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Elementary Site Dilemma Faces City School Board

By Wally Trabing

As if the proposed high school site dilemma wasn't bad enough, city school trustees last night found themselves in another unenviable position over the selection of a West Side elementary site.

Almost checkmated by the sewer problem on one hand and the uncertainty of the University of California's decision to build a new campus nearby, the board took sort of a traditional step — when in doubt, get an appraisal.

The board had been negotiating with property owners toward a choice of two properties on either side of Meder street, Between Bay street and Western drive. It was then suddenly discovered that a sewer connection across from Moore street (in the Westlake development) was not possible, and to bring in a sewer line from Kenneth street, some 3000 feet away, just for the school alone, would cost almost as much as a site itself.

During the city council meeting Tuesday night it appeared, for a time, that the problem was solved

through city approval to allow a sewer connection from Moore street providing the school was built on a site formerly considered below the Bay street reservoir.

This site was formerly rejected by the board, mainly because the appointed architectural firm of Falk and Booth was not satisfied with the safety of reservoir poised above the site. It had not, it admitted, made extensive probes to substantiate its fears.

This site, some 15 acres, is owned by Mrs. H. C. Fridley, of 2102 Bay street.

To further frustrate matters Mrs. Fridley said last night she was told by a Santa Cruz contractor, whom she refused to name, that he would pay twice the present market value of her property if a University of California branch campus was approved for the Santa Cruz area.

Trustee George G. Wilson, said at Monday's meeting he had information that the decision would be made in 45 days.

The sudden switch to the Fridley property left the board with its appraisals down.

"I guess we'd better have this property appraised," suggested Pegie Johns rather bitterly, "we have had every other property in town appraised."

It was so moved and passed.

Trustee Richard Hackbarth moved that the architect make a "traffic flow test" and a study of potential parking areas and entries. This was approved.

Still one of the big "ifs" is the reservoir. Business Manager Leon Torrey learned yesterday, by phone research, that an engineering company would take six core samples from the reservoir for \$3000 and come up with an opinion whether it was safe. For this price it would also submit plans to make it safe if it wasn't, said Torrey. He said if the company found the answer in the first core taken from the reservoir it would only charge \$2000. All this would take a month.

Mrs. Johns moved that an engineering firm be engaged to make tests and appraise the safety of the reservoir. This was passed.

Wilson was of the opinion that even if the reservoir did burst, the water would run down a small canyon and not reach a school built on the property below.

So far, these are merely the technical problems.

Mrs. Fridley, who was present at last night's meeting, was upset at the turn of events.

"I've never even been spoken to about this," said said. "All I know about it is just what I read in the newspaper. I think I should be given a little consideration."

"That property's been in my late husband's family for 75 years."

She has been living in an eight-room house on the property for 20 years.

She said the Superintendent Dr. Lawrence Magee had suggested to her that selling the property for a school would make a fitting family memorial.

"Well," she said, "my grand-uncle donated the property for a Holy Cross school. My cousin sold her property for part of the high school . . . I think my family has given enough to the schools."

Amid the briar patch of gloomy circumstances, at least one bright thought made itself evident. And this came from a member of the sparse audience.

City Councilman Ted Foster surmised: "If the safety of the reservoir is challenged (by the core tests), the residents of the area will probably kick up such a rumpus that it will become the responsibility of the city to make it safe."

New Officers Appointed By County Bank

County Bank of Santa Cruz officers and board members were reappointed Tuesday in two meetings at the Palomar hotel. In addition four of the bank's assistant cashiers were promoted to assistant vice presidents.

The board of directors, headed by J. J. Johnson, was reappointed for the coming year in a shareholders' meeting which preceded the board's organizational meeting.

According to President Ray J. Seller of the bank, the newly-promoted assistant vice presidents are:

Don Falconer; Felton Branch Manager Mario Esposito; East Santa Cruz Branch Manager Fred W. G. Mommer, and Soquel Branch Manager L. R. Lenox II.

Earlier the bank declared its usual (since 1955) annual dividend of \$2.50 from a \$237,614 net profit after taxes for the 12 months ending December 31. The net was more than 20 per cent higher than for the year earlier. Since 1950, the bank's assets have grown 121 per cent.

The firm has four main offices in addition to its downtown main branch. Last year, the bank applied for clearance by the state to set up a West Side branch office.

Falconer, 36, lives with his wife, Eunice, and two children in Soquel. He attended Mission Hill Junior high school and the New Mexico Military institute. Mommer, 32, his wife, Mary, and their three children live in Pasatiempo. Mommer graduated from New York university where his major subjects included fundamentals of banking, negotiable instruments and installment credit.

Esposito, 35, his wife, Donna June, and their two children live in Felton. A graduate of Santa Cruz high school, the Felton branch manager attended San Jose State college and Hartnell college. Lennox, 41, his wife, Katherine, and their four children live at 2401 Harper street. Lennox is a graduate of the University of California and Harvard university's graduate school of business administration. His major subjects included fundamentals of banking, commercial law, and negotiable instruments.

Roy C. Johnson is vice president and cashier of the bank and A. R. Morgan is vice president.

Hit-Run Driver

East German