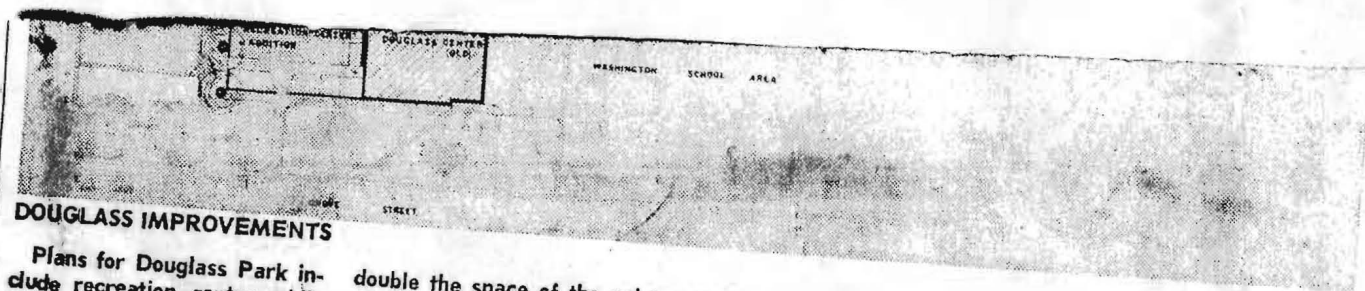


This Douglass Center will be torn down and another built on the site, with work to begin April 1



**DOUGLASS IMPROVEMENTS**

Plans for Douglass Park include recreation center addition (lower left) that would

double the space of the existing center. The sled hill and

multipurpose asphalt area to the north were recently add-

ed with the help of federal matching funds.

strapped birds and pons, have been or spurs," Joseph F. Co- has owned gamecocks, guy from sed to fight d to name necocks us- 110 a pair, ed training luce a good

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## iges

ke whatever to remedy shelter and for correct-cannot be re- Y. on the corn-elda Martin, and Rick il Beaumont, l also a mem- will be asked said. If the local veter- sked to work e. Walter

gamecock fights "around Monticello and that neck of the woods," but had not attended any in the area.

"They have a lot of them (fights) in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas — that area," Coble said. "It's a popular sport in Mexico, but it's not illegal there."

Newsletters and magazines featuring gamecock fighting are sold in several Champaign-Urbana sporting goods stores, he said.

A Champaign man who has been invited to cock fights, but

declined to go, said they are "super-exclusive" affairs.

"They call the same day the fights are held, and usually hold them at a different place, usually a barn way out in the country.

"They're big cliques," he said. "Everyone knows everyone else and no strangers are invited."

He said that he has talked to people who attended them, describing them as "pretty bloody affairs."

"When the fights are over, there's a pile of dead birds left. They burn them in a barrel the next day, so there's no trace of them."

The fights are pretty festive affairs, he said, except for one thing: "They don't allow drinking. If some drunk gets near those roosters he'd get his throat cut from those spurs."

L. L. "Jack" Lawhead, a member of the Champaign County Board and township supervisor of Mahomet, said Thursday that it was "common knowledge" that cock fights had been held in the area. He had once been invited to go, he said.

That invitation came "two or three years ago," Lawhead said, but he declined to name the man who invited him.

total reduction was \$8,284.53.

The improvement of John from Russell Street to Mattis Avenue, expected to cost about \$500,000, is being protested by 30 property owners in the area.

Property owners in the area would be assessed for 30 per cent of the cost of the project if the jury upholds the city's plan.

As Judge Creed Tucker explained in his instructions to the jury, a special assessment of that kind can be made only when the real market value of the property assessed increases in value by at least the amount of the assessment as a direct result of the project.

The benefits also must be of a kind that accrue to the assessed property owners and cannot be shared by the public at large. The city has the burden of proof in the case.

The project would involve the construction of a 44-foot wide concrete pavement with a bicycle lane on the north, side and parking on the south side.

The portion of West John in question now is an oil-and-gravel pavement. There currently are no curbs, sidewalks or storm sewers along it. These would be constructed as part of the improvement.

It was the issue of whether the public at large would share in the benefits of the project that James Evans, assistant Champaign city attorney, and Lawrence Johnson, attorney for the objectors, concentrated upon in their closing arguments.

Evans argued that special benefits would result for the assessed property owners in that traffic safety in the area would be improved by a better roadway and having parking only on one side; that sidewalks would increase pedestrian safety in the area; that the storm sewers would provide better drainage for the

ings would be lost and traffic and noise would increase.

Johnson also showed the jury photographs of homes along West John and along intersecting streets in the area such as Russell, Draper and Garfield streets, which indicated that West John was in significantly better condition than the others. He argued that if the project was not envisioned as a means of improving traf-

assessment testified in the case. J. Lloyd Brown, testifying for the city, said that property values would increase by at least as much as the assessment. Of two experts testifying for the objectors, Gail E. Caslerline said he thought property values would remain about the same, while John F. Gwinn said he believed that in almost every case values would go down.

# Group demands 'complete' center

The Frederick Douglass Community Center Citizens Steering Committee issued Friday a "position paper" which calls for the construction of a comprehensive recreational center.

The paper was released by Richard Davis Jr., a member of the Champaign Park District Board of Commissioners.

Davis, also a member of the steering committee, has opposed the park board's decision to build a smaller center containing only a gymnasium and supporting facilities.

The paper lists the following contentions and demands:

— Historically, the northeast section of Champaign and especially Douglass Center has had to exist with less than adequate recreational programs, less than adequate recreational staffing and less than adequate physical facilities.

— The present Douglass Center is not only under staffed, but also lacking in program space which the park board's proposed facility will do nothing to correct.

— The original charge of the 1972 bond issue committed the park board to building a recreational facility fully adequate to meet the needs of all of the citizens of northeast Champaign.

— The Champaign Park District, statements of the new board President William J. Helms Jr. withstanding, has the financial means for building an adequate Douglass Center.

— The only acceptable facility for northeast Champaign will be a complete one.

— There will be no demolition of Douglass Center until a complete facility is promised.

— 90 per cent of the workers on the Douglass Center project shall be black.

A rally is scheduled at Douglass Park from 5 to 7 p.m. Sunday to gain support in protesting the demolition of the center and requesting the construction of a complete one.

Davis had earlier said he believed the park board had enough money to build the center if some other minor projects in the bond issue were deleted.

Park board President William J. Helms Jr. said Friday night that with the efforts put into opposing the issue, the black community could have raised enough money to build the complete center.

Helms also hinted that the search for extra money is still continuing. He said he knew of at least one other board member who is exploring possibilities of extra funds.

Meanwhile, the board is scheduled to meet at 5 p.m. Tuesday to consider bids on the demolition of the present structure.

One bidder, McCabe Construction Co. of Champaign, withdrew its bid last week after learning of the black community's opposition to the demolition.

Helms said Friday night the board will go ahead with awarding the demolition contract. He said the board has signed a contract for the construction of the center and the demolition must be done.

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surgeons from Illinois were in Friday and today annual meeting

of the Illinois chapter of the American College of Surgeons.

Keynote speaker will be Dr. William Nick of Columbus, Ohio, speaking today at noon on "The Crisis in Malpractice." The group Friday heard the presentation of scientific papers and elected officers.

The group named Dr. Otto Metzmaker of Springfield as president, succeeding Dr. William Marshall of Peoria. Doctors Jack Cooley and Michael Hurno of Carle Clinic were program co-chairmen.

The meeting is being held in the Hamada Inn.

## To continue boycott of hiring recruiter

# Latino students talk with Corbally

By Paula Peters  
Of The Courier

Latino students dissatisfied with the results of a meeting Friday with University of Illinois President John Corbally plan to continue their boycott of the U of I's efforts to hire a full-time Latino recruiter.

