jim Steinrok.

The new Belmont ordinance will allow police officers to cite tire squealers, not only on the streets, but in parking lots and on other private property, Sanderson pointed out.

The proposed ordinance states simply: "It is unlawful for any person operating a motor vehicle within the city to so accelerate the same as to cause audible noise by tire friction on pavement or to cause the tires of said vehicle to leave skid marks on the pavement, except when such acceleration is reasonably necessary to avoid a collision. Any person violating this section shall be guilty of an infraction, which shall be punishable to the extent of the laws of this state for infractions."

Belmont council outlaws 'burning rubber' on public roads and private parking lots

By Phyllis Brown
Times Tribune staff

DN.TIMES 5/9/84
Drivers' fond of making fast starts that cause tires to squeal and leave skid marks will be breaking the law if they do so in Belmont.

The City Council Tuesday night outlawed "squealing" and leaving skid marks on public roads and in private parking lots. Noting that such driving practices are a hazard to pedestrians and other motorists, the council unanimously agreed that "burning rubber" is unacceptable in Belmont.

The law was proposed by police Chief Floyd Sanderson in response to a recent

Ordinance covers 'squealing' on public roads and private parking lots

increase in complaints about youthful motorists making fast starts in shopping center parking lots.

Merchants in the Carlmont Shopping Center, at the intersection of Ralston Avenue and Alameda de las Pulgas, and in the Bay View Shopping Center, at the intersection of Ralston Avenue and El Camino Real, were especially concerned about the problem, Sanderson said.

The state Motor Vehicle Code outlaws "exhibition driving" but does not give police the power to give tickets for squealing, Sanderson said.

The new ordinance will go into effect in mid-June.

The law applies to public roads and private property, including shopping center parking lots.

Violation of the law could result in a citation and a maximum fine of \$500 or six months in the county jail, City Clerk James McLaughlin said.

Belmont's neighboring cities, San Carlos and San Mateo, already have laws against tire squealing.

In other action, the council unanimously

approved changing the zoning and land-use designation of the McDougal School site, as recommended by the Planning Commission last week.

The decision will allow a private school that specializes in correcting learning disabilities to lease the facility.

The decision changed the site's land-use designation from public facility to private institution and its zoning from public school to planned development and agriculture. Private schools are allowed under the city's agriculture zoning.

rubber'

Without the changes, the Charles Armstrong School, which has agreed to lease the site from the Belmont School District, would have been an illegal tenant at the site.

The school for dysphasic children, now located in Menlo Park, is scheduled to occupy the former elementary school at 1405 Solano Drive July 1. It will begin offering classes Aug. 1.

The school primarily will use the school buildings. Because of an agreement between the city and the school district, the city Recreation Department will continue to use the site's playgrounds and ballfields. The agreement is a boon to the city, which has a shortage of playing fields.

Belmont council gets tough on Old County Road shops

S.M. TIMES 6/13/84

BELMONT — The owners of auto repair shops on Old County Road have 60 days to clean up their area or they will be fined by police, the City Council decided Tuesday.

"I say we should enforce," Councilman Robert Hoffman said during a study session with Police Chief Floyd Sanderson.

The council recently launched a campaign to clean up the blighted strip of auto repairs shops and other businesses that stretch for more than one mile along the eastern edge of the Southern Pacific Railroad.

"The businesses have been allowed, over the years, to park vehicles on the public right-of-way without sanction," according to a task force report given the council. "This has given way to the general

accumulation of junk, scrap materials, and even actual work being performed on the city right-of-way."

Chief Sanderson said that he talked to a dozen shop owners, many of whom pointed out that their businesses are cramped between the railroad and street.

Sanderson said the owners wanted to know what they can do.

The council said they can begin by moving cars, junk and scrap materials off the public right-of-way.

The council also noted that several businesses do maintain tidy shops and keep their sidewalks clean.

Sanderson said other shops aren't so neat. "Four or five businesses are a real problem."

The council then decided to give the owners 60 days to clear the public right-of-way and directed police to

continue enforcing the four-hour parking limit on that side of the street.

The police chief said he will return to the council with a progress report at the end of the 60 days.

In other business the council:

- Announced that neighborhoods will be polled within the next two or three weeks on a plan for the city to buy playing fields at three closed neighborhood schools. The Park People organization is also proposing that the city buy Barrett School and use it for a community center. The results of the poll will determine whether the council puts the proposal on the November ballot.

- Agreed to set a contract with Dr. Cecil Reeves, who will provide facilitation skills to the storm drainage

task force. The contract is not to exceed \$6,000.

- Approved a general plan amendment that could allow a warehouse/shop building at 513 Mountain View Ave.

- Authorized City Manager Ed Everett to co-sign an application for a use permit for Kumam Corp.'s mixed-use development east of Bayshore Freeway. City Attorney Kenneth Dickerson said the unusual move was necessary because the project, if approved, "would entail building large public improvements which would benefit city property as well as Kumam."

Everett said the council action does not mean a go-ahead for the project; it just allows plans to be forwarded.

Belmont's king-sized problem

By Ann Gibbons

Times Tribune staff

PEN. TIMES 6/11/84

When it rains in Belmont, it pours — into intersections, businesses and homes.

The storm drainage system is so poor that rain water seldom stays in the drains.

Instead, it splashes all over roadways and floods homes and intersections. During the harsh winter of 1983, damage from storm flooding in Belmont exceeded \$1 million, according to city officials.

The problem has so frustrated the town's City Council that it recently appointed a 23-member task force to study the storm drainage system and come up with ways to improve it.

