

THE CASE  
FOR AND AGAINST  
THE SALE OF THE ALACHUA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

...and will mean a break for the purchaser. The buyer will be able to pay for competitive prices and selections.

A great many Alachua County Shoppers now go to other cities to purchase. Those who favor the sale of our Courthouse are worried in getting the people of Ocala, Williston, and surrounding towns and counties to come to Gainesville to spend their money in Alachua County. A shopping center, such as the one proposed, would draw people from Lake County, North Marion County, Suwannee, Cedar Key, Citrus City, Lake City and other counties, Lake Butler, Lawton, and Starke. The sale of the Courthouse means increased business for the merchants of this area and should make Gainesville much greater immediately.

Proponents of the sale are convinced that the future of Alachua County and Gainesville are at stake. This area must continue to grow or regress. We can't afford to lose our Courthouse. It is your duty as a citizen of the city and county to weigh all factors carefully before you vote on July 14.)

AN OLD LANDMARK

...because the Courthouse is an old landmark and a part of our history. It is a landmark that may be lost if we sell the Courthouse. Those who favor the sale have no voice against the people who are interested in keeping the Courthouse for sentimental value. We have to accept the fact that those of you who are willing to pay for that sentiment and keep the Courthouse in its present location. That is a privilege of a free country.

NEEDED LAND AND PARKING

We who wish the Courthouse sold do raise our voices against those who wish to leave the Courthouse block for parking cars, or for use as a County or City park. Is it feasible to take the most expensive piece of land in Alachua County (\$550,000) and make it into a parking space? And at the same time raise the taxpayer's millage at least ten cents and maybe more to pay for a new million dollar Courthouse? And to also pay \$10,000 a year in taxes to the County and \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year in taxes to the City? When does the taxpayer get a break? We can get a break on this issue when we go down and vote to sell the Courthouse for \$550,000.

Prepared by businessmen who believe in the continued growth of Gainesville and Alachua County.

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ALACHUA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

WHAT IS  
PROPOSED

First, let's see what is proposed. The Courthouse would be sold for \$550,000. On the property there would be built a modern, million dollar shopping center. A new shopping center as is now proposed will give shoppers of the County and 12 surrounding counties more selection in goods. These goods will enter a competitive market and will mean a break for the purchaser. The buyer will be able to really shop for competitive prices and selections.

A great many Alachua County Shoppers now go to Ocala and Jacksonville for purchases. Those who favor the sale of our Courthouse are interested in getting the people of Ocala, Williston, and surrounding towns and counties to come to Gainesville to spend their money in Alachua County. A million dollar shopping center, such as the one proposed, would draw people from Palatka, Ocala, North Marion County, Bronson, Cedar Key, Cross City, Lake City and southern Columbia County, Lake Butler, Lawtey, and Starke. The sale of the Courthouse means increased business for the merchants of this area and should make sales in Gainesville much greater immediately.

Proponents of the sale are convinced that the future of Alachua County and Gainesville are at stake. This area must continue to advance or retard. We cannot stand still and let the rest of the world go by. Alachua County must make its choice to progress or regress.

AN OLD  
LANDMARK

Now, what are the arguments against this sale and the building of a shopping center? There are those who oppose the sale because the Courthouse is an old landmark and they object to moving the Confederate Memorial to the new Courthouse location, wherever that may be. Those who favor the sale have no voice against the people who are interested in keeping the Courthouse for sentiment's sake. We have no argument for those of you who are willing to pay for that sentiment and keep the Courthouse in its present location. That is a privilege of a free country.

NEEDED LAND  
FOR PARKING

We who wish the Courthouse sold do raise our voices against those who wish to leave the Courthouse block for parking cars, or for use as a County or City park. Is it feasible to take the most expensive piece of land in Alachua County (\$550,000) and make a park or parking space? And at the same time raise the taxpayer's millage at least five mills and maybe more to pay for a new million dollar Courthouse? And to also lose \$30,000 a year in taxes to the County and \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year in taxes to the City? When does the taxpayer get a break? We can get a break on this issue when we go down and vote to sell the Courthouse for \$550,000.

If we need a park then why not go three blocks in any direction and buy a block of land comparable to the Courthouse square at one fifth the cost? The same applies to parking areas. For parking the Tebeau School lot always has ample space available at any time.

REDUCE VALUE OF ADJOINING PROPERTY

The property adjoining the Courthouse square will be worth more money to the owners if the square is sold. A million dollar building cannot but help increase the value. This new shopping center will anchor business in what is now Downtown Gainesville. The trend today in business is for similar businesses to locate adjoining one another. It has been proved that 5¢ and 10¢ stores, dress shops, and department stores like the same locality. They all do more business that way.

