

# Pleas to save Central denied

**SUPERIOR:** School Board members refuse to wait a year for a citizens committee to come up with new uses for the old school.

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For nearly two hours Wednesday evening, people lined up at the Superior school district administrative offices to speak in favor of saving Superior's Central School.

In spite of pleas to save a part of the city's history, the Superior School Board denied a request to give a citizens' committee a year to come up with new uses for the former school.

The committee, Save Wisconsin's White House, organized

in an effort to save the old school from demolition.

"We're just concerned and passionate," said Superior City Councilor Carol Reasbeck, a member of the group. "We want to see Central saved."

Superior School Board member Mary Klun said she appreciated the passion that people showed, but the board's decision had to be made with reason. The board voted unanimously to deny the request.

Since the 1999 bond referendum passed to build two new schools to replace four other

district schools, the school district has made plans to market its closed schools or demolish them. The school district made a commitment to city and county officials to take care of its unused schools.

While Blaine Elementary and Dewey Nelson, which housed Northland School, were sold, the district demolished Pattison Elementary when a viable proposal for the school wasn't found. The site is being developed for housing.

East and Central middle schools will be the next to come down.

On Monday, the School Board received a letter signed by Mayor David Ross and Douglas County Admin-

istrator Steve Koszarek, asking the board to carefully consider its decision. They asked the district to require bidders to provide some assurance of demolition funding if efforts to save the school failed.

Ross said the city and county weren't taking a position on whether the district should save the school. It was a plea to protect city and county taxpayers from picking up the demolition cost of the school later at a higher price than the district would pay now, he said.

With only the expected expenses for asbestos and lights removal known — about \$195,000 — the total cost of demolition remains unknown. Building and

grounds director Dave Korhonen said estimates range from \$500,000 to \$700,000 for Central, but that's just a guess.

The citizens committee had hoped to save Central because of its distinguished history as the 1928 summer White House of President Calvin Coolidge.

Saving Central "is dear to my heart," committee member Elvina Hoyt said. But she doesn't plan to fight the School Board once the decision is final. The board is expected to ratify the decision at its 7 p.m. meeting Monday at Northern Lights Elementary School.