The council formed the task force after residents last fall rejected its plan to raise \$15 million by forming a storm-drain assessment district.

The council's response was to pass the burden of finding money for the repairs to the new task force.

On Saturday, the members of the Storm Drainage Task Force toured the sewers and storm drainage canals of Belmont to have a look for themselves at the inadequate sewer system.

The 15 members who toured the system Saturday clearly were discouraged by what they saw (the other members toured the system last week.)

"We could spend half a day in the area behind (the College of) Notre Dame — it's a liquid swamp after it rains," said Russ Wertenberg as he was shown where rainwater rushes down Manzanita Avenue and into the garages and living rooms of people living on Notre Dame Avenue.

The main drainage canal that carries water from north and south Belmont to the Bay runs underneath the Church of



Times Tribune photo by Maria Pease

Belmont Storm Drainage Task Force members Joe Crongle and Bettie Anne Nicewonger take their measure of one of the town's dilapidated drainage culverts.

the Good Shepherd and the City Hall on Fifth Avenue and beneath the Iron Gate Restaurant on El Camino Real.

From the church's entrance, the task force members could see the open creek meandering between the cement pillars supporting the church, and how it was eroding the pillars.

A few blocks away on Old County Road, a culvert built in 1902 supports the main tracks of the Southern Pacific Railroad only a few feet above Belmont Creek, the main storm drainage canal.

The creek is clogged with algae and brambles and weeds.

When a storm sweeps through, the clogged creek usually overflows and floods the busy intersection of Old County Road and Harbor Boulevard.

Some of the worst storm drainage problems for residents are in the rustic neighborhood on San Juan Boulevard, where development has occurred haphazardly in the past 30 years.

Some residents have installed their own pipes to transfer the water, but many just dump the water right onto a neighbor's property below, where it can cause serious damage.

Belmont decisions due tonight

Council will allocate federal funds at meeting

By Phyllis Brown

Times Tribune staff

PEN. TIMES 6/20/84

Social service agencies serving the disabled, the abused and the emotionally disturbed asked for economic support Tuesday during the first of two Belmont City Council budget hearings.

The council will decide which requests to fund when it approves the budget in a second hearing tonight in City Hall, 1365 Fifth Ave. The meeting will begin at 7 o'clock.

The city has a federal revenue-sharing allocation of about \$150,000 for fiscal 1984-85. Most of the money probably will be spent on city needs, such as new police cars and park maintenance.

The Police Department asked for \$30,752 to buy three police cars and \$27,171 for animal-control services. The Parks and Leisure Services Department asked for \$64,219 for park maintenance.

Those requests total \$122,142. In addition, five social-service agencies asked the city for funding to continue their services to Belmont residents.

The Center for the Independence of the Disabled, which is based in Belmont, requested \$3,300 for general support for its programs, which help handicapped persons lead more independent lives.

The Whole Earth Youth Diversion Program, a counseling program that seeks to divert troubled youth throughout the county from the criminal justice system, has asked for \$17,000 in funding.

The San Mateo Women's Shelter, which provides shelter for battered women and their children, requested \$1,000 in funding.

The Human Investment Project of San Mateo has requested \$5,000 for its Shared Homes program, which primarily serves senior citizens by helping them find affordable shared housing.

The requests for revenue-sharing funds total \$139,542. Revenue-sharing funds are grants the federal government gives to cities to use at

City faces election expenses

Times Tribune staff
PEN. TIMES 6/10/84
Belmont residents take advantage of their constitutional right to vote with more fervor than their neighbors in other Peninsula cities. But that practice could have a high price tag this year.

The year is only half over and city activists already are vying to have the city hold three special elections: a recall election, an election to replace any ousted councilmen and a special tax measure to pay for parkland.

The three proposals could cost a total of

Belmont

\$33,000, City Clerk James McLaughlin said.

The cost of the elections wouldn't diminish the level of basic services the city may provide, Finance Director Michael Shelton said, but it definitely will cut into the general fund.

McLaughlin has hired a staff of six temporary clerical workers to help him verify the legitimacy of signatures on petitions demanding a recall of City Councilmen William Hardwick, Donald Helman, William Moore and Joseph Green.

The salary for the clerical workers, who are being paid about \$6 an hour, will cost the city about \$4,000, McLaughlin said.

If the petitioners have failed to gather enough legitimate signatures, there will be no recall election and no election to replace the ousted councilmen.

If enough signatures were gathered to recall any of the four, the city will face a special election that will cost \$12,000.

McLaughlin said he will not know if the citizens have gathered enough signatures to hold a recall election Friday.

If the councilmen slated for recall are removed, a second election to pick their successors also would cost \$12,000.

That would place the entire cost of the recall at around \$28,000, McLaughlin said.

A recent proposal by a group called the Park People that seeks to have citizens tax themselves to buy surplus Belmont School District land for parks would cost considerably less money.

The proposal is a new one, and it is too early to tell if the Park People will convince the City Council to put the special tax on the November ballot. The cost of doing so would be \$5,000.

Budget time in Belmont

Hearing set for tonight; drain issue unresolved

By Phyllis Brown
Times Tribune staff
PEN. TIMES 6/19/84

A \$4.5 million city budget that should provide for all of Belmont's needs except its most critical one — storm drain repairs — will be considered by the City Council in the first of two budget hearings tonight.

The hearing will begin at 7 p.m. in the study session chambers in City Hall, 1365 Fifth Ave. The budget is scheduled for approval in a second hearing at 7 p.m. Wednesday.