GIVE LOCAL MERCHANTS UNWANTED COMPETITION

As for competition--it has long been known that competition is the life of business. Stores do better where they have competition than where they do not.

INCREASE THE TRAFFIC PROBLEM

Those who favor keeping the Courthouse where it is say that a new shopping center would increase the traffic problem by congesting more business in an area already heavy with traffic. Actually the traffic problem is no worse now and would not be under the new plan than in any other growing town or city in the United States.

REPAIR AND EXTEND PRESENT COURTHOUSE

If the present Courthouse is repaired and the wings extended the taxpayers will spend a minimum of one-half million dollars and still have the shell of an old building. The County will not have \$550,000. Nor will the County and City have a constant \$40,000 to \$45,000 yearly revenue.

NEED OTHER THINGS FIRST

Some say forget about a new Courthouse. We need other things a lot worse. We need new schools, county roads, a new Gainesville High School, New Lincoln High for Negroes, new consolidated high school for High Springs, Newberry, and Alachua, We need new equipment for the County and more farm-to-market roads. We need better fire protection. The Alachua County General Hospital now has outgrown its present space and needs new wings for additional patients. Ask your doctors what would happen to the sick if we had an epidemic. Tax payers dollars are needed for these things and not for a new Courthouse.

All these things are true. But what better way is there to get these other things that are so badly needed in the County than by an increased income that costs the taxpayer nothing?

YOUR POCKETBOOK IS INVOLVED

Gainesville people should be especially interested in the sale of the Courthouse. If the Courthouse is not sold, they will find themselves paying increased taxes. They will pay for a new Courthouse or repairs to the old out of new County taxes and will be paying new City levies which include one and a half million dollars for the new addition to the light plant. If you must pay for a new light plant addition you don't want to be paying unnecessarily for a new Courthouse as well. Your homestead exemption won't help, either. The taxes that you vote on yourself in elections are considered voted bonded indebtedness and your homes stand as security for that indebtedness.

HERE IS THE  
MONEY PICTURE

When you vote to sell the Courthouse, you get \$550,000. The County now has approximately \$100,000 in the bank, saved from three mills levy for a new Courthouse. That makes a total of \$650,000. It has been estimated that the needed new Courthouse would cost a million dollars furnished. At that cost the County would owe \$350,000. It has been estimated by proper authority that the County will collect \$22,500 in taxes from the new shopping center. And, too, the County will collect \$7,500 from the intangible tax. This makes a total of \$30,000 a year to be derived from this block each year.

If this \$30,000 a year is applied on the \$350,000 balance that the County will owe, this amount will pay off the balance due in 14 or 15 years. Then the County will have an income of \$30,000 a year.

On the other hand the City of Gainesville will also collect from \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year from new taxation on the Courthouse square that has never been on the tax books before. This will be a free income at no cost.

LARGE GROUP OF  
CHEAP STORES?

It is rumored that there will be a large group of cheap stores located on this property. How can you believe that? If a man pays \$550,000 for a square block of property and builds a building with partial second floor for storage, complete air-conditioning, a sprinkler system for fire protection, and everything modern and up-to-date, would you call that cheap? This building will call for something in the neighborhood of a million dollars. Add the cost of the property to the construction costs and the outlay will be one and one half million dollars.

Then there's another thing. Figure the combined taxes of the County and City, plus the cost of fire and windstorm insurance and it totals around \$50,000 a year. Then figure interest rate on the capital outlay of \$1,500,000 at 4 per cent. This amount is \$60,000. The buyer in this case first has to charge enough rent on the various stores in the building to equal the \$110,000 cost. Also there is upkeep to figure on a building of this kind. It will be costly. Now, do you, the voters, think the buyers of this land can afford to put in cheap stores? What cheap store can pay the kind of rent that will be necessary?

THE STORY IN  
A NUTSHELL

If we sell the Courthouse, we get a new one for free, we add new tax revenue to both city and county books, we get a fine new shopping center that will bring much new business to Gainesville and Alachua County, and through competition we get better selection of goods at cheaper prices.

If we don't sell the Courthouse, we will be taxed to build a new one, if the present site becomes a park or parking lot, or we will be taxed to repair and enlarge the old building. We will not get new tax revenues for our local government. Tax money will have to go into a Courthouse of some kind--tax money that might go for other things vitally needed, like schools and a hospital addition.

If your taxes go up, business and home rentals will have to go up in price.

Call your County Commissioner and tell him how you feel about this sale.