

FRONT PAGE

COUNCIL FROM FRONT PAGE

88-124

n and the areas like the Estero

that we'd be patient as they work toward

" said Lynch, a river Chamber of mittee.

Rosa is in water will be closely ard,

s, and Marin lters can produce so-fluent, the product gate crops,

A high-quality ce wary Marinites to stewater discharges an estuary on the at is vital to Santa al plans.

.124.1

FRONT PAGE

s in force across the

hols said, can be rest," providing ldlife as well as he Laguna is "a nes in it," he added.

l creeks in or near covered by a riparian k has been largely it disappears into a e Avenue and f Morris Street where a. Calder Creek is as it crossed through , but other portions ly undisturbed by pment. The creek is t flows through Ives is the least impacted north-south at the draining the largeagle Ranch Park.

g with the stream setback distance nd identify activities ot take place within e "scaled to the size an zone," Nichols h things as species

with a list of suggested additions: setback requirements; erosion protection; livestock confinement requirements; and prohibitions on the removal of plants, the use of herbicides, and the introduction of exotic plant species.

"This is simple enough that we can incorporate it into our existing wetlands ordinance," said Magnie, "but is that enough?" City planning consultant Bruce Aspinall suggested that the additions also address questions of "interface" with adjacent land uses and zonings, saying the absence of those considerations was "the primary weakness of our wetlands ordinance."

The council generally agreed that all those matters should be included in the wetlands ordinance, and Aspinall will draft amendments that incorporate those concerns for the council to consider at their next meeting.

Other details of the Laguna policy text were refined during this week's discussion. Stewart and Richard Johnson both questioned a statement that development in the already urbanized portions of the flood plain must be "consistent with clearly feasible methods" of retaining flood storage capacity. Johnson called for some specific definition of the uses allowable in those areas, while Stewart suggested that multiple methods of preserving flood capacity should be mentioned. "We can encourage construction techniques that do not require fill," he said, citing "elevated pole

construction" as an example. "Beyond the issue of flood storage, there are aesthetics, too," Stewart added. "I don't like all those fill pads out there [on Morris Street]."

In another area, Stewart advocated that annexation and rezoning be included in a list of mechanisms that might be used to preserve undeveloped lands, along with public acquisition or easements for open space. "Annexation and application of the wetlands ordinance zoning overlay may also protect the environment," he said.

Other comments focused on areas in which council members suggested the language might be strengthened. Magnie proposed that the word "advocacy" be substituted for "advisory" in two places. "The reality is that the city is acting very strongly in an advocacy role," she noted.

There was also discussion of the future role an ongoing Laguna Advisory Committee might play. The council agreed that the panel should be retained, and briefly considered having it report through the city's Parks and Recreation Commission, before leaving it open for the group to also work directly with the city manager. "Ultimately this will normalize into a Parks and Rec function," predicted Magnie, but not yet because Laguna issues are "intensely political now."

With the fine tuning nearly completed, the council anticipates taking final action to adopt its Laguna policy sometime before Christmas.

CREEKS FROM FRONT PAGE

88.124.2

- major Sebastopol waterways:
- Calder Creek. Contained in a stone culvert, it vanishes under High Street in the downtown area.
 - Zimpher Creek meanders through back yards, then feeds into an underground pipe on Murphy Avenue in the town's residential center.
 - Laguna de Santa Rosa, a large, complex, and highly damaged wetlands that borders the eastern side of the city.
 - Atascadero Creek forms a portion of the city's western boundary, passing through farms and orchards.

Complex ecological systems such as Laguna de Santa Rosa and Atascadero Creek may require system-wide restoration efforts, while smaller streams like Calder and Zimpher Creeks can be helped by establishing setback areas along the routes of the streams, which would be scaled to the sizes of the creeks and

Libeu.

In recent years Calder Creek, or what's left of it, has been polluted with motor oil and by TCE, a chemical used in dry cleaning. Its ducks long since departed, today it trickles through a stone and cement culvert that can be seen in Ives Park before it vanishes under High Street and makes its way underground to the Laguna.

Zimpher Creek can also be seen, almost stagnant, near Brookside and Winding Wood before it disappears into a giant cement pipe on Murphy Avenue, directing its flow into the nether world under the Bank of America, across Main Street, toward the Laguna.

The restoration of the Laguna de Santa Rosa is a huge undertaking involving a diversity of agencies and interests, perhaps extending to federal government. It has been defoliated, drained, in-filled, and used for a dumping ground. Nichols, along with councilpersons Anne Magnie and Nichols Stewart, is currently participating in an ad hoc committee which is