The budget for fiscal 1984-85, which begins July 1, would fund city services at their present level, city Finance Director Michael Shelton said Monday. Money also would be available to hire a second city planner, another building inspector and a part-time employee to serve the needs of senior citizens, as Shelton has recommended.

But the rosy financial picture will change dramatically if Belmont must make emergency repairs to its dilapidated storm drain system, Shelton said.

Last year, expensive repairs made to a burst drain pipe in the Carlmont Village Shopping Center and at two other sites cost the city \$972,000. To pay for the repairs, the city took \$522,000 from the general fund — money that could have been used for recreation and other services — and added it to \$350,000 in the storm drain fund, which is made up of fees paid by developers when they begin new projects.

If the city is faced with more emergency storm drain repairs in 1984-85, all of the funds to pay for them will have to come from the general fund, Shelton said. The storm drain fund has been exhausted, and significant new revenues are not expected this year.

The storm drain repairs made last year did not solve the city's drainage problems. Engineers have said the entire 50-year-old system needs a \$15 million overhaul. The city does not have the money to foot the bill.

An assessment district proposed to finance the repairs was rejected by residents, who said it cost too much. Now the city is counting on a citizens' task force to find a way to pay for the work.

In the meantime, the city will hold its breath and hope that heavy winter rainfall does not necessitate another look at the city budget, Shelton said.

The city's total general fund revenues for fiscal 1984-85 will be \$4,513,819, Shelton said. Add to that \$265,908 in reserve funds from 1983-84 and the city will have total resources of \$4,779,727.

Shelton said the city's expenditures for services will be \$4,162,304. Those expenditures will leave a balance of \$617,423, of which \$350,000 will be kept in reserves. The remaining \$267,423 in discretionary funds is available to pay for new employees or for whatever the council wishes, Shelton said.

Belmont Is In Trouble

Engineers Warn City Storm Drains Are Inadequate

CARL ENG. 6/16/84
By STEVEN STARK

According to observations made by the Belmont Storm Drainage Task Force as they made a 12-site tour of the city's storm drainage system, Belmont is clearly in trouble.

Add to the existing storm drainage problem nearly \$4 million in outstanding flood claims made against the city between 1980 and 1983 and the situation might well be spelled double trouble.

Underlining the urgency of the situation, engineers from the firm of Wilsey and Ham, hired by the city in 1980 to update their 1963 and 1965 reports, state that "the heavy rainfall experienced during the winter of 1979/80... serve to dramatize the general inadequacy of the city's existing storm drainage facilities."

According to Wilsey and Ham, an engineering, planning, and landscape firm with offices in Foster City, these inadequacies fall into three main categories: non-existent open or closed storm drainage facilities (including the lack of street gutters and underground piping in the San Juan Hills area); inadequately-sized existing facilities; and poorly located, non-existent, and undersized catch basins.

TASK FORCE

Appointed by the city council after the taxpayers rejected a proposed \$15 million storm drainage assessment district in December 1983, the 23-member task force has been charged with developing ways of alleviating the storm drain problem and assisting in the implementation of their recommendations.

According to one task force

member's view, it might be easier to visit Judy Garland in the Land of Oz than rectify the past mistakes in Belmont's "storm drain system," especially in the San Juan Hills area.

"The engineering solution is really quite simple," the committee member said with the understanding that anonymity was granted, "we should just rip 15 or so houses out to allow for better flow. But this, of course, is not politically expedient."

"Big problems," was the initial assessment of task force member Nels Hansen, representing the city's senior citizens.

Some of the "horror sites," as tour guide/city manager Ed Everett aptly described the dozen stopping points, seem to back the two opinions above.

ANNUAL FLOOD

A house located at Bay Court has no choice but to be flooded annually. Situated at a point where nature and gravity collide everytime the rains falls, lawsuits from the past three floods still remain to be settled by the city.

At the Cipriani School, four pipes jut out onto Ponce Avenue, poised like silent cannons, to flood the neighbors down the street, where the natural flow of water from three separate areas collides at the Skarpnes residence.

Throughout the San Juan Hills area, pipes jutting out into air provide "diffuse drainage"—a nice way of saying the pipes lead nowhere but downhill. All along Notre Dame Avenue the conspicuous lack of storm drains and curbs leave

Flood waters no choice but to follow the path of least resistance—never mind the homes built in the path.

WATERS MEET

At San Juan Boulevard, where Laurel Creek and the city's storm drain system meets, floods are a natural result when the piping for both is clearly inadequate.

And on went the tour, raising optimistic task force chit-chat of the lucky city residents who really don't know what floods are until they've been in Ethiopia when the Nile River floods its banks, and recollections of past city flood horror tales.

For committee member Dick Green, solutions won't come without losses.

"Nobody can win—it's like putting your head in the proverbial lion's mouth," Green said.

Taskforce Agrees On Flooding Solutions

CARL END 8/29/84
By Steven Stark

Ten assumptions were agreed upon by the Belmont Storm Drain Task Force in their efforts to find a solution to repairing the city's system.

A central tenant, however, of whether the city's General Plan could be viewed as the launching pad for progress, failed to gain the necessary support.

The task force is comprised of 22 citizens selected by the city council after citizen opposition to a storm drain assessment district. The group met last Wednesday night to reach an agreement on possible solutions to the city's dilapidated and sometimes non-existent storm drain system.

At dispute was an assumption "the solution to be devised should meet the future needs of the city as defined by the general plan."

"How can we develop solutions if we don't know what the launching pad is, asked moderator Cecil Reeves, "this is a basic issue."

