

Capitol - 1970-1975

Construction begins on Capitola City Hall

by Maxine A. Cohen

There was a festive air at Monday's ceremonial ground-breaking for Capitola's new City Hall, attended by a host of local dignitaries, members of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Capitola Chamber of Commerce (original owners of the present City Hall building), and the press.

Hill Nelson, who just ended a two-year term as the city's mayor, wielded the gilt-colored shovel as the crowd looked on. There was applause for the symbolic shovels-full of dirt that were turned over, marking the official beginning of the \$377,000 construction project.

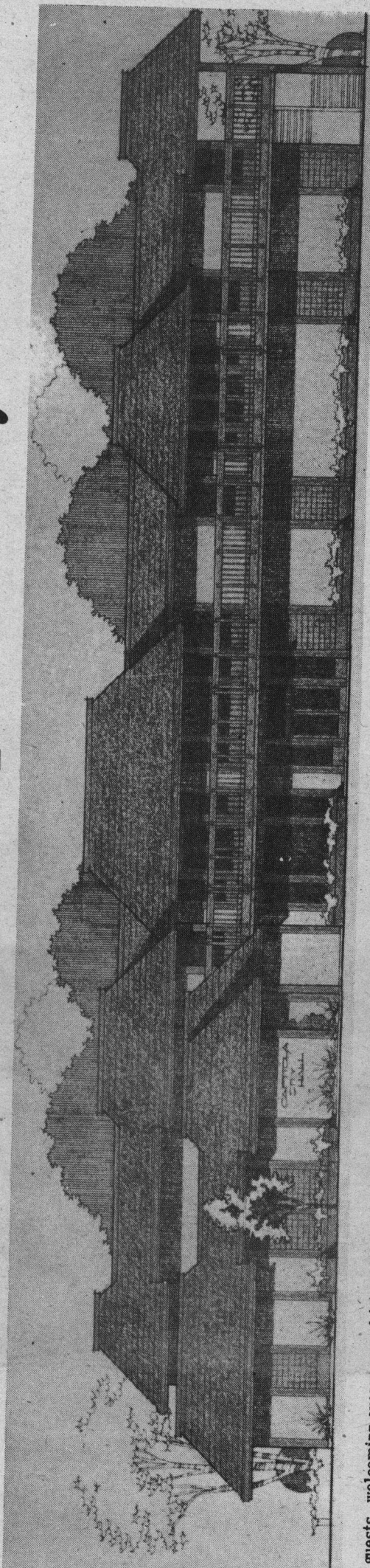
It was during Nelson's tenure as mayor that the plans were finalized and adopted by the City Council and -- as he emphasized during a short speech after the ground-breaking -- the new City Hall is being built without going into debt. He credited the efficiency of the city's staff and sound financial policies for making this possible.

According to City Manager Max Kludt, funds for the renovation/construction project are coming from \$114,000 in federal revenue sharing monies, which are earmarked for major capital improvement rather than day-to-day expenses, and from the city's accumulated capital outlay fund of \$214,708. The balance, about \$50,000, will come from anticipated tax revenues in April.

In Monday's talk, Nelson briefly traced the city's history since 1949, when Capitola achieved "cityhood," mentioning that the first quarters of the city official(s) were in a small office on Monterey Avenue opposite the theater.

Capitola has grown from its original population of 1,808 to its most recently estimated 7,723; the new City Hall will have the capability of housing necessary administrative and other services even beyond the projected 1990 population level of 18,000.

Recently-elected mayor Tom Mason followed Nelson in addressing the assembled



guests, welcoming everyone and introducing staff members who had participated in the planning.

Capitola architect Doug Messina, who designed the building-to-be, was there as was Richard DaPont, president of DaPont Construction, Inc., of Aptos, whose bid won the job of executing the plans. Sept. 8 is the date set for completion of the total project.

When completed, the new City Hall will feature City Council Chambers with fixed seating for 110, a 20 by 14-foot conference room, and an area designated as a meeting room for the Ladies Auxiliary of the Chamber of Commerce.

There will be two reception areas, plus offices for the mayor, city manager, city clerk, planning, building and public works.

The police department will occupy the quarters now used as City Hall, after modifications are made.

Between now and July, when completion of the City Hall portion of the complex is possible, there may be some confusion and inconvenience due to the construction underway. But City Manager Kludt was cheerful about the anticipated move -- "We'll be doing business as usual right up to moving day," he said.



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HARD HATS AND A GOLD SHOVEL were the props used by Capitola city fathers for Monday's ground-breaking ceremonies behind the present City Hall building. The "construction crew" for the occasion included (from left, in white hats) councilman Ron Graves; the real builder, Richard DaPont; councilman John Dixon, former mayor Brad McDonald, present mayor Tom Mason, and councilman Hill Nelson.

— Photo by Ken Kearney