

Toll Climbing

Agency Feels Many Facts Forgotten In Jury Report

By Sy Berg

Santa Cruz Redevelopment agency members feel many facts were forgotten in a five-page grand jury report which suggests they resign, a subsequent board complete the San Lorenzo Park project quickly as possible, and the idea of urban renewal be banished from the county.

The agency was a prime target of the voluminous report of the grand jury.

Criticisms were of the limited sales made by the agency, an estimated loss of \$340,733 in taxes, the prior claim of agency bonds over taxes, and assorted implications of waste and mismanagement.

The agency heard the report after its regular meeting last night. Chairman Tom Polk Williams Sr., after looking down at the mass of notes he had made, commented sadly on what he termed "the inaccuracies."

"It is too bad that these men, who unselfishly gave so much of their time, reveal such a complete lack of understanding about what urban renewal is," he said.

During the year the grand jury had been represented at about 11 of the agency's 28 meetings. Foreman Vernon Berlin had attended one.

Williams noted the report "in all fairness, failed to even mention the obstacles the agency had met from the post office (see page 12) and others."

"Private developers never could have overcome them," he stated, citing the powers of eminent domain held by the agency.

He criticized what he called the short-sighted, it-costs-too-much and "it-takes-too-long" attitude of the report.

"What these good men forget," he said, "is that this entire area was wrecked by a flood. This redevelopment project, in a little more than a decade, will transform an area with a tax base of about \$720,000 into one with a tax base of from \$2.5 to \$4 millions."

Vice Chairman Carl Nelson read through the report answering alleged mis-statement of fact as he went along.

The report stated, "To date only two firm sales have been made. These are a \$16,000 sale to Alvarez and a \$64,000 sale to Barrett Construction corporation."

Nelson expressed surprise that the jury forgot a \$318,332 county courthouse transaction completed on November 27, 1961.

He also noted that the Barrett contract was for a total of \$248,273 ("The \$64,000 figure is only the first 'take.'") and the project

will be completed by December 31, 1965.

Nelson went on to cite the Park Plaza (Shaffer) contract, which has been stymied by lack of post office department action, but which still resulted in a \$100,000 deposit paid the agency in January, 1962.

"This sum has been drawing interest to our credit for a year," Nelson said.

Nelson indicated that the city, county, and school taxes have priority over the agency bonds, contrary to the grand jury's conception.

The report stressed the "private enterprise" aspect of an urban renewal project in Watsonville, contrasted with the federal "give-away-money" as-

pect of the Santa Cruz project.

Nelson emphasized that developers of the Santa Cruz project are operating with private capital, with the exception of the county and the possible participation of the post office.

But he took exception to what he termed a contradiction in the attitude of the grand jury towards "promoters." "How can you have free enterprise without promoters?"

When the report complained of "speculators," however, Nelson took bitter issue. "We sell the land only to developers whose plans we have seen and approved. "There can be no re-sale until the project is completed. If there is a profit, then does the grand jury object?"

Report Says

County Hospital Site Wrong For Juvenile Hall

The proposed new juvenile hall should not be built on or adjacent to the county hospital, the 1962 grand jury says.

The recommendation is contained in a report made by the jury's law enforcement committee, chaired by Leslie H. Keller. It is in the final jury report, released yesterday afternoon.

Another site should be selected because hospital grounds "will be needed for hospital expansion in the very near future."

The new juvenile hall should be built on "land of sufficient acreage to allow for the inmates to be taught the dignity of manual labor, such as farming and vegetable growing."

Other hall recommendations made by the jury include:

1. Under no circumstances should any juvenile be detained at the hall for more than 30 days unless convicted of a crime and awaiting transfer to the California Youth Authority.
2. The use of the hall as a "private boarding school" should be discontinued at once.
3. Expenses of confinement for out-of-county juveniles and any transportation of them should be reimbursed to this county from their home county.
4. The county administrative officer should study the hall operation and institute changes to improve it, because there appears to be a lack of efficiency.

The jury's study of the hall operation claims that half of the inmates are residents of other

counties, who are detained here at the expense of local taxpayers.

It says that hall records show that one girl inmate was confined for 145 days. The jury committee could not learn why she was there that long or if the county was reimbursed.

Also, a boy was kept in the hall for 122 days and another girl for 95 days. As for the latter, the committee said it was told by Chief Probation Officer Tom King that "we don't know what to do with her."

King told the committee the girl had "committed no crime, was mentally of superior ability."

The report states, "Juvenile hall should not be operated to keep children that parents can afford to have kept privately."

Costs of operating the hall are "increasing at an alarming rate, with a rise of 38 per cent in two years," according to the report.

The county population has grown only 8 per cent in the same period while the cost of living has increased only 2.7 per cent.

Probation Officer King made the following comments this morning:

1. Site location is a problem for supervisors to solve. But the hall should be near the hospital because hospital services are used extensively.

2. A farm program doesn't work well because there is too big a turnover. Juveniles now do get constructive work to do.

3. Retention of juveniles should not be more than 30 days, but there are many problems which render this limitation unfeasible.