

Oxnard

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■ ARTISTIC TOUCH

Kate Marking finds intrigue in transferring images in the printmaking process, as in the mirror imaging of collagraphs, monotypes. 48

Tension marks school building plans

By Wendy Leung

wendy.leung@vcstar.com
805-437-0339

Debate on construction plans for a new Camarillo high school got personal and political Wednesday as the Oxnard Union High School District board considered a labor agreement with union leaders.

The board took no action on the agreement and instructed staff members to resume negotiations on a plan that can be

■ Trades council seeks jobs for residents within district

finalized Monday.

District staff members came under fire and were accused of not negotiating in good faith with the Tri Counties Building and Construction Trades Council. Tony Skinner, a business representative for the labor group, said the district omitted key components of a proposed agreement and used stall tactics so the board wouldn't approve

the agreement. Assistant Superintendent Stephen Dickinson, who represented the district in the negotiations, denied the allegation, saying there was no intention to delay talks.

But the allegation angered board member Socorro Lopez Hanson, who said she was displeased with how staff members handled the matter.

"Those who know me know I

don't like playing games. When a direction is given, I expect it to be followed," she said. "I don't like someone trying to run the clock out. It's not cool."

A split district board in October directed staff members to negotiate a project labor agreement, or PLA, with Tri Counties in time for a vote Wednesday. The district is on a tight timeline to build Rancho Campana

High School by fall 2015.

Among the sticking points of the agreement is the process of hiring local workers. Under a proposed PLA presented to the board, the contractor would have a goal of hiring 30 percent of its workers from the tri-county region. But union leaders want the goal to focus on workers in the school district boundaries of Oxnard, Port Hueneme and Camarillo.

"While helping the workers

See LABOR, 2B

LABOR

from 1B

of San Luis Obispo County and Santa Barbara may be nice, I'm concerned about the people of Ventura" County, board President Wayne Edmonds said. "I'm concerned about the people right here."

Union members and supporters of a PLA say having such an agreement would ensure local workers are hired and the project is finished on time without increasing construction costs. About 200 union members, representing carpenters, electricians and other construction workers, attended the board meeting wearing hard hats. The crowd spilled outside the boardroom into the rain.

They called on the board to back a PLA that would ensure hiring of Ventura County workers because they're the taxpayers who spend money locally and they're the voters who supported the bond measure to pay for the campus.

"We're paying for

housing here, going to Vons late at night to get diapers. ... We take care of our community," said Jonathan Garcia, a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. "I thought we voted you in to get the community working again."

Those who do not support a PLA, including non-union trade associations and district board member John Alamillo, think such an agreement would raise the cost of the project and is not needed to ensure the hiring of local workers. Trustee Gary Davis, who also does not support a PLA, was absent from Wednesday's meeting.

Alamillo, a former union worker who eventually became owner of a building contractor business in Camarillo, said a PLA would force nonunion workers to pay union dues, which wouldn't benefit them and would force the contractor to pay that worker more. He wanted to give both sides an extra week to negotiate an agreement and invite other community and nonunion organizations to weigh in.

Hanson opposed that and was part of the board majority that called on district staff to have an agreement by Monday.

"Let's assume the final PLA ... comes back with no benefit to the district and it'll actually harm the district," Alamillo said to Hanson. "Some way, I get a feeling you'll still support it."

Later, at the conclusion of the meeting, Hanson responded, "I don't appreciate you insinuating I would vote for something not good for the district."

Rancho Campana is one of two high schools to be built with bond money from a 2004 voter initiative. The other high school will be in Oxnard.

The district planned to build the Oxnard school on property on the northwest corner of Victoria Avenue and Wooley Road. Owners of the agricultural land showed no intention to sell, and the district was considering eminent domain. The board voted Wednesday to set aside that land and conduct a new analysis of potential school sites.