NO SCHOOL TAX HIKE VOTE

Industry park is defended

The West Berkeley Industrial Park, much of which has yet to be developed and sold, has already brought 364 new jobs to the city, according to Berkeley Redevelopment Agency (BRA) officials. This claim was made at a BRA public hearing last night at which the park was described as everything from a "great land ripoff" to the answer to Berkeley's slumping economy.

Unlike other industrial park hearings in recent memory, supporters of the park outnumbered opponents.

Mr. Ruth said that to date the park is responsible for 364 new jobs in Berkeley because of the economic spin that goes with the location of the agency's business.

Mr. Ruth said that there are 100 blocks of street reconstruction, new street lighting, and landscaping, and that all the work has been completed. He also said that Berkeley's sales have helped to keep what industry Berkeley does have within the city limits.

Mr. Ruth said the park will be responsible for $566,000 in increased

A change of heart by board majority

A proposed 50-cent tax rate hike for Berkeley Unified School District will not be on the June 8 primary ballot.

This leaves the local school board wrestling with possible staff cuts and other "alternative" economies for raising the expected $1.8 million budget deficit.

An apparent change of heart by three board members led to a 3-2 vote last night, killing Director Lou Stoll's proposal to raise the district's revenue limit by $3 per child above the present $1,600.

If approved by the voters, this would have amounted to about $5 to $25 cents added to the present school tax rate of $7.30 per $100 assessed valuation.

Several board members believe that the rate proposal would fall if submitted to the voters, leaving it to the voters to make a decision when the lower rate is in mind. If the rate increase is sought, several opponents of the plan, Board President Gene Roh and Directors James Guthrie and Marc Monheim, supported the argument that the board should "set its house in order" before asking the voters to tighten their belts.

Ms. Stoll said that the present administration should be able to make cuts in its current program and that the present administration staff can be justified for the single fact there is now enough money.

Albany seeking ways to recoup

A month ago, four board members, with Mrs. Johnson absent due to illness, voted in favor of a resolution of "intent" to place the tax rate hike on the ballot.

It was indicated last night that this was a final decision unless the board decided against the Feb. 9 action.

Ms. Stoll argued that it is easy to tell the district to put its house in order, but in fact it is restrained from proceeding in this direction by state regulations.

The state forbids reductions such as laying off incompetent teachers, she said, while the district is told to eliminate valuable programs such as Latin, German, interscholastic athletics and others.

She argued that the people should be allowed to make a decision, a position they will do in the next year under state regulations, and adding about $5 to $25 cents to the present tax rate does not fall below the present.

A tax rate increase could prevent a budget cut of $500,000

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