

Weather Report

Temperature for the 24-hour period ending at 8 a.m. today — Maximum 82, minimum 52.

Monterey Bay Area — High fog night and morning but clear afternoons through tomorrow; west wind 10-17 knots in afternoons.

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Transport

Trustees Hit Stumbling Block

Efforts To Buy Meder St. Property Looking Bleak

The new University of California campus may prove a serious stumbling block to the city schools system in its efforts to acquire a 15-acre elementary school site on the West Side.

City Schools Business Manager Dave Gray informed trustees last night that negotiations to purchase the property, located south of Meder street and east of Western drive, have all but fallen through.

Since the university campus became a certainty for Santa Cruz, the asking price on the property has skyrocketed from \$60,000 to \$75,000 and the "down payment" from \$10,000 to \$15,000.

On top of that, several housing developments originally planned for the vicinity of the proposed elementary school will probably not be built due to the need for nearby student housing for the university campus. That could seriously reduce the number of children the school would service.

Yet trustees and administrators still seem to think acquisition of the property is a good idea — even if the district just sold it at a later date to finance acquisition of another site.

But they may not be able to buy the property at any rate.

Realtor Bob Voris, who owns the property along with a group of other investors, came before the board last year with the former owner of the land, Tony George, and agreed verbally to sell the site for \$60,000 on an "installment" type plan.

The district was later informed by the county counsel's office that the "installment" purchase plan could not be done legally and the district set about looking for another means of purchase.

In the meantime, the university campus was approved for Santa Cruz and land values in the area of the proposed school site zoomed skyward. Voris and his group began to get extremely good offers for the land and the "very low price" they had quoted the school district began to look even lower.

Since the district had not been able to come up with a plan for financing the land purchase, Voris told them the previous deal was off and \$75,000 was the best the district could hope for on the land.

Voris told The Sentinel this morning that his group was not interested in the lease purchase type of land deal the district has been considering. The lease purchase plan, used recently in Monterey county, allows a district to acquire title to portions of the land, payment by payment. The remainder of the land is kept frozen by options.

"We wanted no parts of options," Voris said. "That method holds us back in our development of the land."

Trustees are now considering the possibility of initiating condemnation proceedings on the land. But Deputy County Counsel John Sanbrook today said the district would have to prove need for the site and determine its use before such proceedings could be carried out.

If the land turns out to be unsuitable for elementary school development — because of the university's demands for student housing in that area — the condemnation proceedings might not be able to be started.

"It wouldn't bother me if

they condemned the property," Voris said. "But it would certainly hurt the district financially."

There has been some talk of using the site for construction of a junior high school, but its comparatively small size (15 acres) may preclude that use.

Trustees requested a representative of the county counsel's office and Voris meet with the board to talk the matter over at the July 24 meeting or the first meeting of August.

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