

Government Center

Liddicoat Move Loses, 3-2

Courthouse Renovation Change Fails

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Supervisor Marilyn Liddicoat nearly pulled off her first political coup Tuesday as she tested the county board's decision to renovate the supervisorial chambers into two courtrooms at a cost of \$225,889.

In December, the board approved the renovation over the objections of then Supervisors-elect Liddicoat and Phil Baldwin.

The decision was also opposed by Supervisor Cecil Smith.

At her first meeting Tuesday, Liddicoat moved to have the board change its mind and develop the open space atrium between the courts building and the government center into the two needed courtrooms, arguing that it would probably be less expensive and that it would not force the board to relocate "at a cost that could be as high as \$400,000," she said.

Liddicoat called the board's earlier

decision, "An atrocious waste of taxpayers' money."

As she made the motion, seconded by Smith, it appeared the new Aptos supervisor could muster the necessary three votes.

It didn't happen that way.

Supervisor Gary Patton and Chairman Ed Borovatz, two supervisors who supported renovation of their chambers, argued that the security factor of using the atrium would be more expensive in the long run because the present board chambers are immediately adjacent to other courtrooms and the interior hallways can be used for moving prisoners.

Liddicoat countered, stating that the atrium courtrooms could be scheduled to handle minimum security suits such as civil and traffic.

Patton pointed out that the board of supervisors have no control over court scheduling, and he further argued that renovation of the supervisors cham-

bers would make use of the middle hallway in the courts building "Which is now a waste of space."

Patton also said that from \$15,000 to \$25,000 had already been spent with the architect's to develop designs for renovation.

Concerning the relocation of the board's chambers, Patton said, "I don't think anybody should think the board will spend \$200,000 to \$500,000 to feather its own nest."

He told Liddicoat, "I think you fought the noble fight (to use the atrium) and I ask you not to go back and relive the past.

"I would simply plead with the board to go ahead," Patton said.

His argument appeared to have persuaded Baldwin, as the new supervisor joined Patton and Borovatz in opposing Liddicoat's motion.

Concerning new supervisors chambers, Baldwin said he would be willing to hold meetings "in a bungalow" and

added, "This building was built with some idea that opulent surroundings had something to do with justice—that's hogwash."

Patton joined Baldwin in stating that he did not want posh surroundings and that "looking down on the audience" was not an advantage.

As Liddicoat's motion failed, the board moved to direct County Administrator Ted Durkee to seek out alternate chambers for county supervisors.

Smith urged that the CAO try to keep the board in the county center to cut down on the staff time that would be involved should the board meet elsewhere.

One alternate location that has been suggested is the Veteran Hall auditorium on Front Street.

The initial estimate of costs for the atrium was at about \$168,000, however, the board was later told that it could cost as much to use the atrium as renovate the supervisors chambers.