Eva Fuentes, a representative of La Collectiva Latina, said Friday afternoon several students met with Corbally for more than an hour Friday.

"He was very cordial and pleasant, and he listened to us patiently," she said. "But he will not pressure the chancellor (Jack Peltason) or the director of admissions and records (Jane Loeb)."

Miss Fuentes said her group wants the full-time recruiter to be hired to work in the admissions and records office and to report directly to Di-

rector Loeb.

A half-time Latino recruiter who has worked in the office has "no authority," she said. "He was bringing in applications, but he had no say-so about who was chosen."

"We asked them to hire a full-time person besides the half-time person, and they said okay, but took away the half-time job. Now we'll have a full-time person, but unless that person has authority we have nothing at all."

"That authority would come if the person reported directly to Jane Loeb."

Miss Fuentes said the students will not work with a search committee looking for an individual to fill the full-time job so long as that person would not report to Director Loeb.

Contacted Friday afternoon,

Corbally described the discussion with the Latino students as "lengthy and informative."

"I did inform them that I would not interfere with the chancellor nor with the director of admissions in suggesting what administrative arrangements were appropriate to enhance the recruitment of students from minority groups," he said.

He also said he told the students he "thought they were focusing on the wrong problem."

"The basic purpose of their efforts is to increase the number of Latino students at the Urbana-Champaign campus," Corbally said, "and I think that's a purpose we all accept."

"But I feel the question is whether that purpose can be met without having a special Latino recruiter who reports directly to the director of ad-

missions. In my view, their discussions are straying and are related almost entirely to the administrative structure."

Miss Fuentes said the students will work through the summer, contacting community officials and other persons in an attempt to gain support for their cause.

"They already have contacted U of I Trustee Arthur Velasquez, she said, adding that Velasquez "has all our documentation, including statistics and the history of our past efforts."

"He is very aware, and we know that he is acting on our behalf, as well," she said.

Several faculty members also are aware of the group's efforts and support them, she said.

Chancellor Peltason has asked Director Loeb to report to him by December on how the recruitment effort works.

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d to stop the measure of  
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he bill, which can be  
ended further, would have  
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y support.

Senate currently is con-  
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(RPC) were on hand  
to present their case  
Miller's recom-  
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reduction for planning.

replied, "I stand in full  
of my recommendation,  
we could get more plan-  
g the dollar, and I want  
portunity to prove that to

Senate Executive Committee.

having t

# Windows Get Bullet Holes At McCabe's

The McCabe Brothers Con-  
struction Co. office at 411 N.  
Wright St., C, was damaged by  
gunfire late Thursday night or  
early Friday morning according  
to Champaign police.

Reports indicate that 13 bullet  
holes were found in plate glass  
windows of the office, and ex-  
tensive damage was reported  
inside the building. Police found  
two .38 caliber bullets at the  
scene which were turned over  
to the department's investigation  
division.

One large hole was discovered  
in a plate glass window, and  
police theorize it was created by  
a shotgun blast. The incident  
happened between 9:45 p.m.  
Thursday and 7:20 a.m. Friday.

Until McCabe Brother's  
defaulted on its contract with  
the Champaign Park District  
Tuesday, the firm was to have  
demolished the old Frederick  
Douglass Recreation Center at  
512 E. Grove St., C.

But some community op-  
position developed as a result of  
a vow by the Douglass Center  
Steering Committee that  
demolition would be prevented  
until a larger recreation center  
is planned.

McCabe's business has been  
picketed daily for the past two  
weeks by steering committee  
members and their supporters.

In a letter to the park district  
requesting an extension in the  
demolition project, company  
owner Don McCabe said threats  
had been made against him, his  
employees and his equipment.

He had requested an extension  
to begin demolition "as soon as  
safe conditions exist." The park  
board Thursday night denied his  
request.

See related store on Page 3.

# Market Falls

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# Douglass Center site shifted

COURIER 6-12-75

By Les Somogyi  
Of The Courier

The new Douglass Center will be built, whether the old one goes down or not, the Champaign Park Board voted Thursday night.

Since McCabe Brothers, Inc., demolition contractors, defaulted on its contract to raze the old center, the board decided to start from scratch and build a new one a few hundred feet away.

Previous plans were to demolish the old center and build the new one on the site of the old one. But threats by members of the black community apparently caused McCabe to change his mind.

McCabe Brothers signed the contract for the demolition work May 31 and had ten days in which to start work. McCabe officially requested an extension of the deadline at Thursday's meeting, but the park board turned down the request.

With the deadline for allowing the general contractor, English Brothers, to begin construction about a week away—and a hefty lawsuit possible if they can't start work—the park board made its go-ahead decision Thursday night.

The decision was made again in a split vote, complete with shouts, new threats and a walk-out by leaders of the opposition faction.

A big bass drum, carried to the meeting as a symbol of opposition, was not beaten during the meeting. But opposition leaders said that

doesn't mean they are backing down.

English Brothers President Ed Hynds said today his company would start work as soon as he received the new specifications. In contrast to McCabe, he said his firm has not been threatened or picketed.

The board directed architect E. Hedric Clay to make arrangements to build the structure west of the existing building, between the existing center and the Douglass Annex.

The 4-1 vote, with Commissioner Richard Davis Jr. dissenting, came after the board refused McCabe's request for an extension.

McCabe sought to delay work until the problem between the park board and the black community has been resolved. In a letter to the board, McCabe said he could not begin the demolition work without assurance that he will not be disturbed.

McCabe told the board that he had been threatened and that his business at 411 N. Wright St., Champaign, had been picketed daily by members of the black community. He said he did not want to risk the safety of his work crew and equipment on the job.

Blacks have been protesting the demolition of the old center, saying the park board should make a commitment to build a full recreational facility. The full center would include a senior citizens room and an activity room. Current plans call for only a large gym-

nasium with supporting facilities.

Although McCabe is technically in default of his contract, he apparently will not lose his \$600 bid bond. The board agreed but took no action to return his bid bond.

Commissioner Donald F. Bresnan said, "This man has been intimidated. He operated in good faith. He attempted to do the job, but he was not allowed to. I can't hold this man liable for not completing his job. He acted like a businessman."

The board's decision to build the center elsewhere in the park angered blacks who were at the meeting.

Roy Williams, chairman of the Citizens Steering Committee, and members Kenneth Stratton, Elsie Easley and the Rev. Lundy Savage walked out

of the meeting room Thursday night, saying they were going to "organize" the black community. "This community will see hell in the morning," Mrs. Easley threatened.

Williams, who was carrying the large bass drum, refused to talk to reporters. He did not beat the drum, at the request of the park board.

Earlier in the meeting, Davis took the floor and attacked the park board.

He said putting the center between the old center and the Douglass Annex is "very bad park planning."

Davis said the board acted with "no respect for the black community." He said the board simply wants to put up a building somewhere without solving the real problem.

"Problems still exist," Davis

said. "English Brothers won't be able to get in there. We kept McCabe out, you think English will get there?"

Bresnan agreed that it was a terrible thing to do (move the location of the building), but he said he did during the last few weeks to resolve the issue. He is no alternative park district defaulting the contract with English Brothers and losing a large amount of money.

At that point, Davis introduced a resolution: a commitment be made to build the full center monies" (allocated bond money) and "as funds become available expansion may be completed in phases ultimately."

His motion died for lack of second.

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His motion died for lack of second.

What?  
ALL BUT DAVIS  
VOTE TO MOVE THE SITE  
McCabe's LETTER TO BOARD  
A FULL CENTER!

2:30 PM  
1-14 MEETING?

