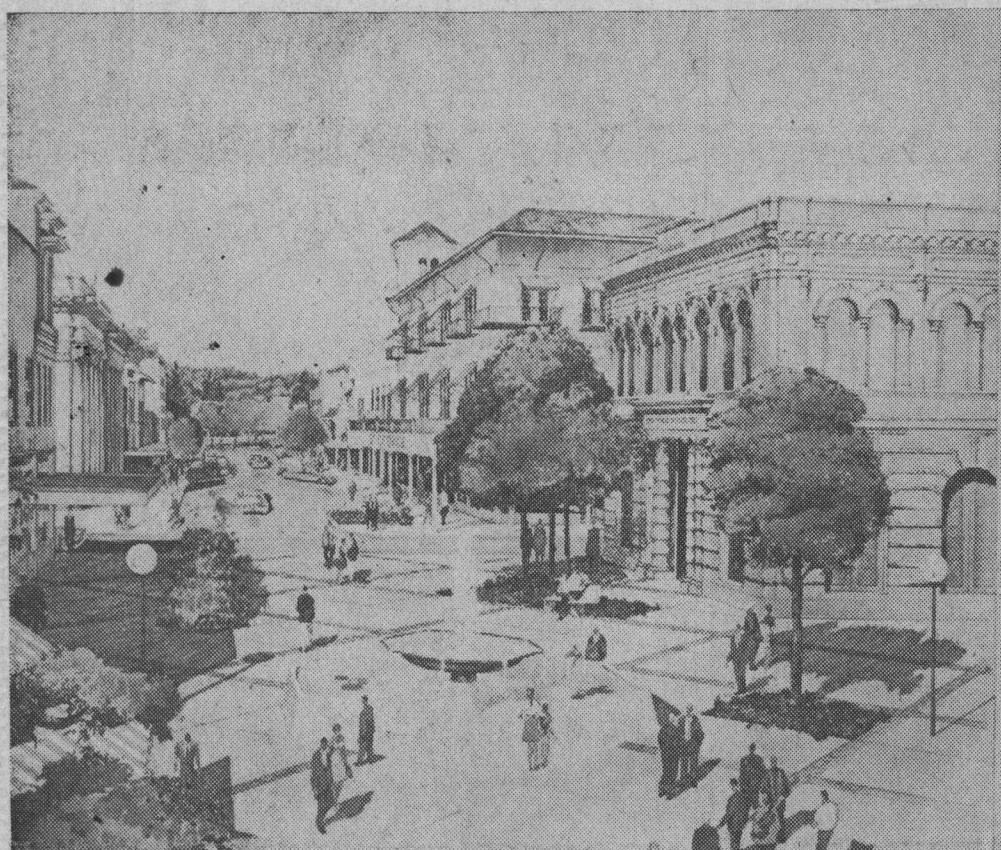


ending at 6 a.m. today: Maximum, 53; minimum, 45. Rainfall 1.87 inches.

Monterey Bay Area — Rain, becoming showery this afternoon, then partly cloudy through tomorrow; wind diminishing this afternoon and tonight; little temperature change.



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A Mall Concept For SC Along Pacific Avenue

By John Elliott
Sentinel Staff Writer

Responding to warnings of two nationally-known Santa Cruz residents and apparently receptive to the Grand Junction story, downtown Santa Cruz businessmen yesterday took a firm step toward consideration of a shopping mall for Pacific avenue.

Ken Wenzel, co-owner of Santa Cruz Hardware and long active in community affairs, was chosen by acclamation as the man to lead in the study of the possibility of renovating Pacific avenue through construction of a shopping mall.

About 135 property owners, businessmen, city and county officials, gathered for a no-host luncheon yesterday, at the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Chuck Abbott, Santa Cruz photographers of national repute.

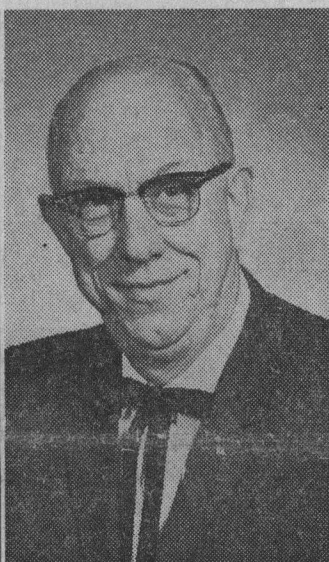
Guest speaker was Leland Schmidt, a key leader in development of the now-famed shopping mall in Grand Junction, Colo. Schmidt, a hardware store owner, was first chairman of the citizens' advisory committee which worked with city officials in planning and construction of the mall there. The civic endeavor led to Grand Junction's recognition as an All-American City and beat back an economic challenge to the city's downtown shopping area by a perimeter shopping center. (See Page 11 for that story.)

