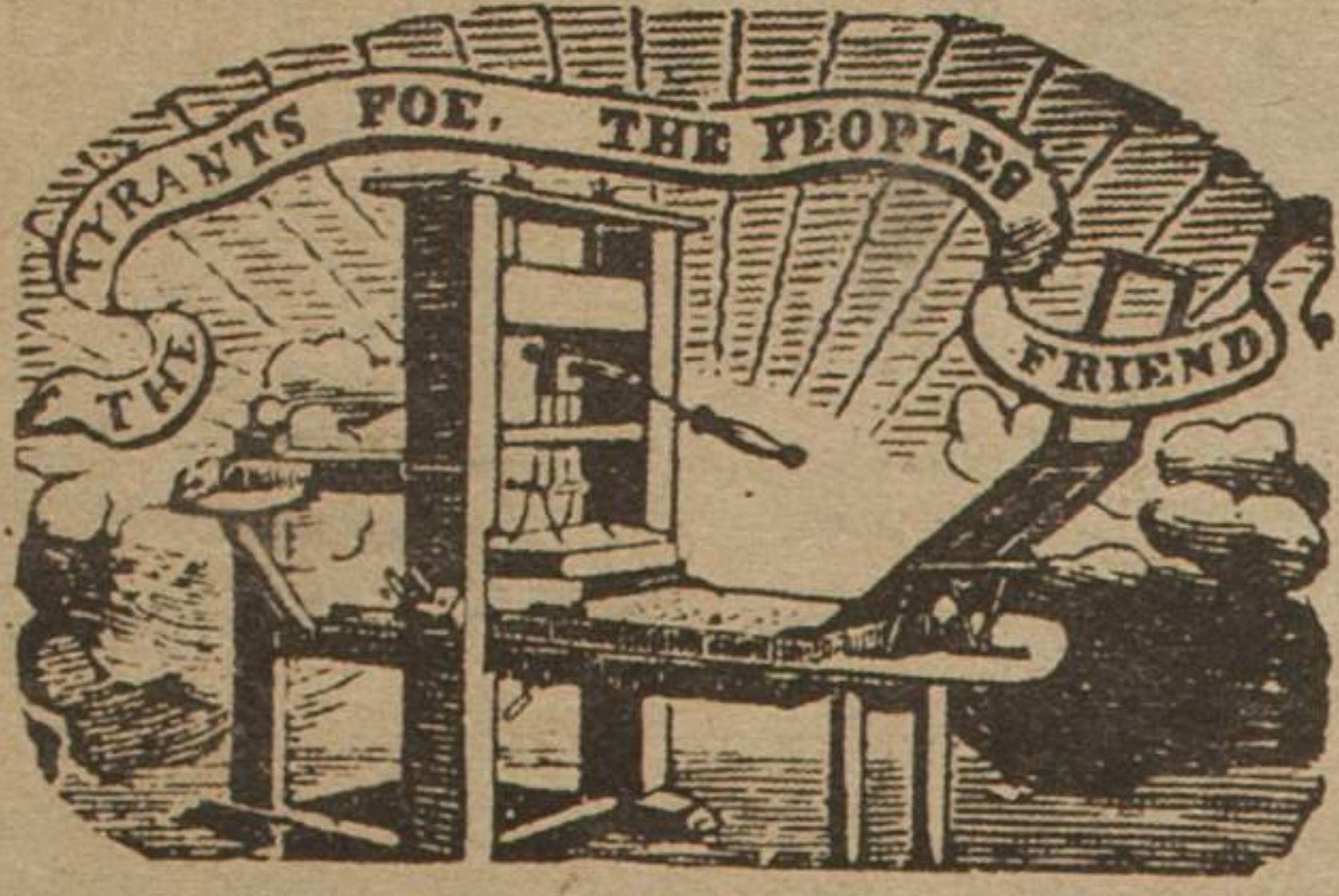


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# Public Notice

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## City Hall Under Fire

# Voters Rush To Sign Petition!

BY DAVID HANN

Faced with City Commission intent to build a \$3 million City Hall regardless of public sentiment, Lawrence residents have organized to put the question of financing the building before voters in the August 1 primary election.

The movement began in May with formation of Citizens for Responsive City Government, a cross-section of about 70 Lawrence residents united in their opposition to use of revenue bonds for construction of a new City Hall. Most participants in the push for a public referendum vote on the project feel City Commissioners are circumventing voters' rights to approve tax-supported projects.

"We have the right to express ourselves," explained Marvin Tripp, a long-time Lawrence resident. "Barkley Clark seems to think there is a ground-swell of support for a new City Hall. I don't believe that is the case."

Art Transue, East Lawrence resident, has been circulating petitions for the referendum and has found dissatisfaction with City plans and Commissioners' attitude. Mr. Transue, a long-time observer of City government, began working for the referendum on the new City Hall because he had been to a Commission meeting on the new City Hall and didn't like what was going on.

"Everybody seems to dislike the procedure the City Commission is following," Mr. Transue said, "and many people dislike the location. Some people I spoke with volunteered to carry petitions."

