

City Hall News

From the desk of
Fort Bragg City Manager Linda Ruffing
November 1, 2007

- 1. City Awarded \$350,000 Sustainable Communities Grant.** City staff received notification last week that our Sustainable Communities Grant application for funding to assist with planning efforts for the Mill Site was partially funded. Our application sought a \$350,000 grant and a \$150,000 loan and only the grant request was funded. The granting agency (California Pollution Control Financing Agency) chose to not award any loans this year in order to fund as many applications as possible. Only seven out of 67 applications were funded and Fort Bragg and Willits were among the lucky seven. The grant will be used to fund "sustainability" components of the specific plan for the Mill Site. Staff is working to define more detailed options for use of the grant funds. Community Development Director Marie Jones is to be commended for writing the successful grant application!
- 2. GP Mill Site Meetings.** Last week was packed with Mill Site related activities. At Monday's Council meeting, the City's environmental consultants provided an update on the Mill Site remediation process. On Tuesday, City staff and attorneys met with GP staff and attorneys and Coastal Conservancy staff and attorneys to continue negotiations regarding the purchase and sale agreement for the Coastal Trail & Parkland acquisition. On Wednesday, many of the same players and some others, plus the Council's ad hoc committee met to discuss a strategy for moving forward with the specific plan for the Mill Site. The discussion focused primarily on a management framework for the planning efforts. We'll be reporting to the Council on this matter on the November 26th agenda. On Friday, City staff and attorneys met with our counterparts from DTSC and GP in Berkeley to review the schedules for the various elements of the remediation process and to discuss coordination among the three agencies. A considerable amount of progress was made at all of these meetings, and the stage has been set for a very busy next year (2008) relative to the Mill Site reuse planning process.
- 3. Boatyard Shopping Center Transient Issues.** Police Chief Mark Puthuff, Lieutenant Robert Watson, and Councilmember Jere Melo met with several merchants and employees from the Boatyard Shopping Center earlier this month to discuss problems associated with the panhandlers and homeless persons who congregate at the shopping center. The Public Safety Committee had a follow-up discussion regarding homeless issues in our community and directed staff to bring a draft ordinance that addresses camping within the City and, possibly, some modifications to the City's aggressive solicitation ordinance to the Council for consideration early next year.
- 4. Hospitality House Emergency Shelter.** Councilmember Dave Turner, County Supervisor Kendall Smith and I met with representatives of the Hospitality House Board of Directors a few weeks ago to receive a briefing regarding difficulties that the volunteer-based organization is having with the County's somewhat heavy-handed oversight of their operations. The Hospitality House runs a very pleasant

24-bed emergency shelter and serves about 20,000 meals per year to the homeless and working poor in our community. And they do this on a shoe-string annual budget of about \$70,000. The meeting reinforced how vitally important it is for government agencies to work collaboratively and supportively with the non-profit organizations that provide essential social services in our community.

- 5. Skate Plaza Update.** Planner Sean O'Rourke and I met with Mendocino Coast Park and Recreation District Director Beth Pine and John Griffith from the School District in early October to plot out the next steps for the skate plaza project. We expect to hear from the State CDBG program in early November regarding the City's grant application. Following that, we will be seeking Council direction on whether to use modular or built-in skate plaza components and establishing a scope of services for a landscape architect to prepare a master plan for the western half of Bainbridge Park. We will also be redrafting the MOU to identify the Rec District and City roles and responsibilities with regard to operation and maintenance of the skate plaza. The Rec District is presently establishing the Skate Park Advisory Board and we will be gearing up to begin a community planning process in early 2008.