# Park Board Votes To Build New Dou

By STEVEN HERSHBERGER  
News-Gazette Staff Writer

The new Frederick Douglass Recreation Center will be built next to the old one.

The Champaign Park board voted 4-1 Thursday night to move the construction site. It will now be between the dilapidated Douglass Center on the east and the rundown annex on the west.

Also by a 4-1 vote Thursday night, the park board refused to grant McCabe Brothers Inc. an extension in which to begin demolition of the 30-year-old Douglass Center, 512 E. Grove St., C.

Thus McCabe now has defaulted on his contract. At least two commissioners indicated they would oppose bringing suit to recover dam-

ages. Commissioner Donald Bresnan suggested he would favor returning McCabe's bid bond.

Construction of the \$742,000 gymnasium, showers and stage facility with a small activity room will be delayed for several more weeks. Architect E. Hedric Clay must first revise his building design to accommodate the new site.

"You are in deep trouble on your other contracts," warned attorney French Fraker when asked about the district's status with the English Brothers Co., which holds the general construction contract for the basic building.

"It involves a substantial amount of money," Fraker continued. "You'll be in default of your own contract if you don't

build it and the public stands to lose a substantial amount of money."

"I have no choice," Bresnan said in explaining his vote. "I have done all I could. There is no other choice (except to move the construction site) to prevent losing a substantial amount of money."

"This shows the lack of respect that this board has for the community," commissioner Richard Davis argued back. "You'll put up anything, anywhere without resolving the problem. It still exists. I don't know how English Brothers will get in the park to build."

Davis, the only black park commissioner, has long opposed building the basic unit without the wing.

The vote to move the con-

struction site came after about one hour of tension-filled but quiet discussion among commissioners.

Members of the Douglass Center steering committee including Roy Williams, Elsie Easley and Kenneth Stratton watched in bitter anguish. The steering committee on April 29 vowed to prevent the demolition in order to get the kind of building they felt was an adequate recreation center for North End residents.

Stratton, who sparked some of the most heated and passionate remarks during the seven-week stand-off, rapidly walked out after the construction site vote without saying a word and then yelled to following reporters, "I have no comment."

The commissioners apparent-

ly remain undeterred by the community opposition that prevented demolition of the old Douglass Center.

The new center was to sit where the old one is now. But local community opposition, including some picketing, created tensions that McCabe apparently prevented him from fulfilling his contract with safety.

The commissioners are steadfastly clinging to their argument that they have no money for the \$200,000 wing being demanded. Thus they have not deviated from their plans to build a facility that the Douglass Center steering committee — a citizens group — maintains is inadequate without a wing for senior citizen recreation and an all-purpose meeting room.

Just before the construction site vote, Davis failed to gain any support for his resolution calling for the park district "to add alternate A for senior citizens" with the cost borne by the \$279,000 "pad" money.

The "pad" figure is the amount Board President William Helms says remains unallocated from the 1972 bond issue. The \$742,000 for the basic building is coming from the 1977 bond issue.

During the discussion of McCabe's request for an extension of his demolition contract, Bresnan said, "This man has had no opportunity to perform. The situation in this community is disgraceful. This man has been intimidated. He was awarded a public bid and

OK (PL SITE) CHECK THE  
LEASING PITCHBACK 1976

BRESNAN STEALS HIMSELF  
AS HAVING NO CHOICE

BOARD MONIES STILL  
UNUSCO

6/19/75 *Carver*



# Douglass being shorted

## Mailbag

To the Editor:

Sir: As soon as the 1972 bond referendum was passed the Champaign Park Board apparently invested the money in hopes of gaining interest to fulfill its many promises to the voters in its bond campaign literature.

Inflation increased more rapidly than the interest received. In fact, nothing could have been built when the money was approved by the voters. There had been no preplanning or real cost estimates made prior to submitting the issue to the people.

The problem now is the direct result of poor planning on the part of the board. In order to fulfill its promises to other parts of the community, Frederick Douglass Center is being shorted. The decision of the four commissioners to short Douglass Center is based strictly along racial attitudes and political considerations. There is no consideration of community priorities or need.

For at least six months during 1973 the park manager, the architect, staff, park commissioners and the Douglass Community met developing program needs in order to give the architect direction to develop a plan for building the center. A list of 36 program needs were accepted. The architect developed five plans to satisfy these needs.

The old center has proven inadequate except as a basic free play facility. Many of the problems that Douglass Center has suffered over the years is a direct result of this free-play philosophy. It offered the staff few opportunities for directed activities and discipline. The lack of adult facilities or participation as a stabilizing influence added to the chaos.

The new center as planned

would correct the serious deficiencies. The new center would allow for participation of senior citizens whose very presence would assure a new decorum at Douglass. It would give staff opportunities to expand programs to lifetime recreational habits. When the only recreation learned is physical activity, the child when he grows past the physical, can only turn to barrooms later in life.

A good, well-rounded recreational program must include soundly established values that are redeeming past the point of immediate entertainment.

In late 1973 the five plans of the architect were considered by the park board. Compromises were made and the plan that would have satisfied all of the 36 program needs was dropped in favor of a plan that included only 15.

In September of 1974 the board approved the plan now in controversy, the base bid plus alternate one. For six months thereafter Commissioner Helms held up the project hassling over placement of a stage and other minor details. This hassle ended with no fundamental changes in the plan.

If it had been let for bid last year, the cost would have been at least one-third less. Poor planning again allowed the best bidding season of last winter pass. Bids were finally let this spring with building cost at a maximum.

At the time of the bid letting then president, Mr. Bresnan, stated that the board was \$55,000 short of being able to build the proposed building. Later Mrs. Leonard stated that it was more like \$100,000 and soon there after stated 150,000. Finally, Mr. Helms arrived at a 186,000 figure.

Currently, the figure most

often quoted is \$200,000. Mr. Helms cites a "pad" available of over \$250,000. Without any assignment of priorities, he emphatically states that this "pad" is not available for Douglass Center.

In summary, the Douglass Center community should not shoulder the irresponsibility of the park commissioners in their racial attitudes or their fiscally unsound planning.

THE DOUGLASS CENTER STEERING COMMITTEE

*CITIZENSHIP ROLE OF RECREATION*

*CONCEPTS  
REPLACEMENT,  
PROCESSES  
TO SPAC  
LIVE HISTORIC?  
S. DAVE B. CHAMBERLAIN  
RESEARCH*

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Creates alley, architect says

Courier  
6/19/1975  
ARCH FILE

# Douglass Center move is costly

By Les Somogyi  
Of The Courier

compound the present problem. Architect E. Hedric Clay told the facilities committee of the Champaign park board Wednesday that moving the center to the west, as proposed could cause many problems and could be expensive.

Nevertheless, he said, it can be done. Clay said problems would include a small space, about 12 feet, between the existing center and the new center. The small space would create an alley and lend itself to supervision problems. He said the entrance to the building would be on the west side opening to the backyard of Douglass Annex.

the contractor, English Brothers Inc., be given an extension on the starting date of the work. He also recommended that a "letter of intent to build" be given to all contractors involved. When asked which plan they would recommend to the board, commissioners Donald Bresnan and Morgan Powell said they did not want to make a recommendation.

If built that way, Clay said no further expansion of the building can be done unless Douglass Annex is torn down later.

They called a special meeting of the board at 7 tonight to select an alternative.

Clay also said the ground slopes to the west which could create further water seepage problems. Some problems, already exist in the Annex, he said.

Commissioner Richard Davis Jr., who is not a member of the facilities committee, said Wednesday that a political solution should be found to the problem. He urged the committee, as he urged the board previously, that the construction of a structure west of the existing center would not solve the problem.

