

Reluctant Board Adds Road To School Site

By Len Klempnauer
Sentinel Asst. City Editor

Unanimously declaring they didn't like it, Santa Cruz city school district trustees last night acceded to city council demands that the school system build a new road through its new La Fonda High school site.

The city council has required a north-south road that will split the campus into two parts before it will approve a use permit for construction of the district's third high school.

Although the matter was not up for public hearing, members of the audience, led by real estate agent Ed Hansmann, began interrupting the board discussion until the High school issue eventually turned into a hearing.

More than one time, however, Board President John Melendy had to gavel down Hansmann for "being out of order." Melendy finally told Hansmann that "I'm fast losing my patience with you."

Trustee Eugene Adams, member of a board committee working out site development problems with the city, opened the discussion by stating that City Public Works Director Bill Fieberling and City Planning Director Neal Walton are "both adamant" about requiring the school district to put in the road that will connect from the La Fonda overpass to Soquel avenue.

Adams said he told the city officials that the school district feels the road would "not be in the best interest of the taxpayers, and certainly not in the best interest of the school district." He said the board needs the use permit "now" to get construction under way so the La Fonda school can be opened in the fall, 1967.

The road, however, would not be built for approximately four years, under stage two of construction when the school plant is enlarged.

Each trustee, before voting for the road, individually expressed his opposition to it. Later in the session, Trustee Charles Smith told the audience of some 100 persons that if any of them believe the school district should not be required to build the road that they attend tonight's city council meeting to "make their wishes" known. The council is scheduled to act on the use permit tonight at its meeting at 7:30 in council chambers on Center street.



The Rev. Herbert F. Schmidt, pastor of Messiah Lutheran church, last night questioned city school trustees' methods of going about building the new La Fonda high school.

someplace else and decide it there?" he said.

Melendy said the board committee had met with city officials to discuss the road.

"I've been having a little trouble getting information (about the road)," Hansmann said.

"I'm fast losing my patience with you," Melendy told Hansmann as he gavelled the real estate agent to calmness.

Then Charles Wheat, another La Fonda site opponent, spoke up, "Nobody is willing to discuss price. You knew you had to put a road in there before you started grading."

Porter then said he estimated \$161,000 for the road.

"This site is fast becoming too expensive, isn't it?" Hansmann queried.

Porter answered he is the district architect and it is not in his purview to say what is or isn't too expensive.

Trustee Lewis Alcorn said the board has to "come up with a road of some type. We're acquiescing to the city council demands and seeing if they'll go along with it (road plan). That's all we're doing here, isn't it?"

Hansmann said the school site had 23 usable acres before the road, "I believe," and it's losing three with the road. "Isn't it (site) becoming too small for a school?"

"Is this a public meeting?" asked Trustee Genevieve Beck.

Hansmann said he had asked Gray for information on the site and that Gray told him that Superintendent Denzil Morrissey had said to "hold up on anything that I (Hansmann) am to get." He said others have gotten information, but "I am not privileged this way. I feel it is the duty of this board to tell us how far we've gone (in spending on the site)."

Melendy reminded Hansmann that they had had two conversations together, and the board president had asked Hansmann to write down his questions.

"This was done," Hansmann said, "Is it here Mr. Morrissey? Maybe you don't want it out in the open."

Wheat then produced figures he had gotten from the schools' office. He said the land was estimated to cost \$450,000, but had cost \$541,000; that there were \$32,000 in fees and \$27,000 in estimated costs of more land yet to be bought. He said the site work contract is \$294,000 while the estimate was \$285,000, and two items in the estate are not included in the site work. These two add up to about \$37,000 more, he said.

Porter then said the estimate was made in 1964 and it was his responsibility, not the school board's. He said "pad work" for buildings have been completed in the site development which weren't in the estimate, however. He said it is "quite remarkable, actually" that the estimate and actual bid came so close, since no soil tests had been taken.

"No road was known, anticipated or wanted" at the time the estimate was made, Porter emphasized.

But Wheat said it was known at the time the property was purchased. Hansmann backed Wheat.

"I assure you I didn't know," architect Porter replied.

"It might have been kept from you, Mr. Porter," said Hansmann.

Gray said that when the board went through eminent domain procedures in superior court to acquire the property, it indicated six acres it didn't want included in the site.

Gray said Hansmann was owner of Arana Properties, from whom the board bought most of the La Fonda site, and that Hansmann insisted the six acres be included in the total sale.

"He (Hansmann) knows he's making up a lot of stories here,"

be produced in two days.

Hansmann replied that he was at the meeting as an "interested citizen"; that he owns nearby business property; that "we're big neighbors" and "generally business districts don't like a high school nearby."

Superintendent Morrissey then went through a background of the site selection, saying how an east Santa Cruz citizens committee had recommended the site and that others under consideration did not meet state requirements, were undesired by the citizens committee or could not be purchased.

Gray, still smarting from Hansmann's attacks, asked Hansmann:

"Since you're such a dedicated citizen, why don't you tell the group how much you offered to sell the property to us for?"

Hansmann, surprised by Gray's question, stumbling, said, "We never had the property offered for sale."

Melendy then instructed Gray to get all costs and estimates together in one package and make them available to the public and to the press.