Those assumptions which did receive the necessary approval of 85 percent of the 21 members present include:

- There is a storm drain problem in Belmont.
- The 1980 Wilsey-Ham report provides a basis from which to evaluate potential alternatives (this was changed from "accurate estimate" and "reasonable guideline").
- An acceptable solution may require some infringement of private property (with the concurrence of one member overheard as saying, "As long as it's not my house").
- Flooding on streets is an acceptable part of the solution. (According to Wilsey-Ham report, construction of curbs are still necessary if pipe construction and installation is to be done properly. Their cost estimates did not include the expense of these improvements.

- An acceptable solution will minimize, but not eliminate, flooding in habitable structures. (Implicit in this is one member's comment that, "We could throw a billion dollars into Belmont and still have some flooding occur, somewhere").

- A long-term phased solution is an acceptable solution.

- An acceptable solution will give first priority to nature and second priority to engineering solutions. (This idea is best captured by one member's comment, "It's best to go with the flow than against it.")

- Recommendations made by the task force will stem primarily from a cost benefit analysis tempered by human factors.

- The city will provide maintenance necessary to support the recommendations.

- The county will participate and cooperate in the solutions to the storm drain problem.

"Sometimes the democratic process is a real challenge," Reeves said, jokingly, of attempting 85 percent agreement on an issue.

Drainage Issue Put Off

CARL ENO 6/27/84

By Steven Stark

Belmont's \$4.5 million budget for fiscal year 1984-85 provides for all the base-level services of the previous year and for more than one-quarter of a million dollars in capital improvements. It does not, however, address storm drain repairs in any way.

According to city manager Ed Everett, final decisions on storm drain repairs and it's funding awaits the recommendations of the 23-member Storm Drain Task Force in October.

Adopted at the city Council's meeting last Wednesday, the budget represents total general revenue funds of \$4,513,800 and expenditures of \$4,162,300, leaving the city with a projected ending surplus of \$351,500.

In addition to funding city services at their present base, level, money will be budgeted to hire an assistant city planner and a part-time employee to serve senior citizens, according to Finance Director Michael Shelton.

Should Belmont need to make emergency repairs to its dilapidated storm drainage system, however, the city's financial health could be seriously jeopardized. Last year the city spent nearly \$1 million to pay for emergency storm drain repairs, depleting the city storm drain funds

and borrowing some \$522,000 from the general fund.

Engineers have said the city's 50 year old drain system is in need of \$15 million overhaul. The same engineering report, however, said even more money would need be spent for curbs, gutters and smaller pipe hook-ups to the updated system.

Highlights of city spending on discretionary funds and their dollar amounts are:

- Part-time senior citizen coordinator—\$16,000
- Countywide Narcotics Task Force—\$16,000
- San Juan Canyon Study—\$40,000
- Assistant planner—\$22,000
- Twin Pines electric upgrade—\$13,000
- Special Election—\$5,000

In addition, nearly \$140,000 in general revenue sharing funds were allocated with \$30,000 going towards the purchase of three police patrol cars, animal control services (\$27,000), School District turf maintenance (\$64,200). Additional funds were granted to the YMCA's Whole Earth Diversion Program for youth (\$17,000) and the Center for the Independence of the Disabled (\$750).

Belmont:

Council Allocates Funds For Study, Supervisor

CARL ENO 8/22/84

Belmont's senior citizen's quest to establish a senior center came one step closer to reality on Monday, August 13, as the city council unanimously agreed to hire an architect to select a site, conduct a preliminary design, and plot a budget for construction of the center.

Group 4 Architecture of South San Francisco was selected from three competing firms, according to, city Recreation Director Rick Haffey.

Funding for the study, which brought applause from seniors who packed half the council chambers, will come from budgeted Redevelopment Agency money.

Depending on the site selected and the services required, fees will range from \$21,110 to \$31,470, Haffey said. The Redevelopment Agency budgeted \$50,000 for these services.

Haffey said site selection for the senior center should be accomplished by mid-November, while the rest of the work should be completed by January 1985, in time for the next budget season.

Belmont senior citizen's club President Hugh Slay thanked the city council for the progress being made to date, but added, "we've got a lot more to do" to realize the 15-year dream of the city's seniors to have a center.

In a related matter, Haffey announced the new senior citizen recreation supervisor would assume her duties by mid-September. The new, part-time senior citizen assistant, Geanne Gillispy, is a graduate of Humboldt State University and has served the senior citizen's recreational needs in Burlingame.

In landing the position, Haffey said, Gillispy bested 16 applicants for the job.

Referendum On Parks Approved For Belmont

CARL ENO 8/1/84
Steven Stark

To the applause of its proponents, the Belmont City Council approved a November ballot measure asking citizens to approve a one-time assessment of \$160 to buy the playfields of three closed schools and one school building.

The special tax referendum, initiated by the citizen's group called the Park People, will go to the voters for approval during the general election November 6. Funds raised by the assessment, estimated to generate \$1.25 million if approved by two-thirds of the voters, will go toward purchasing the playfields of the closed McDougal, Cipriani and Barrett School sites and the building at Barrett.

A poll conducted by the Park People earlier in the month revealed that 74 percent of those responding were in favor of buying the surplus school lands for park and recreation uses.

The council's unanimous vote brought applause by the measure's proponents, and council member Donald Heiman said the acquisition of the sites "will enhance the entire city."

Rick Haffey, city recreation supervisor, called the need for additional parks and open space "overriding."

"There's truly a shortage of playfields in Belmont, and this is an excellent opportunity for the citizens to do something about this," Haffey said.

Haffey said the 8-10 groups who use the city playfields actually fight among themselves for field time. Field use is booked year-round, Haffey said, and rehabilitation and improvement on city fields are seldom achieved due to the heavy use on them.

