

Library - Board

Green Sheet 5/6/81

Library board, planners at odds over new sites

The communication gap between the Santa Cruz Library Board and the county Planning Department appears to be as large as ever, following the monthly library board meeting held Monday morning.

County chief comprehensive planner Dave Laughlin attended the meeting, and addressed board members regarding "misconceptions" about a proposed Live Oak library site.

"I'm here to make sure things are clear between the county Planning Department and the library board," he said. "We can provide technical information; we may be able to help you locate (prospective library) sites."

Trustee C. Vernon Berlin, who criticized the Planning Department at the April meeting for being "so far behind" with regard to potential midcounty library sites, again expressed dissatisfaction with county planners in their handling of the matter.

He told Laughlin that in July 1978, board members named the northeast corner of 30th Avenue and Brommer (Live Oak area) as their first choice for a new library, and the corner of Capitola Road and 30th Avenue (Live Oak area) as their second choice. Instead, he argued as he did at the April meeting, planners keep suggesting the corner of 17th Avenue and Capitola Road as a recommended library site.

There is a gas station and Live Oak Senior Center on that corner. Board member Mary Ann Kaplan, agreeing with Berlin, told Laughlin, "That area just isn't available anymore."

Although Berlin said the first choice was for the 30th and Brommer location, that site has since been approved for what he called "high density housing." He told Laughlin, "In 1978, the site was available and would require a minimum amount of preparation. There were transit lines . . . we all considered it an ideal choice."

Laughlin explained to board members that they would have had to have asked for an amendment to the general plan for that location, and was later criticized by board member Bob Blankholm who said, "I'm not so sure it is our place to ask for a general plan change."

Despite Berlin's dissatisfaction, Laughlin repeated his offer for the Planning Department and library board "to work informally together. We (Planning Department) can provide you with technical information," he said.

Supervisor Joe Cucchiara's aide, Fred Keeley, who attended the meeting, also addressed board members, and like Laughlin, stressed the need for the two groups to "work cooperatively."

Berlin and Ms. Kaplin, however, indicated they will begin a search for a midcounty library location on their own.

"My recommendation is that this board forget the planners and go out and find a site and say, 'This is it,'" Berlin told board members.

"Maybe we should just do it and see what happens," agreed Ms. Kaplan.

Berlin and other members of the sites and facilities committee will look at

possible locations, including the corner of Portola and 30th Avenue, and make a recommendation on a suitable site to trustees.

In other business:

— Board member Bob Blankholm expressed dissatisfaction at the number of library projects that "end up costing money" but are not approved beforehand by trustees.

— Trustees voted to request from the Santa Cruz City Council, approval for another staff member for the library system at a cost of \$10,746 and to ask for a book budget of \$230,000 for 1981-82. The book budget request would not include trusts, endowments or other private gifts and is, according to board member Al Reetz, "just keeping up with inflation."

— Board members received a report from Charles Atkins, library director, on a \$50,000 grant from California State Library for an outreach project to provide what he described as "service to unserved people." Persons confined to rest homes, the physically handicapped and others will be served through the grant.

Program seeks energy auditors

Volunteer counselors for the Energy Conservation program are being sought. The volunteers become "energy auditors" who advise clients on energy use and conservation.

Volunteers must be over 18 and have four to six hours a week to devote to the program. Call 462-0414 to apply for training.