

Report to Directors, Angwin Community Council

Subject: Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting, June 2, 2009

From: Herbert Ford

By far and away the biggest item on today's BOS agenda was the 9:15 a.m., Public Hearing relative to the consideration and possible action regarding an appeal filed by Lake Luciana LLC of a decision by the Conservation, Development and Planning Commission on March 18, 2009, to deny the Lake Luciana Golf Course (in Pope Valley) Use Permit to develop an 18-hole championship golf course, attendant buildings and site improvements, including lake side recreational uses with a small boat dock and boat storage pavilion, and to improve existing roads to serve the golf course and nearby parcels.

The interest in this matter was dramatically presented to me when I arrived at the BOS meeting room at 8:30 for the 9 a.m., meeting and found every seat taken and at least 30 people standing around the edges of the room. I have never before in several years of attending BOS meetings found that at a full half hour before the day's session begins I could not find a seat. So it was off to a small conference room on the building's second floor where a television view of the proceedings, comfortable chairs and a table to write on awaited. A number of the main players of the Save Rural Angwin group were noted in the audience in the BOS meeting room on the third floor of the County building before I left in favor of the overflow conference room.

The usual back and forth between those favoring and those opposing the project took a couple of hours, with an attorney for the golf course presenting a selection from 20 appeal points in which he contends erred relative to its findings. There followed speeches by several opponents including the Sierra Club.

Finally the Supervisors began deliberating the appeal. Supervisor Dillon took the most time in her educator-like deliberation, often appearing agonized over point she knew held considerable interest. At one point she used the second part of a General Plan provision that had been cited by the golf course's lawyer in the golf course's favor, to argue an entirely opposite conclusion. That exercise reaffirmed in my mind that the County's General Plan is too broadly written to be an effective instrument in knowing how one can go in land use matters. If two opposite conclusions can come from the same provision then only the power of the BOS can win.

BOS Chairman Mark Luce gave by far the clearest and most straightforward of all the deliberation that went on. He clearly came down on the side of the golf course, and in doing so said that Supervisor Dillon's contention that golf courses should be constructed only in urban areas rather than in rural areas was, as far as he was concerned, without merit. Supervisor Dodd also took the side of the golf course, and the final vote saw Caldwell, Wagenknecht and Dillon voting to deny the golf course's appeal, with Luce and Dodd voting to uphold it.

It is certain that this matter will find way before the BOS again, likely in the not too distant future. I was particularly interested in remarks made by one of the opponents of the golf course: "Napa County is noted for its grapes. That's our right. That right should not be put in jeopardy by secondary issues." Golfers, I thought, would be interested to know that a championship gold course is "a secondary issue" to the growing of grapes. Well over an entire ream (500 pages) of paper was used to present all aspects of this appeal.

There were 21 actions in today's Consent Items, the largest of which was authorization to increase the amount payable to Community Resources for Children, Inc., by \$244,556, to a new maximum of \$865,414.

Certificates of Completion were presented to 15 County employees who have recently completed the Napa County Management Academy. Public Health Nurse Patricia Simpkins, who has completed 34 years of public service was honored with a Retirement Proclamation by the BOS.

Before the Pope Valley golf course matter was heard, the BOS quickly upheld the assessing of a penalty of Aman P. Etal Singh "for failure to file a Change of Ownership Statement for Assessors Parcel No. 059-172-003.

In the afternoon session of the BOS, matters relating to the Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District were heard and acted on. The Director of Corrections brought a request to the Board related to the prison Inmate Commissary, and the Director of Health and Human Services requested a Public Hearing "for the community to comment on proposed reductions in public health services, and to take actions to approved proposed reductions.

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