In other council action:

Meeting as the directors of the Belmont Fire District, the council adopted a \$600,000 property tax reduction for the fiscal year 1984-85. Originally slated in the budget was a \$300,000 reduction.

City finance director Michael Shelton said the reduction to homeowners would amount to 5.4 cents on every dollar of property tax paid. Prior to the reduction, property owners were assessed 17 cents on every dollar of property tax paid; with the reduction, it is now 11.5 cents to every dollar of property tax paid, Shelton said.

Rates for sanitary sewer services for restaurants, public facilities and commercial/industrial sites were set, with increases ranging from 3.5 percent for commercial establishments to 23 percent for restaurants. The new rates, effective retroactively July 1, reflect the actual costs of services, as calculated by the South Bayside Sanitary System.

Rates for residential users remains unchanged.

The Belmont City Council next meets August 14 at 8 p.m. in council chambers, 1365 Fifth Ave.

Sanitary Sewer Rates

No Increase Planned

CARL ENO 8/8/84

Belmont has had more than its share of storm drain flooding problems. In comparison with their neighbors in Menlo Park, Atherton and the rest of the West Bay Sanitary District, however, Belmont and San Carlos are sitting pretty.

Recently a proposed user and connection fee (averaging a 400 percent increase) was turned down by the governing board of directors for the West Bay Sanitary District. The fees are deemed necessary by District Manager Steven Ford to both replace pipes that in some cases are 80 years-old, and to maintain financial viability for the sewer system.

"We're operating in a negative financial deficit," Ford said recently.

Luckily for Belmont and San Carlos this is not the case.

In both cities, ongoing projects, financed to the tune of approximately \$200,000 annually, replace old or broken lines.

"We've an ongoing maintenance policy," said John Hopkins, Bel-

mont public works department director.

Because of this ongoing maintenance, Hopkins said, he doesn't foresee the need for city sewer users to be hit with any dramatic fee increase in coming years.

Annual maintenance in San Carlos should save users the heartache of dramatic rate increases in the near future, according to City Engineer Parviz Mokhtari.

A recent study revealed that 70 percent of San Carlos' sanitary sewage problems are located in the White Oaks area, Mokhtari said.

"In the long run we will have to construct storm drains in some parts of the city to stop the infiltration of sewage," Mokhtari said.

A revenue short-fall of \$31.5 million (at the present rate schedule) is projected for the West Bay Sanitary District over the next 40 years.

In San Carlos and Belmont, residents can flush comfortably.

Measure B: A taxing issue about the future of school land in Belmont

By Phyllis Brown

Times Tribune staff

11/2/84

Land at three closed school sites would be purchased for recreational use if Belmont voters approve a special tax measure on Tuesday's ballot.

Measure B asks voters to agree to pay a one-time tax of \$160 per parcel to allow the city to purchase 10 acres of playgrounds from the Belmont School District.

The \$1.25 million raised would buy the buildings and playgrounds at the Barrett School site and playgrounds at the Cipriani School and McDougal School sites. School buildings at the Barrett site would be used for a community recreation center.

The Park People, the citizens' group that has proposed the purchase, asserts that citizens should approve the measure to preserve

community control over badly needed open space.

If Measure B fails, the city has no other viable means of paying for the purchase, the group says. The loss of the fields would mean a loss to a variety of community groups that use them for sporting activities.

"Belmont has fewer acres of recreation land per capita than any city on the Peninsula. The school

sites represent some of the last available open space in the community. The city has the opportunity to acquire part of these sites at well below market value," Park People Chairman David Frydenlund said.

Frydenlund said while Belmont has a good deal of natural open space, much of it is hilly and unusable for recreation.

The city would buy the fields at

the three school sites under the provisions of the Naylor Bill. The state law allows government agencies such as cities and counties to buy surplus school land at a quarter of its open market value.

The buildings at the Barrett site, however, would be purchased at a market value cost. The school district has not stated how much each part of the package would cost, but it has said it would accept the \$1.25

be paid for through the city general fund, Frydenlund said. The city already pays for a portion of the maintenance costs of school district playing fields, which the Parks and Leisure Services Department uses for its activities.

Measure B has little stated opposition. The author of the argument against passage of Measure B in the Belmont ballot pamphlet, Sheila O'Shea, agrees with the Park People that the city needs park land. However, she argues the city has other means of acquiring it.

The city and the school district earlier this year discussed city acquisition of the park land — not through a sale, but through a trade.

The city would give the school district a more valuable zoning on a part of one of the sites so the land would bring a higher price when sold to a private developer. In return, the city would get the park land at the three sites. The city had not proposed buying the Barrett School buildings.

"Last spring, your council proposed that the school district give Belmont three park sites, in exchange for upgrading zoning on part of their surplus property. The district liked that proposal, so this exchange still can be made, without cost to taxpayers," O'Shea wrote in her argument.

In response to her argument, Frydenlund said the trade deal had not been firmly agreed upon. It probably would have met with a good deal of community opposition because it could have allowed more intensive development on part of the Barrett site.

"We saw a lot of problems with that idea, not the least of which was none of the people around the site was interested in having the high value zoning in their neighborhood. The site that would have been traded we considered the prime recreational land," Frydenlund said.

O'Shea also noted that ball fields are proposed for the Kumam Corp.'s Island Park development, which is under consideration for construction east of the Bayshore Freeway.

Belmont

million purchase price for the entire package.

Passage of the tax measure would require approval of two-thirds of the voters. If approved, San Mateo County would collect the tax money and then transfer it to Belmont. The city then would transfer the money to the school district.