Excavation would be harder, he said, and the subsequent demolition of either the Annex or the existing center would be more costly.

He urged the board to meet with the citizens committee on Douglass Center "before this park is messed up by another building."

Clay also recommended as alternatives moving the building site either north or south. But he said costs would be prohibitive because a main sewer line would have to be moved. And, he also recommended "flipping over" the present plans. But he said new plans would have to be drawn and engineering fees would be high.

He received no response from committee members.

Whichever plan the park board will pick, Clay said, would involve a two-month delay. He recommended that

**MISSIONARY TO SPEAK**  
Missionary Douglas Carroll will speak at the evening meeting of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at Westview School, 703 S. Russell St., Champaign.

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Moving the site of the new Douglass Center is no simple matter, an architect told a Champaign Park Board committee Wednesday night. In fact, he said, it would

## dents money

ost Mart Store are not annexed the to the city. The apartments are valued at \$168,010.

he six The owners have an agreement with the city to annex. Paley said the city will attempt to annex the property during the summer.

he State of Illinois will let bids on the project in September. Paley said the city must be ready for bid letting by Aug. 28 or risk losing the \$90,000 in state funds.

He said, however, that \$65,000 could be provided from city funds and that the net loss to the city would be \$25,000 if the deadline is not met.

City officials emphasized that the district scheme can only be used for improvements on streets designated for federal assistance.

The scheme could be stopped if 51 per cent of the people in the proposed district signed a petition against the idea.

City officials said the scheme

would be quicker and cheaper in terms of legal costs than the special assessment program. They also said that other city tax revenue, such as sales or utility taxes, could be used to retire the bonds.

But Paley said only taxes from the district would be used to retire bonds sold for the project.

The project would include a 44-foot-wide pavement for four traffic lanes, street lights, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, storm sewers, driveways and signals for the intersection of Florida and Philo. The improvement includes 570 feet on Philo Road north of Florida Avenue and 77 feet south of Florida Avenue.

Estimates were for construction costs of \$600,000, \$114,000 for acquisition of rights of way, \$35,000 for design engineering, \$90,000 for construction engineering and \$36,000 for legal fees.

JUN 1975  
6/21/75

ARCH FILE

# Architect: Don't Move Douglass

By STEVEN HERSHBERGER  
News-Gazette Staff Writer

The Douglass Center architect said Wednesday he cannot recommend moving the site of the proposed new center, and staunchly defended his building design against criticism that it is too costly.

Architect E. Hedric Clay outlined to the Champaign Park District building and grounds committee three options in placing the building on the new site, just west of the old center.

"I, as your architect, cannot recommend moving the building," Clay said. He criticized the park board for making the decision without first consulting him and getting a detailed appraisal of the problems in moving the site.

The full park board will meet at 7 p.m. Thursday (tonight) to hear Clay outline the three options, since the two-man com-

mittee could not reach a recommendation.

The park district has a \$742,000 contract to build a new Douglass Center, 512 E. Grove St., C. English Brothers & Co. hold the general contract.

The proposed gymnasium with supporting facilities costs \$40 per square foot, Clay said.

The recreation-meeting room wing would cost \$48 per square foot, he said. This 3,861 square foot addition is hotly contested between the North End community and the park board. Currently, this wing will not be built.

The figures were arrived at by using the professionally accepted method of determining square-footage costs, Clay said.

Park Board president William Helms has previously said the building design was too costly.

"Every item in that building was reviewed by the staff, the

committee and the full board," Clay said. "Mr. Helms himself reviewed my plans and made a recommendation that they be approved. Mr. Helms seconded a motion in a Jan. 21 meeting to include a stage, which substantially increased the price of the building."

English Brothers has requested an indefinite extension of time to begin construction until the new site plans can be worked out, park commissioner Donald Bresnan said.

"The extension request is perfectly logical under the circumstances," Bresnan said.

Community pressure, mostly from the North End, prevented demolition of the old center where the new one was to go. Some residents claim the new center would be an "inadequate" recreational facility.

Because the old building could not be razed, the park board

recently decided to move the construction site.

Of the three options presented, the least costly would be to place the building between the old center and the annex, Clay said. This would reduce the function of the building by hampering entry and exiting of the building, Clay said.

A 12-foot alley would be created on the east between the new center and the old. The rear entrance would be here and thus could cause major supervision problems, he warned.

The front entrance on the west would face the back side of the annex with its trash cans and the like, Clay said.

Thus the option would make the building "unsightly," Clay told the committee. And unless the annex is torn down, there could be no expansion of the new center, he explained.

Placing the building on the new site will create additional

flooding and water seepage into the annex, Clay said. This could be compensated for by placing drainage tile between the buildings, he said.

Option two would place the building lengthwise in that same site. The front entrance would be south off of Grove Street. The building, however, would overlap the outdoor basketball court, which would have to be moved or taken out, Clay said. It would also straddle a sewer line, which would create additional problems, he said.

Option three would be to simply flip the building, so the front entrance would be on the east instead of the west as in option one. Option three would take a considerable amount of time and cost much more money, since most of the building plans would have to be redrawn. Construction could not begin for two or three months under this option, Clay said.

CPD  
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IS THIS THE CPD  
ROOM AT THE CPD?

NEW  
PLACEMENT LAND  
AT JAMES FUCHS



June 10, 1915

# Park Board Shifts Site

By STEVEN HERSBERGER  
News-Gazette Staff Writer

The Champaign Park Board Thursday night instructed architect E. Hedric Clay to redraw his building plans to accommodate the new site for the Frederick Douglass Recreation Center that will now be squeezed between the old center and the annex.

Actual construction by English Brothers Co. will thus be delayed until late August or early September, Clay estimated.

The new site, which is just west of the old one near Fifth and Grove Streets in northeast

Champaign, will be a tight fit for the 16,000-square-foot gymnasium and its support facilities.

A 12-foot alley will be created on the east between the old and new center. This might cause supervision problems, Clay said.

The main entrance on the west will open onto the backside of the annex — a former grocery store — with its garbage cans and other eyesores, according to Clay. Building on the new site might cause additional flooding problem, particularly for the annex, Clay said.

The site decided on was the first of three options available.

Commissioner Donald Bresnan moved to build option one. Commissioner Morgan Powell seconded. The vote was 4-1, with commissioner Richard Davis dissenting.

The architect presented three options to the board but explained option one would probably be the cheapest alternative.

The costs created by moving the site several feet west are "unnecessary expenditures in my view," the architect said.

Bresnan termed moving the building site a "political decision." Powell lamented the new site as a poorer one, but said the park commissioners had little choice since the North

End community prevented the old center from being demolished.

Some community persons have argued the proposed center is inadequate and so have prevented demolition of the current center in an attempt to get a larger recreation facility. Instead, the park district simply moved the construction site several feet to the west. Thus the new and the old will exist side-by-side. No expansion is possible unless there is demolition of either the annex or old center, Clay said.

Architect Clay said moving the building site would cost money — how much he could not yet say.

"The new center will be totally out of place," said Davis, the long dissenting voice in this matter before the park board. "I hate to see us spend more money on our current plans. That money could go to a senior citizens' wing. I don't know where we will get the additional money."

"This is very bad park planning," Davis said. "It'll stick out like a sore thumb."

The board granted English Brothers and other contractors an indefinite extension on the construction starting date. But construction must be completed one year after starting.

The board also is sending letters to each contractor involved explaining the park district's "intent to build." This action meets certain legal requirements.

The park district will negotiate with English Brothers to keep the construction cost of the building on the new site the same as what it would have been at the old site.

Total cost of the new center now stands at \$742,000 with the general contract work by English Brothers amounting to \$560,000.

