

Councilwoman: City needs name change

BY KARA CHALMERS
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

East Palo Alto residents live in a city with a name that doesn't reflect its uniqueness, so residents should "name themselves," City Council member Pat Foster said last night.

"It's been on my mind" said Foster, who has lived in the city for 22 years and would like to see its name changed. Foster said East

Palo Alto is the most diverse community on the Peninsula

and should have its own unique name that is unrelated to Palo Alto. Foster said the name "East Palo Alto" relates to both Highway 101 and Palo Alto. She



FOSTER

See EAST PALO ALTO, page 10

EAST PALO ALTO

FROM PAGE 1

said that while East Palo Alto is east of the highway, it is actually north of Palo Alto, so a less confusing name would be "Upper Palo Alto."

But Foster said including "Palo Alto" in the name of her city at all is misleading, because East Palo Alto and Palo Alto are in two different counties. She said when she travels, even within California, people she meets think that East Palo Alto is just a part of Palo Alto.

Foster didn't suggest any new monikers and said residents should be able to choose a name themselves, perhaps through a contest.

Also, Mayor Duane Bay said the city should have a zip code separate from that of other cities, which he said would be practical and would also allow the city to have its own identity. The city currently shares the code 94303 with parts of Palo Alto.

Budget crunch

The name issue came up at last night's council meeting, the first in a series on next year's budget. Council members and members of the public used the meeting to list projects and services they would like to see the city provide.

They suggested improving or constructing new streets, enforcing traffic laws,

increasing the number of police officers on motorcycles and upgrading police technology. Other suggestions included teaching residents about government, creating a chamber of commerce, celebrating holidays with parades, replacing street signs more quickly, following through on resident complaints, scrubbing away graffiti and monitoring abandoned cars on the street.

Wish list

The council has not yet hammered out the details on funding its wish list. East Palo Alto is facing a \$2 million shortfall due to the loss of the utility users tax, a decrease in grants and a decrease in building fees. The council began trying to rebuild the budget accordingly last night.

The 2.5-square-mile city of East Palo Alto has 30,000 residents and a budget of more than \$13 million. Of that, \$5.5 million is spent on police services and \$2.6 million is spent on public works.

The next meeting on the budget is scheduled for 6 p.m. Feb. 26 in council chambers at 2415 University Ave.

City Manager Monika Hudson said she would accept questions on the budget from residents through the end of the month at City Hall or via e-mail at mhudson@cityofepa.com.