

# Decision postponed on buying property in 700 block of Main

JAN 20 1976

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The Local Public Agency (LPA) for urban renewal in Rapid City has postponed any decision on purchasing the remaining property on the north side of the 700 block of Main Street.

After hearing from three property owners and a businessman Monday night, the LPA tabled further action until the next LPA meeting Monday.

The 700 block on the north side of Main has always been in the urban renewal plan for acquisition and redevelopment. It was included as part of the \$64 million disaster recovery-urban renewal program but efforts were initially concentrated on the disaster recovery phase of the eight-year program.

Now, urban renewal is turning to the downtown area and making an effort to acquire properties to be replaced with new structures, hopefully by private developers.

Two property owners, Mrs. Jessie Allard and Mrs. Stella Buell, were represented by their attorneys who urged the LPA to leave their buildings out of the acquisition program. Their buildings are fairly new and not a blight, they claimed.

Mrs. Allard's late husband, Ira, owned property at 718 Main and Mrs. Buell owns the property at 716 and 714 Main, the Crystal Bar and the Sport Club.

Also objecting was Fritz Couture,

operator of the Sport Club, who commented that the uncertainty over whether or not the building he leases is going to be acquired has affected his business decisions.

Mike Whalen, owner of the old Harney Hotel site, said that he has his own plans for developing his property provided he can buy the property to the immediate west, formerly occupied by the Golden Horn bar.

Whalen said that he is trying to purchase the property now that the lawsuit has been settled. Owners of the Golden Horn had brought a damage suit against the Whalens when a common wall and roof of the adjacent building were damaged when the hotel was razed.

Former Alderman Charles Swander tried to "set the record straight" by reviewing the events that had taken place while he was a member of the council. He called attention to the "in again, out again" status of the property from the time the city made its first offer to buy.

It was the intent at one time for the city either to purchase all the property in the block or none, he said. The thinking by the council was that a completely clear block would be more attractive to a private developer.

Page Townley was ready to turn down any further efforts by urban renewal to purchase the property, but Flittie made the tabling motion to postpone action.