SPACE CREATION  
SPACE  
Choice of site  
to person  
Decision

# Parks won't ask city for more money: Helms

*Courier*  
7/21/75

A statement by Champaign Park District board chairman William Helms released today said that the district will not seek additional funds from the city for the Douglass Center construction project.

In a statement telephoned to local newspapers this morning, Helms said:

"A week ago, the (Douglass Center) steering committee did not accept our \$100,000 (allocation) for senior citizens and our pledge to try to seek additional funds for future expansion of the new recreation building.

"As usual, they wanted more," the statement said, including "quiet space" away from the recreational areas.

Helms said there already existed "considerable quiet space in the basic unit above the locker rooms and separated from the gym areas which could be used as quiet space for numerous activities."

He said the steering committee also wanted the park board to request additional funds from the City of Champaign.

Conversations with Champaign Mayor William Bland have indicated that no additional city funds would be allocated for Douglass Center, Helms said.

"Therefore I will not support another official request to the

city for funds," Helms said.

"It is clear to me that there is no more money available at the present time. It is also clear that without an immediate statement of cooperation from the steering committee supporting construction of the new basic building . . . the basic unit will be built next to the old Douglass Center with future expansion limited."

"Delays are costly and cannot continue," Helms said. "We may have to make cuts in the basic unit to compensate for these additional costs."

The response of the Douglass Center Citizens Steering Committee was unclear this morning, with members of the group unavailable for comment. Helms said he had not told the committee of the statement.

Last Thursday, the group halted picket lines around the firms involved in the construction project during talks with the Park District.

A meeting last Monday between the park board and the steering committee resulted in an impasse when the Douglass group rejected a \$100,000 commitment from the board for construction of a senior citizens center at Douglass Center.

The group contended that the figure was insufficient.

*LESS FOR MORE*

*WHAT DO THE SENIORS GET COST?*



# Pledge Douglass Site—Helms

Champaign Park Board President William Helms has called upon the Douglass Center steering committee to pledge its support for building the planned recreation center on its original site.

Helms asked the committee to make a statement of cooperation by Thursday night's park board meeting.

"Without an immediate statement of cooperation," Helms

warned in a statement Monday, "the basic unit will be built next to the old Douglass Center with future expansion limited."

The park board meets at 7 p.m. Thursday at Meeting Center, 706 Holiday Park Drive, C.

"A week ago the steering committee did not accept our \$100,000 for senior citizens and our pledge to try to seek additional funds for future ex-

pansion of the new recreation building," Helms said. "As usual, they wanted more.

"The new request was for more space, particularly quiet space. There is considerable space in the basic unit above the locker rooms and separated from the gym area which could be used as quiet space for numerous activities.

"I met with Champaign Mayor William Bland twice," Helms said. "We had a couple

of phone conversations, resulting in the mayor saying, 'It is fair to say that the council will not sustain any motion that would provide any additional funds to the Douglass Center project.'

"Therefore, I will not support another official request to the city asking for funds," Helms said. "It is clear to me that there is no more money available at the present time."

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City Council  
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N-G-7/21/75

# Park Board Officer Replies

EDITOR:

I would appreciate very much if you would attend to providing a more complete version of your story (page 3, July 16th) headlined: "English Bros. Picketing is Suspended", in which you quoted Kenneth Stratton as saying: "In the next few days we will halt all demonstrations in order to give park commissioners time to react to our meeting".

The real reason why picketing was halted is that Mr. Stratton has taken off for his vacation. With the little total community support for the unreasonable demands his steering committee is making, demands which are catastrophically interfering with major progress toward meaningful improvements in that area, there is no one left to round up the young children and elderly people who have been manning his picket lines.

His protege, Dickie Davis, is also on vacation and evidently does not want to bother with this problem. No one objects to anyone taking a vacation, but they should not be devious about this.

## People's Forum

William Helms, President of the Champaign Park Board, recently spent a week of his vacation thoroughly studying the total financial status of the 1972 bond fund program, a well defined package sold through a referendum to the community on the basis of providing district-wide improvements.

As a result of his study, and the windfall gained by the Centennial Building coming in well under projected costs, the Champaign Park Board has made totally realistic dollar-wise adjustments to this issue. The funds provided from the 72 bond fund referendum for the Douglass project have already been increased by 125 per cent, (\$400,000 to \$900,000), substantially more than a fair share of the 72 Bond Fund allocation for that neighborhood.

While Davis, Stratton and most male members of the steering committee (the women

members and senior citizens have been very level headed) have been tantruming all over town, white members of the park board have been making concerted efforts to raise even additional funds toward an ultimate building at Douglass Park to serve our black community.

Stratton, who blindly refuses to accept the simple facts that the '72 bond fund and a park amount of money and a park district a political subdivision with strictly limited taxing powers, has been quoted as saying he does not "hold with this pie-in-the-sky approach," (referring to our effort to seek funding for subsequent additions to the building).

This is, indeed, a shocking attitude to becoming from the highest ranking black in our Unit IV school system. He should be the first to know that the "instant gratification syndrome" in the black culture, a social pattern easily explained in terms of the historical subjugation of black people, is one of the major roadblocks to the

current social progress of disadvantaged black persons.

As illustration: Black youths, as school gets tough and boring, don't let Mr. Stratton con you into sticking it out and getting your high school diploma. Leave now and don't go after that pie-in-the-sky. This is the general attitude Stratton is expressing to the park board regarding the Douglass Project.

"If we can't have the ultimate Douglass Center here and now (Stamp foot, stamp foot) we don't want anything at all." This, when the Champaign Park District is providing a \$900,000 building and is diligently seeking funds for the next phase? How unreal can one get?

PATRICIA H. LEONHARD  
Vice President  
Champaign Park Board



Use Zip Code

*Wagner's  
has story?*

*Strong Stratton ->  
- Wagner  
Rehab*

*Instant Gratification Syndrome?*



Tempers get raw over Douglass Center issue

*Courier*

# Dispirited park board to try again on

By Les Somogyi  
Of The Courier

Champaign park commissioners have reluctantly agreed to a final negotiation session at 6:45 p.m. today on the fate of Douglass Center.

Amid a shouting match Monday night, commissioners could not resolve the issue of reconstructing the Frederick Douglass Community Center in the city's north side.

Commissioner Richard Davis

Jr. pleaded with the other four commissioners to submit to a final session at which he was "confident" the issue can be resolved.

Park board President William J. Helms Jr. said he did not believe the issue could be resolved. "We should stop all nonsense now. We should have no more meetings," said Helms.

The commissioners met in response to a recent letter to

Helms from Kenneth Stratton of the Douglass Center Steering Committee.

It said: "As stated in our proposal, the Douglass Center Steering Committee will agree to the building of a new facility on the present site of the existing structure at Douglass Center provided all conditions of the proposal are met."

Stratton referred to a four-point proposal submitted to the

park board about two weeks ago.

"As explicitly stated we will also agree to the razing of the existing structure," said the letter.

Helms said the response was "conditional" and therefore unacceptable.

He said the black community still would only agree to demolition and the reconstruction project, provided the board

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# Park board to try again on Douglass

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Helms said the response was "conditional" and therefore unacceptable.

He said the black community still would only agree to demolition and the reconstruction project, provided the board

met certain conditions.

The conditions included the allocation of \$100,000 to the senior citizens at Douglass Park, the deletion of plans to vacate 6th Street in order to save more money and the addition of more activity space to the basic building.

The committee also has asked for 90 per cent black employment on the construction project to reflect the "racial

character of the community."

According to Donald F. Brennan, another commissioner, three of the four points have been met and the last one can not be met.

