

Zine seeks to shield stars

Reacting to the need for a police escort for Britney Spears, the councilman wants a 'personal safety zone.'

By ANDREW BLANKSTEIN and RICHARD WINTON
Times Staff Writers

After aggressive paparazzi prompted police to escort Britney Spears to the hospital this week, Los Angeles City Councilman Dennis Zine announced Friday that he plans to push for an ordinance that would create a minimum "personal safety zone" around individuals targeted by the media.

Zine said the estimated \$25,000 it cost for police to escort Spears to the hospital was necessary to protect the public from dangers posed by the horde of celebrity photographers pursuing the pop star. He said paparazzi were increasingly endangering celebrities and bystanders with their aggressive behavior and car pursuits.

"I don't want a repeat of what happened to Princess Diana with a celebrity in Los Angeles," he said. "We had to have 12 officers escort [Spears] to the hospital."

He said the public should blame the paparazzi for this week's events.

"They are the ones making a spectacle of themselves," Bratton said. "We will do what we need to do to protect the public from this cast of characters."

Representatives for Spears told Los Angeles police officials Monday that they believed she needed a psychiatric evaluation because of continuing erratic behavior.

After extensive discussions about alternatives, the LAPD mapped a strategy for getting her to UCLA Medical Center amid an anticipated swarm of paparazzi.

The next morning the plan was executed with about two dozen police officers, a helicopter and a special team that took Spears out through a gate in an ambulance with covered windows to shield her from photographers.

Meanwhile, a Los Angeles County court commissioner Friday granted Spears' father, James, and a court-appointed attorney temporary conservatorship over her affairs and estate, said Alan Parachini, a court spokesman.

The decision gives James Spears the ability to make decisions involving his daughter's assets, property and medical care, restrict visitors to her home, change locks at her residence and hire security. It also allows him to seek civil restraining orders, which the court issued against Spears' manager and friend, Sam Lutfi.

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Newport Beach fights over City Hall locations

Residents will decide Tuesday whether to put the new municipal headquarters on land meant for a park.

By TONY BARBOZA
Times Staff Writer

Nearly everyone in Newport Beach thinks they need a new City Hall. Getting them to agree on where to put it is another story.

On Tuesday, voters will decide whether to locate a new civic center on a 12-acre site in Newport Center that was slated to become a park. The fiercely contested ballot initiative has led to more than \$800,000 in campaign spending, an amount almost unheard of for a local issue in a city of its size, including donations of more than \$600,000 alone from one restaurateur.

The debate has focused on whether the new building would block ocean views, how it would keep the cost to taxpayers down and whether it would worsen traffic congestion.

A "yes" vote on Measure B would end more than five years of debate over where to locate a new City Hall, putting it in a more central area on higher ground. A "no" vote would probably mean the city would build a taller, more compact building a few blocks away on a parking lot owned by the Irvine Co., which has agreed to sell it to the city for about \$7 million. The city could also choose a third alternative and build a new civic center on the site of the existing one on the Balboa Peninsula.

The idea to put City Hall in the park was conceived by Bill Ficker, an architect who has proposed a two-story design



ON SITE: Bernie Svalstad stands silhouetted on a bluff in Newport Beach where some would like to build a new City Hall on part of a 12-acre plot that was slated to be a park. Svalstad is one of the leaders of the fight against Measure B, which would site it there.

that he says would not block residents' views. But after the council voted against reviewing his proposal, he and other activists collected signatures to put the issue on the ballot.

The city of 88,000 has outgrown its civic center, a cramped complex built in 1948 that draws comparisons to an elementary school campus. There is so little room that boxes of files and rolled building plans are stacked to the ceilings and some city workers share desks at cramped cubicles.

City officials say a new facility is long overdue. Parking is scarce, and a growing number of portable buildings crowd the property. The mayor recently gave up his office there for lack of space.

"It's embarrassing," said City Manager Homer Bludau. "It's not a welcoming impression."

Bon Hendrickson, another architect working in favor of

Measure B, said he was eager to put the issue to rest after five years of bickering.

"Let's get this underway. Let's not waste any more time and money," he said.

The initiative would amend the city's charter to require that the building be placed next to the public library. The rest of the site could be preserved as a smaller park.

Activists opposing the measure argue that it would force the city to go back on a promise to develop all of the area as a park.

Anne Balderston, a No on B activist who was picking up trash and collecting flowers at the site Thursday afternoon called the property an "irreplacable gem."

"What else do we have that is natural like this?" she asked. "Everything else is being developed."

The campaign has been marked by heavy spending on signs, mailers and polling, with

two wealthy donors on opposite sides of the issue.

The group pushing the ballot initiative has been bankrolled by Jack Croul, a retired executive and part owner of the Santa Ana paint company Behr. He also owns the Cannery, a seafood restaurant near the current City Hall. He has contributed more than \$600,000 of the \$650,000 raised.

That has led some residents, such as No on B activist Karen Tringali, to speculate that Croul has designs on land that might be vacated if City Hall moves.

Croul shrugged it off. "Each person is contributing according to their means," Croul said. "I've just been able to contribute more than others."

Those favoring keeping the land as a park have spent more than \$140,000, \$125,000 of that from Audrey Steele Burnand, a member of a Newport Beach family of electrical company in-

vestors that for many years operated a charitable foundation.

Also in dispute is the cost of developing the competing sites. The building alone is expected to cost at least \$27 million regardless of where it lands.


Proponents of the initiative say building on land the city already owns will save \$13 million.

Opponents say the cost of removing dirt to flatten the rugged, hilly site enough to build on would more than cancel out the savings. They say that the smaller property nearby, already a flat parking lot, is in ready-to-build condition and would cost \$3.7 million less.

Both sides expect the vote to be close, and in the final days are holding rallies and sending furies of mailers to make their case.

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Times staff writer Paul Barckus contributed to this report.

U.S. Navy Announces Alternative Arrangements for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act and Requests Public Input



On January 15, 2008, the Department of the Navy accepted alternative arrangements, approved by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). These alternative arrangements specifically address the use of mid-frequency active (MFA) sonar and its effects on marine mammals during Navy exercises in Southern California (SOCAL) Operating areas. These exercises include Composite Training Unit Exercises (COMPTUEX) and Joint Task Force Exercises (JTFEX) scheduled to occur between January 15, 2008 and January 23, 2009. A Decision Memorandum documenting the Navy's acceptance of these alternative arrangements was published in the Federal Register on January 24, 2008.

Information on the Navy's proposals for the SOCAL Operating Area including the full text of the Decision Memorandum is available at www.SOCALRangeComplexEIS.com.

The Navy will prepare a post-exercise assessment after each exercise. By this Notice, the Navy requests input from the public on the process for reviewing the post-exercise assessments. The Navy is also offering the public the opportunity to discuss the implementation of these alternative arrangements, input on reviewing the post-exercise assessments and any requests to meet with Navy and CEQ representatives about the alternative arrangements may be submitted by contacting Mr. Alex Stone at (619) 545-8128 or in writing to:

Naval Air Station North Island
Attn: Alex Stone, CPF Environmental
McCain Boulevard, Building 678, Room.218
San Diego, CA 92135

For more information about the Navy's Decision Memorandum, visit www.SOCALRangeComplexEIS.com.

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