

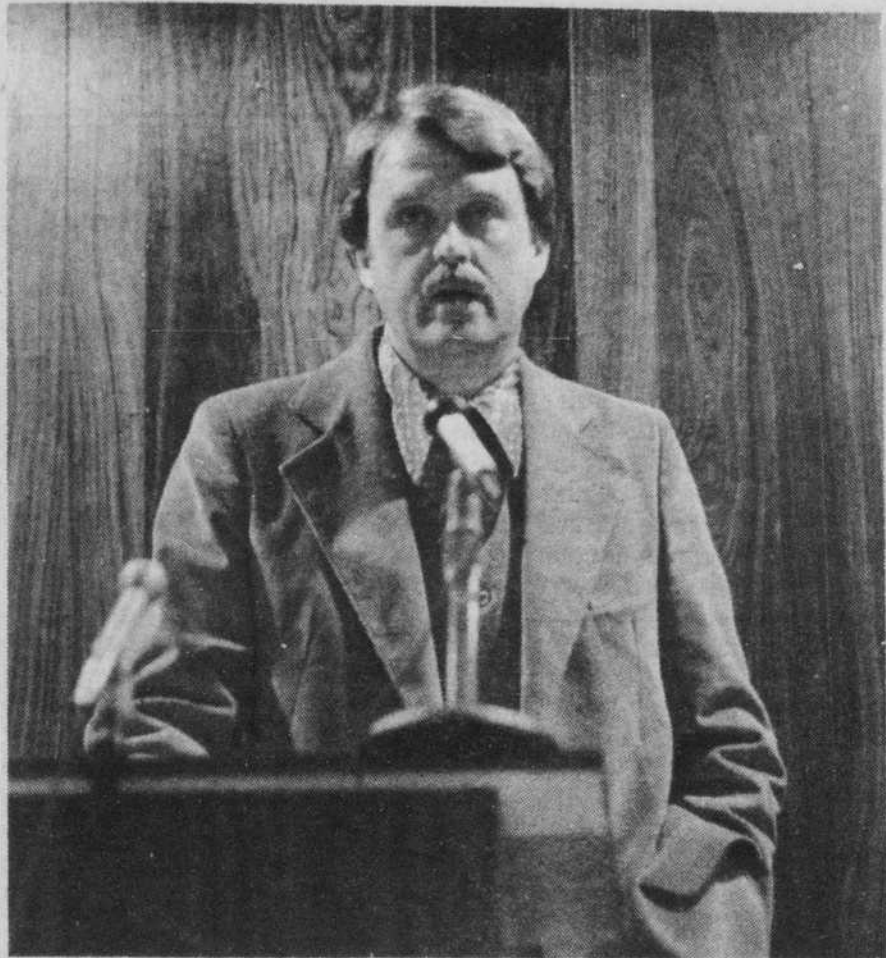


Photo by Greg Gawlowski

Jim Johnston: "Eugene will certainly end up looking like Los Angeles if we don't get together and cooperate with each other."

Eugene destined to look like LA?

By DAN POSTREL
Of the Emerald

Eugene "will certainly end up looking like Los Angeles if we don't get together and cooperate with each other," Jim Johnston, city council candidate, told a Rubicon Society meeting Thursday.

Johnston, the estimator and design supervisor for the University's Physical Plant, is seeking the Ward 1 council seat.

He said, "Adversary roles are emphasized and carried through" in hearings on too many public issues.

Planning disputes, for example, are frequently handled by attorneys for special interest groups, and too often end up in court, he told the luncheon meeting.

"It's not going to work to have special interest groups or city hall implement changes people don't even want," he asserted, referring to the city's current planning strategy.

Reduction of lot size and frontage requirements, and overuse of duplex and triplex housing all threaten to overcrowd Eugene, Johnston said.

"If one is not careful," he warned, "use of these techniques without citizen knowledge could make this city look like some of the cities you've run away from."

A better approach to growth management, Johnston said, is to develop workshops and forums to gather information on issues and to bring "people with a wide variety of views together."

Johnston pointed to the city's Joint Housing Commission and to the neighborhood organizations as examples of his cooperative

approach to issues.

Abandonment of "adversary" techniques and application of the collective approach can work to resolve issues other than growth, Johnston said.

Eugene's unemployment problem, for example, could be eased by bringing together local resources and technical knowledge to begin a plastics and electronics industry, he suggested.

The local unemployment level — which is above the national average — will never drop if industries located here continue to bring in personnel from elsewhere, he added.

Education, energy conservation, and problems of the elderly also require attention, Johnston said in closing, "and we can start by creating a mayor's forum on the next major issue that bothers us."

Civic center complex may be on ballot

By TOM JACKSON
Of the Emerald

The Eugene Civic Center Commission voted unanimously Wednesday to ask the city council to place a bond measure on the June 27 ballot to fund an estimated \$22 million downtown civic center complex.

The project, if approved by the voters, will contain a large concert hall, a large theatre, a small theatre, a convention center and meeting rooms. The plans also call for a large hotel to be built on the site, but the hotel would be built by private funds.