Bresnan said the board had voted both to allocate the \$100,000 for senior citizens and to instruct the architect to investigate the deletion of plans to vacate 6th street where it runs through the park. And, the board voted to add more space to the basic building "as funds become available."

But Bresnan said the board had no power to grant the 90 per cent black employment request.

Bresnan said the board can only enforce its own affirmative action ordinance. He said it is up to the contractor what percentage of minorities he hires, as long as the affirmative action ordinance is complied with.

At Monday night's meeting, both sides, Davis and the four other commissioners accused each other of "playing games."

Davis said: "If people would quit playing games this issue would have been settled a long time ago. What you're doing is forcing a confrontation in a hot community."

"It's a shame," Davis continued, "that intelligent people had to communicate through the newspapers."

The committee, incidentally, had asked that editors of one or both local newspapers mediate the meeting.

Commissioner Morgan Powell was still seeking a guarantee of no harm to construction workers on the site. Davis said he could not make such guarantees.

Meanwhile, the entire project may be heading for the "drain" as Brennan put it Monday night.

The park district is seeking a contractor for electrical work in the Douglass building. As of Monday, no firms had taken out bid specifications.

Robert Toalson, general manager, said the firm which originally had the contract withdrew about a month ago because of delays.

The bids are supposed to be opened Aug. 26. If there are no bidders, Brennan said the project is "dead."

*What does  
does the DC  
committee have to  
do this?*

# Douglass expansion in jeopardy

By Les Somogyi  
Of The Courier

Champaign's Douglass Center issue remains unsolved.

Park Board President William J. Helms Jr. stormed out of the meeting Tuesday night after a 1½-hour negotiation session between the board and the Douglass Center Steering Committee.

Roy Williams, chairman of the steering committee, also walked out.

Helms said before he left that as far as he is concerned, the new center will be built next to the old one, provided the district receives a bid for electrical contract. If not, the entire issue would be dead.

"Can I talk to you?" asked Kenneth Stratton, a spokesman for the steering committee as Helms was walking out.

"I've been talking for four months," Helms said angrily. "You're gypping the taxpayers of this city."

Commissioner Donald F. Bresnan also raised his voice for the first time since the controversy began.

"I made a pledge that I would attend every meeting that I am invited to. I hereby withdraw that pledge. I see no sense in any more meetings. I've had it," said Bresnan.

"There isn't going to be a building if this continues. The electrical contractor has already been scared off by public opinion."

The meeting, which began calmly, turned stormy.

At first, commissioners and committee members went through each item on the committee's proposal which was made two weeks ago.

Later, shouting erupted when officials could not determine procedural matters.

"Who is driving?" Williams kept shouting. "Who is driv-

ing the \$100,000 project to the senior citizens. The money was allocated after bids on the Centennial Park recreation center came in unexpectedly lower than architect's estimates.

The park board also could not agree on the location.

At this time, three commissioners favor the addition of space to the basic structure, two want to remodel the annex.

At Tuesday night's meeting, Commissioner Richard Davis Jr. called on Helms to call a special meeting and put the question to a vote.

Helms refused, saying Davis could have made such a motion at the last meeting.

But Davis said the location of the senior citizens facility "wasn't an issue" at the last meeting.

It was at this point that Helms left.

Another issue the two sides could not resolve was the committee's request that 90 per cent blacks be employed on the building project in order to reflect the "racial character of the community."

The park board contends that it can simply enforce its affirmative action ordinance. It said it is up to the contractor what percentage of blacks he hires.

It is difficult now to determine what will happen to Douglass Center. No new negotiation sessions have been scheduled.

## But some battle for As expect

By Michael Murphy  
Of The Courier

Pensions, inflation and sky...

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The two sides were also trying to determine where the senior citizens center should be built. The choices are to remodel the old Douglass Annex or to build an addition to the basic Douglass Center structure.

Helen Hite, president of the Douglass Senior Citizens group, told the board the senior citizens want the annex remodeled because "we wish to remain separate."

But the steering committee is pushing for an addition to the center to "better utilize space and the taxpayers' money." Stratton said an addition also would save on staffing.

An internal split developed among the black interest group when Mrs. Hite accused the committee of leaving the senior citizens out of decision-making. Mrs. Hite is a member of the steering committee. She said that she had not been invited to the meetings and "our opinion hasn't been asked."

Stratton told Mrs. Hite: "I don't like to express disagreement in a public arena." Stratton also accused the park board of deliberately dividing the steering committee by of-

# As expect

By Michael Murphy  
Of The Courier

Pensions, inflation and skyrocketing labor costs — all of them directly related — are the factors which mandate a 20 per cent tax hike for Campaign property owners, City Manager C. Eugene Miller said today.

Miller said the 20 per cent increase — potentially the largest in recent years — was nonetheless intended to "hold the line" on the local property tax. The proposed increase has been expected for weeks.

A fight over the tax hike bill

## West Urbana ticketing begin

Urbana police will begin issuing \$3 tickets at 12:01 a.m. Thursday to parking violators in the area bounded by Green and Race streets and Lincoln and Florida avenues.

As of today, 22 persons had bought permits for \$100 which would permit them to park on streets in that area from 3 a.m. to 10 a.m. Monday through Friday. Courtesy tickets were being issued today.

Exempted from part of the parking restriction are Leal School personnel, who may

INTERNAL  
SPLIT IN  
BLACK INTEREST

WHERE IS IT COMING  
FOR INTERNAL CAMP  
CONFLICT TO BE EXPLORED?





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manager and for concerts in nearby cities. 17, of Urbana, who drowned in a private pond south of St. Joseph. given for Urbana students at 8:30 a.m. Friday. the day or after extreme physical exertion. list of lumber dimensions, police said.

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N. G. August 1920 - 1975

# Douglass Group Seeks Meeting

By DANIEL A. TICHENOR  
News-Gazette Staff Writer

Not satisfied with the Champaign Park District's response to its list of proposals, the Douglass Center Steering Committee has asked to meet with the board Tuesday night (tonight).

The request was made in a letter from Ken Stratton of the steering committee. The contents of the letter were made public at a Monday night park board study session.

In the letter, Stratton reaffirmed the committee's support for building the new Frederick Douglass Recreation Center on the site of the old center and asked for the face-to-face meeting to work out an understanding on details of the steering committee's four-point proposal.

The park board last week delayed action on the new Douglass Center while it sought clarification of a sentence in the committee's proposal.

Board President Richard Helms had written that he

wanted to be assured that the steering committee would "not interfere or encourage others to interfere with the Douglass Center contractors in the performance of their contracts."

In answer to Helms' letter, Stratton wrote:

"As stated in our proposal, the Douglass Center Steering Committee will agree to the building of a new facility on the present site of the existing structure at Douglass Center provided all conditions of the proposal are met. As explicitly stated, we will also agree to the razing of the existing structure."

According to commissioner Donald F. Bresnan, the board has met all of the committee's proposals except one: that 90 per cent of the work force on the project be black.

Bresnan said the board has already passed resolutions to set aside \$100,000 for the senior citizens in the Douglass Park area and not to close Sixth Street, thereby saving money

that will be used on the new center and has agreed to add more money to Douglass Center as it becomes available.

He said the board has no power to control the composition of the labor force on the project.

Helms said the contracts for the work have already been signed and that the contractors have agreed to abide by the board's affirmative action clause.

In its letter, the steering committee asked that the board meet with the committee "in order to facilitate a mutual acceptance of the proposal."

At least three board members—Bresnan, Richard B. Davis, and Morgan C. Powell—agreed to meet with the committee.

Helms said he didn't see what another meeting could accomplish as the board has met all the requirements of the proposal it can. He said he was undecided about coming to the meeting.

