

Courthouse Plans Hit Slight Snarl

Red tape from San Francisco has snarled county courthouse plans again, but no significant delay is expected.

The Santa Cruz redevelopment agency yesterday opened and closed its public hearing on an amendment allowing the new courthouse to be built eight stories high, but postponed action until its November 14 meeting.

The over-all redevelopment plan puts a three-story height limit on the courthouse site at Ocean and Water streets, while the county plans to build a five-story structure with a possible eight stories 20 or 25 years from now.

Regional urban renewal officials in San Francisco reviewed the proposed amendment, and that's when the wrench entered the works. The land disposition office has advised that eight-story development of the site would increase the value of the land, compared to three-story development.

The land office asked for a new appraisal of the property reflecting land value for eight-story development — with appraisal costs to be borne by the local redevelopment agency.

Agency directors yesterday asked the county to change its request to one for five-story development, in hopes an appraisal would not be needed for the lesser change. The change to an eight-story limit could be made a few decades hence when more courthouse space is needed.

If the regional office boosted the land price, the local agency would be required to consent and charge the higher price.

Earlier yesterday, the county supervisors had passed a resolution asking for the eight-story limit.

While the courthouse project was briefly stalled, progress was made on other redevelopment plans.

Ocean Plaza associates, which plans a motel and restaurant on Ocean street south of Branciforte creek, will seek "planned development" zoning for its site instead of the present commercial zoning. The rezoning will take two to three months, but the partners told the agency yesterday that other delays already had killed their chances of opening the motel by next summer.

The planned development zone would put the property in fire district 2 instead of the present fire district 1. Architect Walter Burde said construction in fire district 1 would add 3¼ per cent to building costs for the \$450,000 project.

However, the Ocean Plaza group agreed it would go ahead with development plans whether the rezoning is approved or not. The agency approved a land sale agreement and the contract will probably be signed next week.

Two title companies in the redevelopment area—Title Insurance and Trust company and Colonial Title company—won agency approval of signs for their buildings.

TITCo got approval for a 13 by 5-foot sign, to be mounted on a 20-foot pole in front of its new River street building. The agency had grappled with TITCo this summer over a proposed 25 by 12-foot sign, but had no difficulty accepting the smaller one.

Colonial's sign will be 8 by 5 feet, mounted on a 17-foot pole. The Colonial building will be adjacent to the Bundox restaurant, Soquel avenue and Dakota street, with the sign on Dakota.

Both signs will be plastic and metal, with inside illumination. Colonial was requested to surround the signpole base with a planter box.

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