Maintenance of the land would

In response, Frydenlund noted that the development has not been approved and may not be. Furthermore, he said, the five fields that would be included if Island Park is approved would be used primarily for organized sporting events, not for casual recreation.

Measure B has the support of the Belmont School District Board of Trustees, the City Council and the Citizens for Orderly Growth, a Belmont activist group.

City Council, district set price for surplus school land

S. H. TIMES 10/31/84

By ALAN QUALE
Times Staff Writer

BELMONT — The City Council and City School District have agreed to a \$1,025,000 million price tag for surplus school lands, but the agreement will be meaningless if a majority of the landowners vote against it on Election Day.

The council approved a resolution last week setting a \$1,025,000 value for 10 acres of playing fields at Barrett, Cipriani and McDougal schools, plus all of the school buildings at Barrett.

The council action followed a vote by the City School District Board of Trustees to accept \$1,025,000 for the surplus school property. The school trustees also stipulated that a payment schedule must soon be negotiated between the district and city.

The three vacant schools were closed because of declining enrollment in the district.

Some residents worry that the school grounds eventually could be lost as neighborhood "park" areas where athletic teams have also become accustomed to playing.

Measure B on Tuesday's ballot will ask Belmont property owners to approve a one-time levy of \$160 per land parcel to raise \$1.25 million so the city can pur-

chase the surplus school property.

Geraldine Steinberg, who is consulting the school district on future uses of surplus school land, said lengthy negotiations preceded the agreement between the Belmont School District and City Council.

When the proposal was presented to school trustees, Superintendent Ron Gilpatrick noted that the agreement also stipulates that the city will maintain all remaining district-owned school fields for three years beyond the current contract. Gilpatrick said this maintenance agreement is worth more than \$100,000 to the school district.

Trustees quickly accepted the \$1,025,000 price tag for the school lands, but they also stipulated that a payment schedule must be negotiated between the district and the city.

Trustee Chon Gutierrez said a payment schedule is necessary because if Proposition 36 is approved by California voters Nov. 6 it could place Belmont's Measure B in legal limbo.

If that happened, the district could be tied up in a legal battle for several years over the \$1,025,000 payment for surplus lands.

By setting a payment schedule, Gutierrez said, the district could

squeeze out of any legal fight within a certain time frame. "If they don't pay us (within a certain time) the whole thing falls apart," he said.

The district superintendent recommended to trustees last summer that all vacant school buildings either be sold or leased.

The City Council initially proposed acquiring the athletic fields at the closed schools without paying any money to the school district. Under this initial plan, the city would increase zoning densities at Barrett School site, thereby increasing the value of the land should the district offer it for sale.

In return for the new zoning and added value to the land, the school district would hand over to the city the fields at the closed schools.

The proposal got a cold reception from school trustees, one of whom complained "there's no money."

City officials said, at that time, that they wanted to ensure continued public use of the fields, but City Hall had no funds to purchase the open space lands.

When school trustees pondered future uses of the surplus school sites last summer their property consultant noted that there appeared to be a "strong feeling" in the community to retain one of the vacant schools in case enrollment begins to edge up in future years.

Trustees have leased McDougal School to a private school for learning-disabled students. The private school also has an option to purchase the school.

Vacant classrooms at Barrett and Cipriani schools have been boarded up while the district ponders the future for the sites.

'Park' measure on Nov. 6 ballot

S.M. TIMES 10/24/84
BELMONT — Should taxpayers pay \$160 to buy the playing fields at three closed school sites?

That's the question that will be settled here on election day when voters cast ballots for, or against, Measure B.

Sponsored by a group called the Park People, the measure asks voters to approve a one-time levy of \$160 per parcel. If approved by two-thirds of the voters, the measure would raise approximately \$1.25 million for the purchase of 10 acres of playing fields at Barrett, McDougal and Cipriani schools. Under the proposal, Barrett School buildings would also be purchased for public uses, such as senior center activities.

All three schools were closed by the school district because of declining enrollment and some homeowners fear the playing fields — which in some hilly neighborhoods are the only flat open space where children can play — might be lost to developers or organizations purchasing the school sites.

David Frydenlund, president of the Park People, said Belmont does not have enough parks and recreation areas and "never again will there be an opportu-

ity to provide recreation facilities at such a small cost."

Frydenlund added, "This is the last chance to acquire the flat playing fields, if we don't do it, this time I don't ever see another time."

Frydenlund noted that "the school district has the right, and authority, to sell the land to whomever."

Some opponents of Measure B have argued, however, that local taxpayers already own the playing fields through the Belmont School District.

One of the opponents, Sheila O'Shea, wrote a statement for the voters information pamphlet that "nobody opposes playing fields, even though demand for them may continue to decline as fewer and fewer young families can afford local housing."

O'Shea claims, however, that the city can acquire the playing fields at no cost from the school district and she further noted that the proposed Island Park development east of Bayshore Freeway includes plans for several athletic fields.

She also stated that "a clear need for the Barrett School buildings hasn't been shown."

Even without its opponents, Measure B faces an additional threat from Proposition 36 (the Jarvis Initiative) which, if passed by California voters Nov. 6, could declare initiatives such as Measure B invalid.

Still there appear to be numerous supporters of Measure B including Hugh Slay, longtime Belmont resident, who believes that the purchase of the Barrett School buildings would release the pressure of many groups who want to use smaller public buildings in Twin Pines Park. Should the Barrett School be purchased, many more programs could be sponsored by the city's park and recreation department, he added.