Board Vice President Patricia Leonhard said she would be

unable to attend the meeting because of a standing engagement on Tuesday nights.

"I think we should proceed and build the buildings and stop all the nonsense," Helms said. "I don't see the need for any more meetings."

Davis said the letter from the board was a stalling tactic. He said the board should meet with the steering committee, go through the proposal and "get it over with."

"I think you're (the board) pushing for a confrontation with the community on the north end," Davis said.

In addition to the wranglings of the committee and the board, a technical setback also threatens to delay the Douglass Center project.

No electrical contractor has yet picked up bid specifications that have been available since Aug. 11. Bids on the electrical work are to be opened at 2 p.m. Aug. 26.

"It's not unusual to receive bids at the last minute," said

Robert F. Toalson, district general manager. "But it is unusual for contractors not to have at least picked up specifications for the project."

Coad Electric Co., Champaign, has already submitted a bid that was accepted by the board. However, because of the project's delay and the board's decision to let McCabe Brothers, Champaign, out of its demolition contract, Coad feels it has the right to resubmit or withdraw its bid.

"This is a technical legal point that has to be worked out," Toalson said.

Helms said if no one bids on the electrical contract, the delay in re-advertising or contracting with a company may cause complications with English Brothers Construction Co., Champaign, which has the general construction contract for the project.

"If we get delayed with the electrical contract, English Brothers may demand to rebid because of the delay," Helms said.

Davis suggests  
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The Board want  
a 'conference'  
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Park Board Minutes

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WHO BUILDS IS ALSO  
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Separate space  
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# Douglass Panel, Park Board Deadlocked

By DANIEL A. TICHENOR  
News-Gazette Staff Writer

The Champaign Park Board and the Douglass Center Steering Committee remain at an impasse capable of stalling the start of work on the Douglass recreation center.

As the parties' compromises on other issues began to form, a new deadlock emerged from park president William Helms' insistence, and the committee's refusal, on a pledge that steering committee partisans would not interfere or encourage others to interfere with contractors' work at the building site.

Faced with refusal on the written pledge he demanded, Helms left the meeting Tuesday night.

Without that assurance, the building will be built next to the existing Douglass Center, Helms said. He said construction will begin as soon as the architect is finished with his plans and as soon as an electrical bid is let.

If the assurance is made, the

existing center will be razed prior to construction.

He said the electrical bid is for the site next to the existing building. As yet, no one has picked up the specifications for the electrical work.

However, the steering committee is asking that 90 per cent of the labor force for the project be black.

**But if the committee goes on record not to interfere with contractors, that statement may tie its hands in working for minority membership on the work force.**

Steering committee negotiator Ken Stratton said he could not speak for anyone else, but he was not going to do anything that would send him to jail.

"At that point Helms left the meeting, saying, 'We're right back to where we started.'"

Don Bresnan, park commissioner and former board president, withdrew his promise of four months "to meet anywhere

to resolve the situation," but Bresnan stayed until the end of the meeting.

According to Bresnan, the board's attorney has said the contracts have been signed and there is no legal action the board can take.

He said the board had already insisted that contractors agree to adhere to the board's affirmative action plan.

Steering committee member Roy Williams said the request for 90 per cent black labor force agrees with tradition at Douglass Center.

"The staff at the park has, as long as I can remember, always been black," Williams said. He said the board would be going against its own tradition of an all-black work force and staff at the park if it does not agree to the 90 per cent request.

Robert Toalson, district general manager, agreed with Williams, but said there had been one or two part-time

white staff members at the park this summer teaching crafts.

Toalson also said he had planned to go to the labor unions and the contractors to encourage them to hire as many minority workers as they could.

He added that Sprinkle Plumbing and Heating Co., Champaign, which has the plumbing contract for the job, has indicated it wants to hire a black apprentice plumber for training on the job.

**Toalson said he hasn't gone to the unions or contractors as yet because of the delay with the project.**

Williams said the affirmative action plan "is just paper without specific numerical guidelines."

"I've talked to a number of black craftsmen who say they are willing to supervise the project and initiate a training program," Williams said.

He said if the building was built by a black labor force the

kids in the neighborhood could have pride in the building and point to it and say, "That's the building my daddy helped build."

Another point of disagreement between steering committee and board is on the use of an additional \$100,000 for a 'senior citizens' facility at the center.

**The board is split over whether to build an addition or use the money to remodel the existing annex.**

Stratton said the "money should be spent in order that taxpayers can get the most for their tax dollar."

He wants an addition built on the new building so that when the space is not being used by senior citizens it may be used for other activities.

Stratton said the staff could be cross-trained to help with senior citizens and young people.

However, Mrs. Helen Hite, president of the senior citizens' group at Douglass Center, said

the elderly want a separate area away from the noise of the youngsters.

**The senior citizens program at the park meets two days per week for a half-day.**

Under questioning by Richard Davis, park commissioner and steering committee member, Toalson said the senior citizens building is seldom used at night.

Toalson also admitted that children would be in school in the winter during the day and most summer programs are conducted outside.

The committee and board are closer on two other points in the committee's proposal.

**The board has already passed a resolution asking the architect to redesign the new facility without removing a portion of Sixth Street.**

The board also resolved to add facilities to the new center as money becomes available.

However, the committee wants the board to leave the annex intact.

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*Aug 27*

# Douglass costs up \$4,500 if new site used

*Cover*

The cost of constructing a new Douglass Center west of the existing building would increase by an estimated \$4,500 the \$800,000 price of building on the original site, a park board committee was told Tuesday.

The Champaign Park Board's building and grounds committee also was told that only \$1,600 would be saved if a spur of 6th Street was left in the park.

On the basis of these latest estimates provided by Douglass architect Ernest Clay, the full park board is expected to decide within the next two weeks where the new northeast Champaign recreation center will be built.

The board's original plans to demolish the existing Douglass Center have been blocked by a citizens committee which raised several grievances about those plans over the past four months.

The possibility that contractors would be hindered in efforts to demolish and rebuild the center led to the study of the second site west of the existing building.

While those plans were being developed, talks between the board and the citizens committee broke down again last week.

Near-final estimates of added costs for the alternate site were

presented to the building and grounds committee Tuesday.

English Bros., the general contractor, said its \$560,000 construction bid would not be changed, no matter which of the two sites was used. Sprinkle Plumbing and Heating said their costs would increase \$486 with a change in sites.

An additional \$4,000 would be paid to Clay as the result of the proposed switch to the now-vacant site.

The next move by the citizens' committee, which from time to time has opposed demolition and which has demanded 90 per cent of the workers be black, remains unclear due to a weekend reorganization of the committee's leadership.

In other action Tuesday, the park grounds committee made the following recommendations:

—To build a foot bridge across the Boneyard at the south end of Scott Park and move playground equipment away from Springfield Avenue, closer to the center of the park.

—To prevent erosion at Centennial Park's Prairie Farm by filling in about 60 per cent of a pond there with rock.

—To resurface two Prairie Farm parking lots with crushed rock at a cost of \$1,000.

Those recommendations must be approved by the park board itself.

*Reorganization  
of DC Com. Leadership*

*DCSL Reel Sample*



*Director of DC Com.  
Reorganization of Board  
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*Clay 27 N. 6/69*

# Douglass May Get Go-Ahead

By JIM BRAY  
News-Gazette Staff Writer

The Champaign Park Board could give the final word to begin construction of the long-delayed Frederick Douglass Recreation Center at Thursday's board meeting — if one of the two bids for electrical work opened Tuesday meets with members' approval.

A bid of \$86,288 submitted by Carter's Electric Co. of Urbana was far below the price tag of almost \$150,000 submitted by

Meister Brothers Electric of Peoria.

