

 News

House: City Council Should Decide Fate Of NTC Housing

By Adam Hauck
The Beacon

The June 14 House of Representatives' passage of Congressman Brian Bilbray's and Congresswoman Susan Molinari's (R-NY) amendment to the Department of Defense reauthorization bill has returned the decision regarding the reuse of the Naval Training Center (NTC) to the city of San Diego. The decision was the fruit of labor by Bilbray, Mayor Susan Golding, Councilman Scott Harvey and communi-

ty advocates. A principle motivation for many was to affect the proposed homeless housing at NTC. The full bill next moves to the Senate where it is expected to pass.

"While I personally do not support homeless housing at NTC, I also don't believe reuse should be decided by a federal mandate," Bilbray said after the amendment passed. "If the city council wants to put homeless housing there, so be it; but a federal mandate should not script their priorities for them."

The amendment will provide local authorities with the flexibility to determine the best use of the property but does not preclude the consideration of the homeless during the redevelopment process, Bilbray said.

The ongoing melee over whether the facility will be used to house part of San Diego's homeless population continued June 14 at a meeting of the NTC Reuse Committee. The committee has yet to submit its recommendations to the city council and will still consider the recom-

mendations of the Homeless Subcommittee, but the difference is that the final decision will be made on the local level, according to Mary Anne Pintar, a spokeswoman from Golding's office.

Golding has sought to return city control over these matters through her work as chairwoman of the Governor's California Military Base Reuse Committee and the U.S. Conference of Mayors Committee on Military Base Reuse, Pintar said.

If passed by the Senate, Bilbray's amendment repeals portions of The Stewart B. McKinney and Base Closure and Realignment Acts, which mandate that homeless housing advocates be given priority when deciding what will be done with land made available by a base closure, according to Bilbray's office.

John Seymour, chairman of the Peninsula Community Planning Board, attended the NTC Reuse Committee meeting June 14 and expressed excitement about the progress made. He said the first priority of those who oppose the homeless housing at NTC was to remove the "handcuffs" that involved the federal government in local land use decisions.

With the passage of the amendment more than 600 people who signed their names to oppose homeless housing at NTC will finally have their say, according to Seymour. "We're very pleased and it's just the beginning," he said.

Seymour does not support the use of the NTC property for homeless housing for a number of reasons, but he is willing to help with alternatives. "New housing does not produce revenue to the city," Seymour said. "We offered to work with the Homeless Subcommittee to come up with alternatives."

June 16 was the final day to submit land reuse proposals for the NTC property; now the reuse committee will undergo their review process and prepare to bring recommendations to the city council late this year or in early 1996, Seymour said.