



Staff photo

California firm sues county

OREGON CITY — A California firm is suing Clackamas County for nearly \$1 million back and future rent on the allegedly defective Mason Building in Gladstone.

Essex Property Corp., the building's owner, filed the suit last week in U.S. District Court in Portland, asking for \$40,500 in back rent, plus \$8100 per month until the building is re-rented or the 10-year lease expires.

Ten years' rent would cost the county \$972,000.

The county signed the 10-year lease on the Mason Building in October 1977, effective Feb. 1, 1978. Staff assistant Mike Bateson said the county paid the \$8,100 monthly rent for February and March.

The county has refused to pay rent on the building since March, when it found structural and other alleged defects in the building.

Consultants from the Facility Sciences Corp. of Beverly Hills, Calif., were studying the county's office space problem, Bateson said, when they found that part of the Mason Building

slowly was breaking away and slipping down a hill toward the Clackamas River.

Large cracks appear in the building's walls and windows.

Other defects in the building, the county charged, include inadequate wiring, insufficient fire doors and walls, restrooms inaccessible to the handicapped and a defective heating system.

The county asked the Essex company to correct these alleged defects in March, Bateson said, but the company did not comply. The commissioners then voted not to pay any further rent until the defects were corrected.

Why didn't the county know about the defects before it signed the lease in October?

"Most of the problems happened after our research," Bateson explained. The previous tenants hadn't reported any problems, he said.

Bateson admitted, "It's partly our fault. We didn't take the time to go over it with a fine-toothed comb."

Learning from its mistakes, Bateson

said, the county staff used a fine-toothed comb in inspecting the second floor of the Transamerica Building in Oregon City. The county signed a lease on the floor in June and will move the commissioners' and county counsel's offices there soon.

The commissioners had intended to house all the Human Resources Department offices and the civil service and finance offices in the Mason Building, Bateson said.

The latter two now are in the county courthouse, while the Human Resources offices are scattered in downtown Oregon City, the Red Soils area on Kaen Road, the Maryhurst campus near West Linn and Milwaukie. All but the Red Soils offices are rented.

Bateson said the county may try to get out of the Mason Building lease.

Commission Stan Skoko emphasized, "I'm not involved in it. This is (Bob) Schumacher and (Ralph) Groener's (the other two commissioners) boo-boo. I opposed this thing from the beginning."

Facility site sought

Housing for 'safe' criminals debated

by JOHN DEAN

WEST LINN — Where do you put a building to house 40 "safe" criminals?

That's the question Clackamas County community corrections officials will be asking in the weeks to

come. The facility would be a major part of the new community corrections plan, funded largely by the state and approved by county commissioners two weeks ago.

The plan was to be reviewed today by the state's Community Corrections Advisory Board.

With their approval, the corrections staff can begin looking in earnest for a site for the 40-bed facility.

The building is one-half of an effort to improve the county's attempt to rehabilitate lawbreakers. The other part of the attack is a consolidation of the county and state corrections efforts under county direction.

The state funding for the plan is coming from the Community Corrections Act passed by the 1977 Legislature. That act released funds to the State Corrections and Mental Health divisions for counties to use in setting up corrections facilities. The law requires the participating county to take over the state correctional services in that county.

To take advantage of the state's offer, the county put together a 13-member committee to draw up the plan, including County Commissioner Ralph Groener, Circuit Court Judge Patrick Gilroy, Sheriff John Renfro, District Attorney Jim O'Leary, Milwaukie attorney Art Knauss, representatives of various county and state corrections projects and two citizens.

Working from December 1977 to June 1978, the committee came up with the two-pronged attack on the county's current fragmented approach to corrections and rehabilitation.

"We're trying to pull everything together and work closer," said Terry Gossaway, the county's community corrections manager.

New organization

Currently, the county and the state share corrections responsibilities. Generally, the state handles probation and parole for serious felons, while the county handles offenders guilty of class C felonies (including theft, reduced burglary and drug charges) and misdemeanors. County corrections also supervises the antabus program, which helps alcoholics fight their addiction and provides pre-sentence investigations for all offenders after they have been convicted.

This system, the committee's report says, leads to duplication of services and wasted effort. Without a single clear direction, corrections workers often work at cross-purposes, it says.

To make the county's corrections effort more efficient, the report proposes merging the state and county staffs under the county community corrections manager.

A single unit would be set up to handle all report on all accused or convicted persons from arraignment through

sentencing. The same team of counselors would handle a "client" in all stages of the proceedings.

The report recommends the county start a Release on Own Recognition (ROR) program, which would allow "trustworthy" defendants to be released without bail before trial. Criteria for such release would include length of residence in the community, local family ties, employment, past record and the seriousness of the crime.

The same counselor who makes the recognition report also would make the pre-sentence investigation, which guides the judge in sentencing; the intake report, done before probation, and recommendations on diversion to outside agencies, if requested by the district attorney.

Residential facility

The most visible part of the new plan will be the 40-bed residential facility.

The facility is intended for persons convicted of misdemeanors or minor felonies, "not the real serious people" who otherwise might be let go on probation, Gossaway said.

"They may be on work release, they may just need a place to stay for a time, they may need an education release," Gossaway said. Many of the facility's clients might have committed a crime because of alcohol, drug, job, financial, marital, or emotional problems, he added.

"Crime is just a symptom of some problem within the individual, usually," Gossaway said. "There are a lot of people who can benefit from this kind of thing."

Staff from the county's mental health department would be on hand for counseling. Drug and alcohol treatment programs also would be available. Besides room and board, the facility could make emergency loans, provide transportation for persons on work release and offer employment or educational counseling and placement.

Pickin' n hummin'

DOUBLING-UP on the guitar and harmonica is John Adams, during the Sandy Mountain Festival last weekend. Balloons, Bird Cage Theater plays, every conceivable type of craft and elephant ears (fried yeast bread) added to the carnival atmosphere.

Land use 'how to' slated

A citizens' "How to" sessions on land use communication is set for 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, July 18, at the County Public Works Complex in Oregon City.

The purpose of the meeting is to assist Community Planning Organization (CPO) participants, land developers and others who need to communicate with the county on zoning, planning, subdivisions, roads and sewers.

John McIntyre, director of Environmental Services (DES), will explain reorganization of the group and the Planning Department and a new department

of internal-external coordination which is responsible for coordinating all planning, permits, parks and roads with citizens and other agencies.

Ardis Stevenson will explain changes in notification procedures which have been developed to improve communication among property owners, applicants and community organizations. Revisions include public hearing notices to affected property owners which now list the appropriate CPO, new application forms and updated notification lists.

The July "How to" session will be followed by a second session titled "How to Take Part in Future Planning Decisions" at 7:30 p.m.,

Tuesday, Aug. 15. Assistant Planning Director Dominic Mancini will report on upcoming county activities for Rock Creek, Damascus, south of Oregon City, the Mt. Hood Corridor and the rural planning and zoning areas.

"How to Impress the Planning Commission" will be discussed by Planning Commission Chairman Rich Ares. Both "How to" sessions should be of assistance to people who need to deal with the county on land use matters. At the request of the County Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee, Stevenson will send special invitations to the League of Women Voters, Home Builders and other interest groups directly concerned with land use.

Welches agenda set

A light agenda is expected for the Welches School Board tonight (July 13).

The main order of business will be reorganization of the

board for the coming school year and the election of a chairman.

The meeting will be held at 7:30.

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