However, the Carter bid is \$22,000 above a bid accepted in April from Coad Electric Co., Champaign. Coad was allowed to withdraw the bid after project delays.

Douglass Center architect Ernie Clay blamed inflation and "a dubious air about whether the building is going to be built" for the increased cost.

At a meeting of the district's Building and Grounds Com-

mittee, Clay urged the three commissioners present to reassure other contractors that construction will begin soon.

Clay warned that other contractors might also ask for a rebidding and send the project costs up even higher.

"I don't know how long I'll be able to hold those contractors," Clay told the commissioners.

The start of the project, to be situated in Champaign's North End, has been delayed by conflicts between the park board

and the Douglass Center Steering Committee.

The citizens' committee has disagreed with the location of the building within Douglass Park, requested a larger building and asked for a 90 per cent black labor force.

The committee and park board have reached compromises but the issue of a 90 per cent black work force is still up in the air. A recent "reorganization" of the committee with the more moderate

members leaving the committee further confuses matters.

Clay reported to the Building and Grounds Committee that a shift in location from the original site of the center will have little effect on the amounts already bid.

English Brothers, holder of the general construction contract, told Clay that there would be no change in the original contract price, and Sprinkle Plumbing and Heating Co. indicated the difference would amount to less than \$500.

Clay said officials of both firms were worried about interference by the steering committee, but Clay said he was able to prevent a pullout by both companies.

No figures were available from Dever Heating and Air Conditioning Co., but Clay said they would be available Friday.

The board will consider the electrical bids at a special meeting to be held at 7 p.m. Thursday, at 706 Holiday Park Drive, C.

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Senior citizens addition could be smaller

8-6-78 Courier

# Douglass Center group pares building requests

By Les Somogyi

Of The Courier

A Douglass Center area group Tuesday night reduced its requests for a senior citizens addition and other center improvements, offering a new plan for resolution of the Douglass controversy.

The Douglass Center Steering Committee presented the plan to the Champaign Park Board. Park commissioners Richard Davis and Donald Bresnan said the proposal is the first sign of breaking an impasse between the group and the board on the Douglass project.

"I don't see it too far away from my position," Bresnan

said.

Shifting from a previous request for 5,000 square feet of space in a new senior citizens addition, the new Douglass committee plan requested only an addition that could be built at a cost of \$100,000.

The park board has pledged that sum to the Douglass addition from excess funds previously allocated for the Centennial Park recreation center.

Park officials have estimated a \$100,000 addition would provide about 2,000 square feet.

The proposal also included the Douglass group's previous request for a new Douglass Center that would include a gymnasium and a stage. The

group asked that the addition be build at the same time as or as soon as possible after the basic center is built.

The committee proposed \$36,000 more be trimmed from project costs by eliminating plans to remove a section of North 6th Street pavement for an open park area.

The plan also asked at least 90 per cent of the Douglass project work force be black to reflect the racial makeup of the community. Davis later said the 90 per cent figure actually means "as many as possible."

The park district requires all contractors on Champaign park projects to comply with the

district's affirmative action regulations.

Park board president William J. Helms Jr. declined to give his reaction to the proposal and said he would prefer to wait until commissioner Morgan Powell returns to Champaign before giving an answer to the Douglass committee.

Bresnan questioned why the Douglass committee wants the senior citizens facility attached to the base building.

Douglass area senior citizens said last week they wanted their present home, the Douglass Center Annex, remodeled instead of having a room in the new building. The steering committee suggested the annex should serve as a temp-

orary senior citizens center until the new addition is completed.

"I haven't talked to the senior citizens," said committee spokesman Kenneth Stratton. He added that the steering committee contends that a separate center would increase construction and operating expenditures.

"This is as positive a proposal as we could make," Stratton said. "I'm not going to say this is a take-it-or-leave-it proposal, but I would certainly expect a speedy answer."

Plans to move the center, have not been called off. Architect E. Hedric Clay is revising plans to move the center about 200 yards west of the existing

structure. Protests by the Douglass area residents have prevented the demolition of the existing structure.

But Davis expressed hope that, with the new Douglass group proposal, "we can stop in the letting of the bids on moving the center."

## No. cut in '72 bond issue allotment

The Champaign park board has not cut the sum designated in the 1972 bond issue for Douglass Center, as incorrectly stated in Monday's Courier.

The board has allocated \$400,000 for that project and increased the sum since that time.

The Courier regrets the error.

8-6-78

# Douglass Center Impasse Ends

By STEVEN HERSHBERGER  
News-Gazette Staff Writer

If legal technicalities can be resolved, the new Frederick Douglass Recreation Center will be built on the site of the old one.

The Douglass Center steering committee Tuesday night formally dropped its opposition to tearing down the older dilapidated structure in northeast Champaign. The citizens' group urged the Champaign Park Board to "build on the present site of the Douglass Center," which is what the park commissioners have wanted to do all along.

The steering committee proposal signals a major breakthrough in the four-month-long controversy over the adequacy of the planned gymnasium and its support facilities.

Despite the breakthrough, stipulations within the proposal

are almost certain to stir more debate before the entire issue is resolved.

Commissioner Donald Bresnan said "yes" when asked if he could agree with the steering committee's proposal in concept. He emphasized, however, that he still had many questions on the details.

Board President William Helms reserved comment until he consulted privately with the two other commissioners who were absent — Patricia Leonhard and Morgan Powell.

"All thought about moving the building is over and cancelled," said Commissioner Richard Davis, who is also a member of the steering committee.

One of the stipulations of the steering committee's proposal calls for 90 per cent of the construction workers building the new center to be black.

"The work force to be used on

the Douglass Center building should reflect the racial character of the neighborhood surrounding the proposed facility," the proposal said.

Another of the stipulations calls for building an addition to the structure for quiet space, particularly for the elderly, "as quickly as possible and without delay."

However, the proposed wing on the gymnasium facility runs contrary to the wishes of the Douglass Center senior citizens, who want their own separate facility by renovating the Douglass Annex, formerly Gagliano's Grocery Store.

"How do I reconcile these differences, Ken?" Bresnan asked Kenneth Stratton of the steering committee.

"I can't reconcile it for you," Stratton replied.

In a telephone interview following the meeting, Heier Hite, president of the elderly

group, said members remain adamant in seeking a place for themselves. She said she had been out of town and had not seen a copy of the proposal although she is a member of the steering committee.

Mrs. Hite said, "They (committee) are using us to get what they want. The park board gave us (Douglass Center senior citizens) the \$100,000. Now the committee wants it to add to their building. We want to be to ourselves and not be bothered by kids running through. We want a place like 'C' Center."

"The steering committee proposed that the addition be funded with the \$100,000 already set aside for elderly in Champaign's North End plus \$36,000 "by not removing North Sixth Street as proposed in the base bid" held by English Brothers Construction Co.

Bresnan said the \$36,000 idea is a "new ingredient" and will

have to be studied.

Regarding a 90 per cent block construction work force, Bresnan asked, "Is it possible to get 90 per cent?"

"Yes," responded Roy Williams, chairman of the steering committee. "In fact, I'll be of service to local trade unions to find the workers. We hope to get as many in the neighborhood involved as possible."

"Douglass Center stands as a symbol of what blacks can do when they come together," Williams explained.

Unresolved legal technicalities include:

Letting bids for a third time to raze the older center, re-negotiating prices for some of the construction work since there has been so much delay and determining whether deleting the removal of North Sixth Street from the general contract is agreeable to English Brothers and at what savings.

Handwritten notes at the bottom of the page: "Letting bids", "What is this proposal?", "Roll on proposal", "SPICE for ELDERLY", "Dr. Kenneth", "Letting Mr. Elderly?"