

Board Votes 3-2 To Return Property

By Norman Indahl

The board of supervisors today scrapped plans for building a new courthouse in the San Lorenzo park project by passing a motion 3-2 in favor of relinquishing its option on four acres to the Santa Cruz urban redevelopment agency.

A follow-up motion was passed by the same split vote to endorse "in principle" the petitions instigated by East Santa Cruz businessmen for acquiring property at not more than \$10,000 per acre for a site more accessible to the Santa Cruz-Watsonville freeway.

Board Chairman Lewis Nelson and Supervisor Hulda McLean were the pair who cast the negative votes against both motions.

A move to have the board chairman and Supervisor Vincent Locatelli serve as a liaison committee to the URA for resolving what to do about the county-owned 3½ acres in the park project that was marked for a courthouse and other minor problems gained the unanimous consent of the board.

URA Director Olin Carl White reported after the short session that the board action "Does not accomplish a thing" since the 3½ acres owned by the county is in the heart of the west side of the project and hampers bringing the project to completion.

Since the county-owned Garibaldi hotel property site is in the heart of the west side of the project, White contends that a major commercial retail outlet cannot be induced to settle in this area.

Nelson and Mrs. McLean, who favored standing pat on the board's original intention to purchase the four acres needed to round out a courthouse site, contended that the spot was the most feasible and economical for a courthouse. Mrs. McLean did not waver at any time from her position.

Calling himself "undecided" yesterday, Nelson explained that he went for the site because he is firmly convinced and has figures to back him up that the URA site is the best place for a courthouse.

Supervisor Locatelli, who seconded the motion by Supervisor Francis Silliman to return the property to URA, said he voted for handing the controversial piece back since the people would never approve a courthouse bond election at this spot.

On the basis that there is not enough space to cope with a fast growing population, Supervisor Walter G. Merrill, who initiated the motion to endorse the petitions, went for pulling out.

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