

Astor Group Turns Thumbs Down on Parking Ramp

By SARAH WATKE
Press-Gazette Staff Writer

The Astor Neighborhood Association says it "can't support the St. Vincent Hospital ramp proposal at this time" because "both St. Vincent and Bellin agree (it) will not meet the needs of both hospitals."

If the hospitals can't get together themselves, Astor is calling for the city or state to step in to promote a joint solution.

The reaction was part of a statement given this morning at a press conference called by

the association. Its board of directors passed the statement after discussion at a meeting Wednesday night.

The meeting followed St. Vincent's presentation of its plans for a four-story ramp to its south across Porlier Street.

"It has been the (association's) position that a ramp is needed to solve the parking problem of the entire medical corridor. Because of the limited amount of neighborhood land available for hospital expansion, Astor feels the solution must be found in a single

parking structure."

Bellin Hospital also expressed disappointment in St. Vincent's plans.

A statement from Bellin said under the circumstances "we must reluctantly reserve the option" of consulting with Astor and the city "for probable development of a structure on Webster Avenue which will meet the needs of Bellin hospital and the northern part of the (medical) corridor," plus future growth and physicians' and clinics' needs in the area.

Administrative Assistant

Donald Gaetz said the position recognizes both the existence of the Medical Arts building and the increasing location of physicians near hospitals.

"Any development undertaken by Bellin will be done with the input of Astor Association before the final drawings are made," Bellin's statement said.

Told that Astor says it won't support two ramps, Gaetz said Bellin agrees with Astor that two ramps are not the solution.

The Bellin statement began with the hospital's previous

position on the matter. "Bellin has endorsed a previous proposal of city planners and members of Astor Association that a shared facility be cooperatively developed on the East side of Webster Avenue across from both hospitals."

"St. Vincent has shared with us its reasoning for proceeding alone to build a ramp on the southern extremity of the (medical) corridor," Bellin said.

The Astor Association fears St. Vincent and Bellin, will end up having to reach further into

residential lots for expansions in the distant future because they will have used up all the available land parking and expansions of the near future, according to Jim Gucwa, one of Astor's spokesmen.

The Astor board said it "feels that the city or state is now needed to step in and urge decision makers at both hospitals to reach a joint solution to this problem."

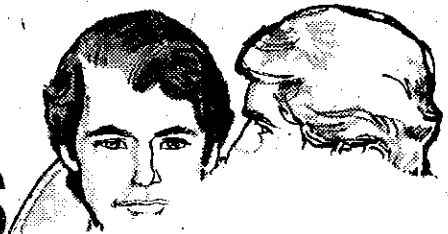
It added that the "potential establishment of the Astor Historic District makes the necessity for cooperation be-

tween the hospitals imperative."

"We don't want to take sides. We all have a vested interest," said one Astor spokesman, Jim Gucwa. "We should all sit down and reach a conclusion. If we can't get together now, the battle will be lost forever and there won't be an Astor Neighborhood." He added that the association "may go down in a blaze of bullets, but we have to."

The Astor board said it wasn't prepared to suggest a specific site.

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