Vineland moves ahead on 2 downtown plans

By KRISTI FUNDERBURK • Staff Writer
September 16, 2010

VINELAND -- City Council supported measures Tuesday that will help two ongoing downtown projects advance.

The council agreed to extend its contract with Rutgers Food Innovation Center by one year to help secure vendors for Landis Marketplace, an indoor public market planned for Landis Avenue.

It also authorized placement of one surveillance camera to oversee City Hall entrances, the police department, and some parking areas and businesses.

Both projects are critical to downtown revitalization, with the market serving as an anchor to attract people to the Avenue and the cameras intended to improve people’s perception of the area.

Councilman Doug Albrecht questioned the need for either of the resolutions considered by the council, and ultimately supported only the market's contract extension.

He inquired at Tuesday’s meeting why the city needs to continue to rely on Rutgers Food Innovation Center when the city has a market manager, Gary Holloway.

Albrecht said an extension just means further delay for the Marketplace. The city initially planned a November opening, but now aims for early 2011.

"It's not a huge addition, but it is a little of an addition," Albrecht said.

Sandy Forosisky, Vineland's redevelopment director, said the city wanted the contract extension -- at a cost of $5,000 -- to use Rutgers as a resource, when necessary, to ensure it can make the most out of the market's space.

"Gary is running construction and recruiting vendors, but Rutgers has a wider net in connection with people in the food industry," Forosisky said.

Rutgers representatives already played a critical role in securing the market's only vendors so far, she said.

Albrecht also cast the sole dissenting vote for the change order on the city's contract with Joseph J. Tonetta Electrical Contractor Inc., which was hired to install the downtown surveillance cameras.

"The camera project was meant to keep an eye on the business community and on the neighborhood," he said. "I have a problem with this being at the City Hall and police department parking lot. That was not the intent. Yeah, it's one camera, but it's one camera that could be somewhere else."

Several cameras, which have tilt and zoom capability, already have been installed along Landis Avenue but aren't active yet.

Mayor Robert Romano recently said he hopes to have them working soon.