Slay also noted that "we have approximately 2,300 people using the outside recreational area facilities at the schools" and he added "we are now faced with the possible loss of the last level ground suitable for recreation use if we do not purchase the available school sites."

Although playing fields are included in development plans for Island Park, Frydenlund said there is no guarantee that the project, proposed by Kumam Corp., will win approval at City Hall.

Furthermore, Frydenlund said that the athletic fields proposed by Kumam "meet an entirely different need" and would be used primarily for organized sports.

The fields at the school sites, he added, would provide the public "more of an opportunity for laissez faire sports. It could be a play to throw a Frisbee on the grass."

By ALAN QUALE

Belmont citizens reject parcel tax

Moore and Joe Green, have been meeting to find other ways to purchase vacant school playfields.

One scenario would have the city trade zoning favorable to developers for the playfields.

Eventual outcome of this scenario, however, could be difficult, if not time consuming.

"It's an uphill battle," School District Superintendent Ron Gilpatrick said, "there were lots of advantages to the community if they had gone with Measure B. The price was extremely good."

"We haven't got that kind of money to put out for parklands," Moore reiterated, "but I do think the school district and the city want to come to grips with what is best for Belmont—a fair and reasonable price for the sites."

City Manager Ed Everett said the city will look towards creative solutions in lieu of adequate funding to obtain the fields.

"It's pretty clear from the election results that less than 50 percent of Belmont voters believed it was important to them to add parklands," Frydenlund said, "It'll be pretty tough to have another go at it."

Belmont voters rejected Measure B, a one-time tax of \$160 per parcel that would have purchased three vacant school fields and a school building targeted for use as a community center.

A two-thirds approval would have made the measure law, but voters rejected the idea, 5,823 to 4,662.

"It was necessary for the citizens of Belmont to bring themselves around on this issue...they didn't, and the city doesn't have that kind of cash in its coffers," Frydenlund said.

Both the city council and the Belmont School District endorsed the measure and had agreed on a \$1.025 million selling price for the sites. The \$1.25 million generated by the measure would have more than adequately covered maintenance of the sites.

A school district-city liaison committee, composed of Trustees Michael Garb and Chuck Zajtzke and Councilmen Bill

Belmont says no to parks

Plan to buy school land falls far short in totals

By Phyllis Brown

Times Tribune staff

DEAN TIMES 11/1/84
Belmont voters Tuesday rejected a special tax measure that would have allowed the city to purchase surplus school land for parks.

Members of the citizens group that proposed Measure B were surprised by its defeat because the proposal had no vocal opposition.

The Park People, which sponsored Measure B, had thought the measure would receive the required two-thirds' voter approval that would have made it law.

The measure had the support of the City Council and the Belmont School District Board of Trustees, the properties' owner. Virtually no one spoke out against it.

"I thought we had 85 percent support," Geoffrey Fernald of the Park People said. "I thought we were in."

The Park People were far from correct. With all the votes in, 45 percent of the voters, 4,662, cast ballots for Measure B. There were 5,823 votes against it.

That the group was wrong indicated how little citizens want tax increases, Fernald said. He said he also believes the voters will regret their decision.

"I think there was clear advantage to the city in this proposal," Fernald said.

Measure B would have charged all Belmont property owners a one-time tax of \$160 on each parcel to raise \$1.25 million for city purchase of a total of 10 acres of surplus land at the closed Barrett, Cipriani and McDougal school sites.

Most Belmont residents would agree that the city needs park land. It has only one large park, Twin Pines, that is available for recreation. There is much open space in its wooded hills, but there are few places where children can play ball or families can have picnics.

The land that is available for recreation is owned primarily by the Belmont School District and the Sequoia Union High School District.

The city probably will have to try to purchase some parts of the surplus school properties, though it has little cash to do so.

That will force citizens in the neighborhoods surrounding the school sites to lobby for their individual parks instead of working together to buy the whole pie, Fernald said.

"Now this will become more of a local issue," Fernald said. "The Cipriani-area people have to worry about their turf area, the Barrett-area people will do what they have to do. I think the citizens lost more than they know."

City writes catalog of ideas for Santa

By Phyllis Brown
Times Tribune staff

PENINSULA 9/14/84
When you make out your list of who's naughty or nice this Christmas shopping season, don't forget the city of Belmont.

Belmont would love to discover a modern public address system for the City Council chambers, a bus stop bench or some playground equipment under its Christmas tree.

The city has written its letter to Santa in the form of a 21-page community Gift Catalog, the fourth such catalog published on the Peninsula.

Belmont joins Menlo Park, Los Altos and Redwood City in the direct approach to bolstering city finances by encouraging citizens to make tax-deductible gifts.

The cities hope the catalogs will help budgets weakened by Proposition 13 tax cuts. The cities' philosophy is that, while the catalogs won't pay for new police vehicles or recreation centers, every little bit helps.

The Belmont catalog was developed by the city Parks and Leisure Services Department, in consultation with city department heads, who listed things they need but can't afford.

The catalog will be distributed to members of civic and service groups and individuals within the next week.

It lists 30 gift items, with some that virtually anyone can afford and some for those with healthier bank accounts.

A stocking stuffer is a copy of "The Heritage of the Wooded Hills," a history of Belmont, priced at \$2.68. The cost-

liest gift is an emergency power generator for the Police Department, which carries a \$10,000 price tag.

A guided tour of the city clerk's office, "giving you an opportunity to relive the glorious past of Belmont through viewing historic pictures," can be taken for \$5. Money from the tours will help pay for the daily operation of the city clerk's office.

For \$25 and the cost of the breakfast, you can break bread with the mayor, a member of the City Council or any other city official.