The commission debated several funding alternatives for the project, including two proposals to build the complex in three stages. The commission, however, decided the building would be best constructed as a complete project rather than in segments. Funding for the structures will be gathered from general obligation bonds.

One item debated was the convention center. Commission member Brian Obie, who is also a city council member and Arlen Swearingen, Downtown Development Board member, urged the commission to include the convention center.

Commission chairer Lester Anderson, former Eugene mayor, said he preferred a plan to build the concert hall and theatres first. The convention center, under that proposal, would be built after later bond measures.

"If we build the performing arts center, it means we will eventually get the hotel and the convention facility," Anderson said. "I think that scenario has the best chance for success."

Obie argued that without the convention center, the voters would not approve the bond measure. Citing the failure of two performing arts center bond measures in the past, Obie said the convention facility would give the voters an added incentive to pass the measure.

"We can sell this proposal to the voters on the basis of the community need for economic development," Obie said, explaining a convention center would attract business to the Eugene area. "That's important to a good segment of our population."

Obie added if the city builds a convention facility, a potential hotel builder will be more likely to move into the site because the demand for hotel rooms would be assured.

Dean Baumgartner, the civic center project de-

velopment director, indicated both proposals would include all of the proposed facilities. "We're talking about different methods of financing the different parts of the package, not about eliminating part of it," he said.

Baumgartner estimated — or "guestimated" as he termed it — that the project would cost about \$22 million.

One reason the commission decided to recommend the complex be built as a complete unit — and that the issue be placed on the ballot as soon as possible — is that the cost of the project will increase an estimated \$130,000 per month of delay because of the rate of inflation, according to Baumgartner.

Baumgartner also noted that the cost figures are rough estimates and that more specific cost analyses would be available for the commission's next meeting. However, he indicated the \$22 million estimate allows for inflation, architect's fees, consultant's fees and the actual cost of placing the measure itself on the ballot.

City Manager Charles Henry, who attended the meeting but was not a member of the commission, said the earliest time the measure could be placed on the ballot would be June 27.

Another concern among the commission members was the measure might be jeopardized by other bond and tax measures on the ballot. Among the tax issues expected to come before the voters soon are a levy for a new sewage treatment plant, an increasing school tax and the city's 1978-79 budget.

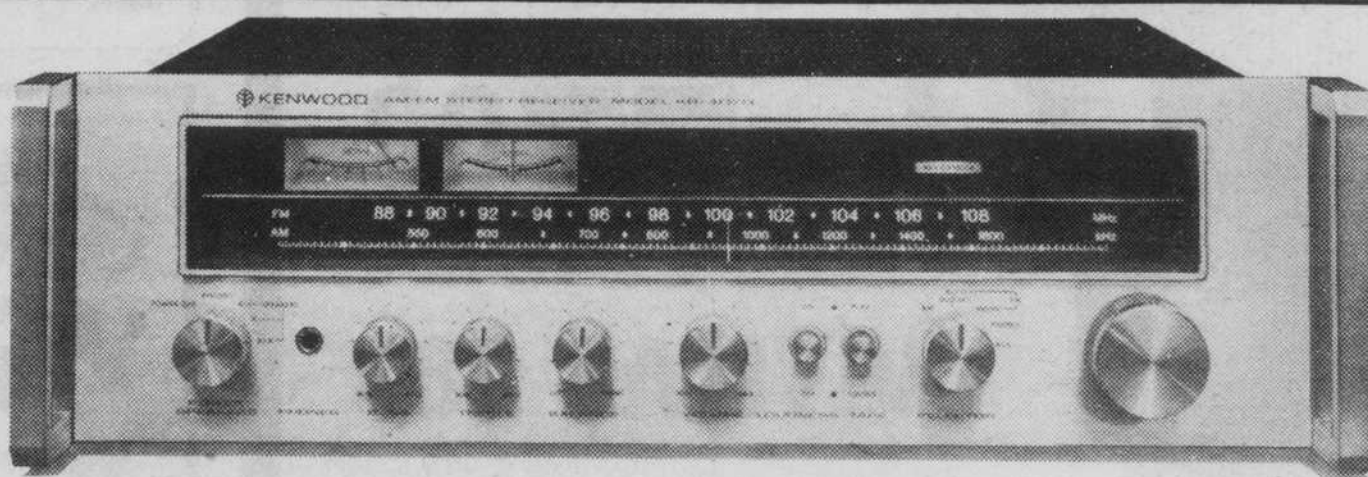
"How many bond measures will the voter's approve?" queried Irving Fletcher, a Lane County Labor Council representative to the Commission. "We need to think about that."

The commission will review the cost estimates of the project proposal Monday and will likely present its findings to the council early in March.

The civic center, if approved by the voters, will occupy a two-block area between Sixth and Seventh Avenues.

The two sides of the civic center complex will be connected by a pedestrian bridge over Willamette St., and underground parking will be built underneath both of the blocks.

If approved, the center will be constructed by the Eugene architecture firm of Unthank, Seder, Poticha and Associates. If built, the architect's six percent fee for the structures could be as much as \$1.34 million if the project costs \$22 million.



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