

Voters nix library tax

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by Robert Airolti

Libraries 1990-1999 12-94

County voters rejected a quarter-cent sales tax for library services last month by five percent, 52 against and 48 for.

The measure, was expected to raise \$5 million yearly for local libraries, nearly doubling local library budgets.

With the measure losing by just over 3,000 votes, backers say the battle isn't over. Dan Haifley, co-chairman of Yes on L/Save Our Libraries, said he still believes the voters of Santa Cruz County want adequate library services.

However local tax critics Anthony Correia and Carolyn Busenhart were ecstatic. They headed the No on L Committee and vociferously denounced the tax saying it wasn't dedicated nor legally guaranteed for libraries.

Opponents seemed to get the measure across to voters that the crux of the matter was whether they believed public officials would keep their promises. Both Correia and Busenhart said they were "extremely pleased the voters weren't duped again."

Measure L proponents said they will continue working for additional library funding. Haifley said the voter refusal to pass the new tax could have been caused by a number of factors, including fear of a new tax or the lack of dedication of the money.

The measure passed by 50 votes, 1,736 to 1,686. Current

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city clerk Pam Greeninger said, "I was really pleased that it went through." Greeninger said she believes it's in the best interest of the city to be able to hire a clerk.

Opponents of the measure said the city clerk position should remain one in which the voters choose. They said the job was important to act as a checks and balance on the council. Yet, the council unanimously supported the measure and denied that the job was to check and balance other aspects of government. Greeninger agreed, "It's not a checks and balance thing, I record the actions of the council."

Greeninger, who started her service for the city in 1979 as secretary to the city manager and the public works director, joins about 75 percent of the city clerks in the state as appointed clerks.

She said the advantage of having an appointed clerk as opposed to an elected one was that it would assure the city of having a clerk who has the qualifications for the job.

However, Capitola resident Anthony Correia, who wrote the ballot arguments against the measure said the citizens of Capitola were smart enough to elect the person with the best qualifications, "just like they vote for members of the council," he said.

A similar measure failed in 1990 by about 90 votes.

The measure goes into effect upon the expiration or resignation of the current city clerk's term. Right now the Capitola City Council is considering when to hold the next election in 1996. With the California primary being moved up the council has a few choices. They can hold it

during the primary, during the general election in November or hold their own election in March of odd years.

The November general elec-

tion seems to be the choice of most cities as it consolidates the

election, saves the city's money and increases voter turnout.