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Laguna Report all but resolved

By Mike Jasper

If Sebastopol city councilmembers agree on anything about the Laguna Report it's this: the "no net fill clause is just one issue."

Although they also would admit that "no net fill" is an important issue, it's still just one of 34 such recommendations made by the

Laguna Report Committee.

Most of the Laguna Report's recommendations have been given tentative approval by the council. Mayor Anne Magnie said the next move is to sit down with city staff and work out the language to turn the recommendations into city policies.

"It's probably going to turn out to be the third version of the Laguna Report," Magnie said, half seriously.

Some critics have said the Council has been stalling on the report. However, Councilmember Nick Stewart believes the criticism is unfair, and added he would rather take too much time to think through the complicated issues spawned by the report, than to proceed hastily.

Stewart also pointed out that the current council has only been acting on this matter for about four months.

The committee formulating the report was commissioned nearly two years ago, in November of 1986. Since that time, two new faces have been added to the City Council; Supervisor Ernie Carpenter has joined the campaign to protect the Laguna through county government; and even Congressman Douglas Bosco has promised his support, once a local consensus on Laguna preservation has been achieved.

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So, after two years of study, what has been accomplished?

First, 33 of the 34 recommendations by the committee have been tentatively approved, which clears the way for several activities.

A linear park along the banks of the Laguna is already underway, with Council studying several parcels for possible acquisition by the city. The city's wetlands ordinance will be strengthened and enforced, changing some zoning from residential to residential agricultural with undeveloped lands along the Laguna restricted in its development.

Some development, however, will occur.

"We cannot preclude all uses without that constituting a taking," Magnie explained. A "taking" would essentially be a downzoning of the land which would cause an economic loss to the landowner.

Also discussed was initiation of a riparian ordinance by the city. Stewart said such an ordinance would not