Lawrence residents are responding very positively to the petition drive, according to members of the group's steering committee. Recent volunteers have increased the number of petition bearers to over 60 persons.

"The most important thing," Pat Willer, Schwegler resident, emphasized, "is to get the issue before the Lawrence community so people can make an informed decision."

A number of Lawrence residents are upset with City officials over the issue of the new City Hall. The main reasons for public opposition stems from what people see as the Commission sidestepping public approval; the scornful attitudes of Commissioners toward citizens; spiraling costs of the new City Hall; and distrust of the recently established Public Building Commission.

The Public Building Commission (PBC) is really the key to the public protest. Under Kansas Law, the PBC may issue revenue bonds for the purpose of construction of public facilities. No voter approval is necessary unless voters obtain signatures of 5 per cent of the number of registered voters in the city demanding a referendum vote on the issue.

It is this power of the PBC to build major public buildings without voter approval that is the most objectionable aspect of the City's plans. It is, according to members of Citizens for Responsive City Government, taxation without representation. The bonds the PBC will issue will be paid off by the City with federal revenue sharing funds, all of which is derived from federal income taxes.

City Commissioners appointed themselves as Public Building Commissioners to utilize the powers of the State PBC law. They issued their intent to go into debt for \$2 million in May. Just a few days after doing so, Citizens for Responsive City Government formed and launched a petition drive to force a vote on the City Hall.

The federal revenue-sharing funds that the City plans to use for the project come to Lawrence with no strings attached. The City of Lawrence has, like many other cities, spent most of its revenue-sharing funds (80 per cent) for major capital improvement projects like the proposed City Hall and the existing Judicial Building, and the other 20 per cent has gone to "people's programs," health, parks, and social service agencies.

Mona McCoy, Pinkney resident, fears that earmarking 80 per cent of all revenue-sharing funds for the next 7 years may endanger public service programs and organizations which derive most of their budgets from revenue-sharing. Even if funded at current levels, inflation alone will erode their support.

The City has said they will use revenue sharing funds to build the City Hall even if voters turn down the project in the primary election. They say they will just take more money away from health and parks improvements.



MARVIN TRIPP ACCEPTS SIGNATURES SUPPORTING A CALL FOR PUBLIC VOTE ON THE ISSUE OF REVENUE BONDS TO CONSTRUCT A NEW CITY HALL.

PHOTO BY DAVID HANN

## City Hall Rises From Bowersock Ruins

BY SUSIE HANNA

The City of Lawrence has discussed the need for an identifiable City Hall building since 1970 when the City offices were moved from the Watkins Bank building, 11th and Mass., to the First National Bank.

Many people wonder why the City relinquished the handsome red-brick bank building, now the home of the Watkins Community Museum. In the late sixties, Ray Wells, then the City Manager, made a deal with the builders of the First National Bank to rent City office space. The argument presented to the public was that it would be more economical and efficient to rent space than to stay in the Old Bank building, which was old and in need of work.

Thus, with the guarantee that the City would rent space, the First National Bank building was planned and built to its present size.

A couple of years after moving into the First, City Commissioners began discussing the need for an identifiable City Hall. By 1972, Commissioners had decided to commit a portion of the federal revenue-sharing money annually received by the City to remodel the Police-Fire building for a City Hall. The Police were scheduled to move to the new Judicial Law Enforcement Center adjacent to the County Courthouse, and Commissioners reasoned that it would be wise to move the City offices into the vacated space.

Costs for remodeling the Police-Fire building were \$340,000 in 1972. By 1976, when remodeling plans were abandoned, remodeling costs were \$700,000.

But Commissioners rejected plans to remodel the Police-Fire building in favor of looking at other locations to build a new City Hall or remodel another building. They stated that the Police-Fire building was an old building (built in 1950), that there wasn't enough space for the City to grow into, and that parking space would be a problem.

Following a look at a few other locations and plans, the Commissioners zeroed in on the North end of the central business district and the Bowersock property.

When the City finally negotiated the purchase of the Bowersock property in January, 1977, Commissioners didn't know whether construction of a City Hall at that location was feasible. The reasoning given by City Manager Buford Watson was that even if the City Hall wasn't built there, the City would be cleaning out a major eyesore and possibly could turn the area into a park.

The main reason the City chose to locate at the Bowersock site was to spur private redevelopment of the North end of the central business district. With the City putting millions of dollars into the Bowersock site, developers, the City reasons, will be more inclined to build office and shopping facilities in the area north of 8th and between Vermont and Rhode Island.

Costs for the purchase of the land, clearance, site preparation and dam maintenance alone is about \$1,300,000. Most of this cost was

### INSIDE PUBLIC NOTICE

#### THE SCHOOL REFERENDUM--

A school board member and a teacher give their assessment of the referendum. See page 2.

#### NORTH LAWRENCE

The North Lawrence Improvement Association and the North Lawrence Planning Council are having a joint meeting to begin work on a neighborhood plan. See story on page 3.

#### PINCKNEY NEIGHBORHOOD

A comprehensive land use plan is in the works for the Pinckney neighborhood. See story on page 5.

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