The Rev. Herbert Schmidt, pastor of Messiah Lutheran church, said Santa Cruzans support "you guys (trustees)"

but he questioned how site development could be done before a use permit is obtained.

Trustee Adams, who is an attorney, said a use permit is not required to do site work; that the first time the board knew a road might be required by the city was this spring; and that site work was done and bids being sought to meet a time schedule, so the school can be opened in the fall, 1967.

"Adams, when you were the attorney for Arana you knew that a road must go in there," Hansmann said.

Adams, boiling, said, "That's not true, and I'm not going to let that (remark) stand."

Adams wound up the discussion by explaining the school

also is being built under a unique component parts building project in which 13 other California districts are participating. Work must be started by December to meet that time schedule.

The project, sponsored by a Ford Foundation grant of about \$500,000, allows the district to "buy today's materials at yesterday's prices," Adams said.

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strict should not be required to build the road that they attend tonight's city council meeting to "make their wishes" known. The council is scheduled to act on the use permit tonight at its meeting at 7:30 in council chambers on Center street.

Architect Kal Porter later in the meeting estimated the road would cost \$161,000 if built now, excluding costs of some additional property that must be bought to put the road through.

The board had voted on the road, and Trustee Lloyd Hebron had said a drainage problem at the site is being worked out in a cooperative plan among the city schools, city council and county government, when Hansmann first stood up:

"I want to protest," he declared.

Melendy replied that the school board was just meeting city council demands and the proper place to protest was at tonight's council session.

The board returned to the drainage problem, and Dave Gray, assistant superintendent of business, said the cost of correcting drainage is estimated at \$50,000, with the school share \$5000 of that.

Trustee Ambrose Cowden asked to see a plan of the road, and minutes later Hansmann arose again.

"I can't find out the cost of that road and where it's going to go. Did you have a meeting

Hansmann said the site had 23 usable acres before the road, "I believe," and it's losing three with the road. "Isn't it (site) becoming too small for a school?"

"Is this a public meeting?" asked Trustee Genevieve Beck. She said the board has proper procedures to follow in hearing the public, "otherwise we'll have a free for all."

Melendy said that "frankly the chair has been out of order for not asking the rest of the board if it wants to hear the public."

Spoke up real estate agent Anne Newlands, "Taxpayers should have the right to talk."

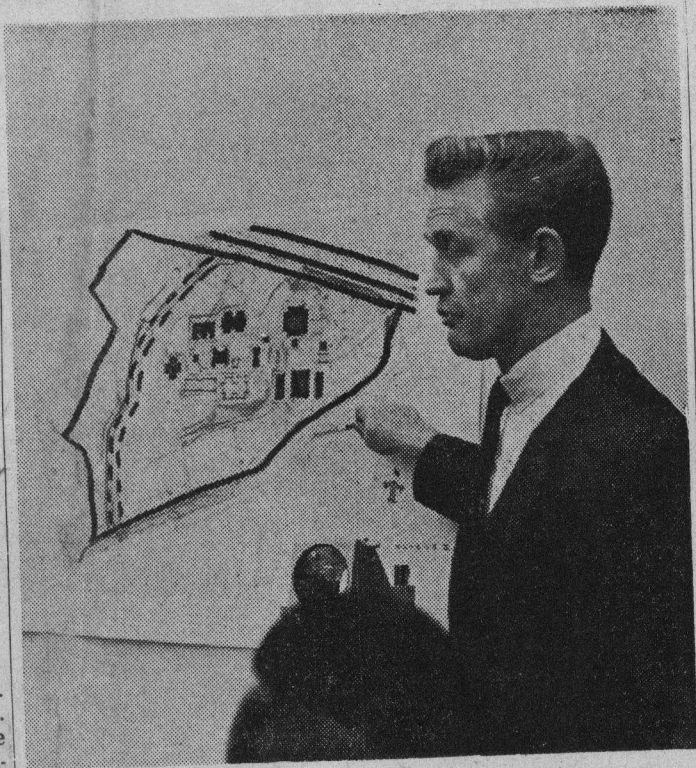
The board never officially opened the discussion to the public, but the audience continued to voice its opinion.

Gray said Hansmann, owner of Arana Properties, from whom the board bought most of the La Fonda site, and that Hansmann insisted the six acres be included in the total sale.

"He (Hansmann) knows he's making up a lot of stories here," the assistant superintendent said. "Don't let any real estate agent think that he's (Hansmann) getting (hurt). He is still trying to get his money back; he thinks now he didn't make such a good deal."

Gray told The Sentinel later that Hansmann is trying to get back the whole site "now that the site work is done."

Gray also added that Hansmann has asked for an "item by item" account of expenditures. He said these costs could



Architect Kal Porter points out how the road, required in a use permit by the city council, will split the new La Fonda high school campus. The road is the dotted lines. At top is the Santa Cruz-Watsonville freeway. Porter said the road, if built now, is estimated to cost \$161,000. It is not scheduled for construction, however, until four years from now, in the second stage of building at the La Fonda

site. The Santa Cruz city council has said it would not grant a use permit for the school until provisions are made for the road by the city school board. Trustees last night approved the road proposal pictured here but said they don't like the idea. Trustee Charles Smith urged persons who back the board to show up at tonight's 7:30 council meeting to express their views to "city fathers."