"During the breakfast, you may approach the official with your concerns, gripes or grievances about any aspect of our city government, or the quality of life in Belmont," the catalog states. The \$25 will go to toward solving the prob-

lem presented.

Civic-minded shoppers can pick up a new public address system for the City Council chambers, priced at \$5,000.

"In our city of concerned citizens, a modern public address system is needed to discuss the most probable solutions to existing problems in our community," the catalog states.

Citizens can buy for the city parks department a teen dance for \$400, a swim day for children at a public pool for \$100, a soccer goal net for \$165 or a park bench for \$135.

In the interest of civic pride, citizens for \$50 can purchase a replica of a Belmont street sign with their name on it. The proceeds from this

gift will go toward replacing the real street signs frequently stolen from the city.

Belmont got the idea for the catalog from the others published on the Peninsula. The cost of producing the catalog was paid for by local businesses so, if it flops, the city won't lose any money.

Failure may not be a worry. Menlo Park has published a catalog since 1981 and has generated as much as \$10,000 a year, about 3 percent of the city's contributions to parks and recreation.

Menlo Park's catalog has offered serious and not-so-serious gifts, including a gift of a half an hour in the city jail that costs \$25.

Redwood City's catalog, produced last November, is being reprinted. It offers some of the highest-priced items of the Peninsula catalogs.

Los Altos' gift catalog, produced in December, brought in \$7,000 in its first year of publication. The eight-page catalog was mailed to every household in Los Altos, with gifts ranging from \$5,000 computers to \$5 rubber balls for the city playgrounds.

Belmont's wish list

Belmont history book, "Heritage of the Wooded Hills," by Russell Estep.	\$2.68
Breakfast with a City Council member or city official of your choice.	\$25
Bus stop bench.	\$400
Modern public address system for the council chambers.	\$5,000
Auxiliary power generator.	\$7,000 to \$10,000

Belmont catalogs wishes

Hopes gift book will aid budget

By Phyllis Brown

Times Tribune staff

EN-TIMES 11/4/84

An innovative Belmont fund-raising tool has begun to turn wishes into dreams come true for community children, sports enthusiasts and even the City Council.

The wishes are part of the Belmont gift catalog, titled "Bella Monte," published by the city Recreation and Parks Department and distributed in late September.

The catalog is one of several city wish lists on the Peninsula, which take the direct approach to bolstering city finances by encouraging citizens to make tax-deductible donations to the city itself.

The cities hope the catalogs will help budgets weakened by Proposition 13 tax cuts. The cities' philosophy is that, while the catalogs won't pay for new police vehicles or recreation centers, every little bit helps.

The 21-page Belmont community gift catalog lists 30 items, from \$5 historic tours of Belmont, whose proceeds go to the city, to an auxiliary generator for the Police Department, priced at \$10,000.

The catalog promotes giving in the name of pride in Belmont. Two community organizations have already shown that pride by giving gifts listed in the catalog.

The G.W. Williams Foundation, located in Belmont, has given a total of \$1,000 in community gifts, City Recreation Supervisor Rick Jaffey said.

Of the \$1,000, \$300 will pay for the purchase of learning aids for the approximately 50 children in the city day-care program at Nesbitt Elementary School.

Another \$300 to pay for playground equipment for Twin Pines Park will be added to other charitable donations for that purpose and will help finance a new play area for community children.

A day at a local swimming pool will be free of cost for community children next summer because of the \$100 foundation donation.

And visual presentations at City Council meetings will be easier to see because the final \$300 will purchase a viewing screen for the council chambers.

City Council approves law making it illegal to live in motor vehicles

VEN. TIMES W/RA
The Belmont City Council Tuesday unanimously approved a law that would make it illegal for people to live in motor vehicles.

The ordinance, which could be enacted as early as Nov. 27, would make it illegal to inhabit any sort of motor vehicle. Automobiles, recreational vehicles, campers and vans are addressed specifically in the law.

The council considered the law in response to concerns voiced by residents of the Sterling Downs and Homeview neighborhoods. Sterling Downs is between El Camino Real and the Bayshore Freeway, north of Ralston Avenue. Homeview is in the same area but south of Ralston.

Sterling Downs homeowners told the council that a recent incident, involving a family that for the past seven weeks has resided in a recreational vehicle, has distressed the neighborhood.

"An ordinance is definitely needed," Dallas Knudson, a member of the Planning Commission and resident of the area, said. "We understand the family's problems, but when you have the (vehicle) generator running in front of your home, it's upsetting," Knudson said.

Trimmed-down zoning plan OK'd

VEN. TIMES W/RA
A trimmed-down version of a proposal to rezone dozens of parcels of land citywide to bring them into conformance with the general plan was approved by the Belmont City Council Tuesday.

With councilmen Robert Hoffman and Joseph Green absent, the panel approved the rezonings with little discussion.

Property owners in July reacted with outrage when the original proposal to rezone more than 100 parcels in a variety of ways, from residential to commercial, from commercial to residential, among others, was discussed by the Planning Commission.

The version adopted by the council will rezone only 39 parcels and was faced with little citizen opposition.

The rezonings approved Tuesday fell into four categories:

- Institutions in the city will be placed in a planned-unit development zoning that would give the city greater control over future development. Construction in a planned-unit development zone requires more detailed review than any other zoning, city officials said.
- Land on El Camino Real, including properties in the 1200 and 1300 blocks, will be rezoned from highway commercial to lighter commercial uses.
- Land zoned for high-intensity commercial and surrounded by apartments in the 800 block of Old County Road was rezoned for high-density housing.