In introducing Schmidt, Mr. and Mrs. Abbott presented a slide and narrative warning that blight and the growth of outlying shopping centers can destroy downtown Santa Cruz.

Longtime advocates of the mall concept, they noted in invitation's to the luncheon that there are 44 empty stores in the "old" Santa Cruz downtown area; eight more buildings will empty when the county governmental center is finished; 41st avenue shopping center construction will begin this year; and assessed land values on Pacific avenue "have remained dormant during the last 10 years while some surrounding land values went up over 100 per cent."

Mr. and Mrs. Abbott urged that a Pacific avenue mall be created, and that exterior improvements blend into the mall-plaza concept.

They said, during their introduction, that costs vary from \$12 per front foot for the semi-mall in Visalia to \$323 per front foot in Fresno. The Grand Junction



Ken Wenzel

before the idea of building a mall gained acceptance in Grand Junction, but noted a 51 per cent favorable petition sign-up was achieved in 18 working days and 74 per cent favorable reaction was recorded by the time petitions were completed.

While not advocating local financing in so many words, Schmidt said that if Santa Cruz decides to go the federal "urban renewal route" it should plan on a project that will take "three

times as long and cost three times as much."

After the meeting, Schmidt told The Sentinel the cost figure of \$43 per front foot is not as frightening as it might appear. He said a more realistic view of expenditures is \$19 per month for 10 years for the owner of an average 50 foot lot. When seen in that light, he said, the owner may be better able to realize the benefit to be derived, at a cost that is not excessive over a long period of time.

The total project cost in Grand Junction, including storm sewer and street improvements, was \$715,976. The business community was assessed \$463,640 as their share, with the remainder paid by the city. Another \$1-million plus was spent by businessmen in remodeling and new construction.

Wenzel placed first priority on selection of "the right committee." He said there has been no decision on how many downtown committee members there will be, nor has there been a time table established yet. He indicated the study plan will begin immediately, however.

Pledging the support of the Greater Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce, in whatever fashion possible, was that group's new president Alvin McCommon.

Reagan Backs Firing Of Kerr

Sacramento (AP). — Gov. Reagan today defended the firing of University of California President Clark Kerr and said he has no intention of ever "arm twisting" the UC regents.

The administration of the nine-campus university, Reagan said, "won't be sullied by partisan politics because this governor has no intention of ever overruling the regents."

At a crowded Capitol news conference, the Republican governor said Kerr, himself, initiated the discussion that led to the 14-8 vote for his dismissal last Friday.

"I voted as one of 14," Reagan said.

Reagan, however, indicated he thought the firing was badly timed in view of the fact that his administration has just taken office.

Reagan said Kerr had told Meyer and another regent, Mrs. Dorothy Chandler, that "he could not go on in this climate" and wanted his status clarified.

He said that he told the regents they "should vote on the basis of whether they believed in their heart" Kerr should remain on the job. "When the vote started I had no way of knowing how the vote would turn out."

Reagan disagreed with his academic critics who have said the university will have trouble finding a new president and many now lose millions in grants.

"I think California can get a man" of quality said Reagan. But he added, "we have to clarify what type — kind of a job description." At the moment he

in Fresno. The Grand Junction cost, they noted, was \$43 per front foot.

Mr. and Mrs. Abbott, who originally requested appointment of a committee to study the matter, noted "we are still sponsored by no one—services rendered and opinions expressed are a personal contribution to our adopted home town, Santa Cruz."

On display at the meeting was a picture of Pacific avenue as it is now and a sketch (above) of how it might look as a mall. The sketch, prepared by the architectural firm of Robert Stevens Associates at the request of Mr. and Mrs. Abbott, is "just an idea" at present, Abbott said, and will warrant considerable study.

Basically, the sketch incorporates two different concepts, the closed-mall of Pamona and the open-mall of Grand Junction.

Schmidt went into detail about planning work necessary

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