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# No 'net fill' looks unfeasible

By Mike Jasper

A report by a technical advisory committee, whose members include two city staffers and one ex-Laguna Committee member, brought a report before City Council Tuesday evening which might jeopardize the "no net fill" clause of the Laguna report.

The committee concluded that filling in the Morris St. commercial district would have no substantial effect on the floodplain, but disastrous effects economically for property owners in the area.

"There didn't seem to be an economic reality for a "no net fill" policy," said committee member Bob Harder of the North Coast

Builders Exchange. Laguna committee member Bill Haigwood and city engineer Paul Schoch and city planning consultant Bruce Aspinall were also on the committee.

In a letter from the Army Corps of Engineers, the corps estimated that in a worst case scenario the floodplain would rise by less than an inch — even if the entire 3000 feet along the floodplain in Sebastopol were filled.

Previously, Laguna activist Helen Libeu had used an example of pennies in a glass of water to show how filling the Laguna would eventually overflow the floodplain. But Harder came up with his own example.

"It's more like putting pennies in

a doughboy pool," Harder said.

Harder recommended two ways Sebastopol could help lessen Laguna fill. First, gravel excavation from the Laguna could be started, once a site is found. Second, the city could look for undesirable Laguna fill and take it out of those blighted areas.

Either way, it takes the responsibility off the property owners developing next to the Laguna.

Earlier, the Council discussed implementing its wetland ordinance to provide for no development along undeveloped areas of the Laguna.

"It's a simple solution, but it could work," City Attorney Larry McLaughlin advised.

Council will discuss both issues at its Aug. 30 meeting.