

Aptos incorporation survey pleases chamber directors

By BILL AKERS

If a random sampling of 287 Aptos area residents is an accurate gauge, there's more support for incorporating it into a city than expected.

Or, putting it another way, there's a lot less opposition to the idea than Aptos Chamber of Commerce directors anticipated. They took heart in the fact that only 52 percent of those sampled opposed the idea of the Chamber making a serious study of incorporation.

Meeting Thursday morning at Donovan's in Redwood Village, the directors heard a report from Aptos Principal Don Schwerling on the results of the sampling taken between Feb. 1 and 5 by students in the local government classes at the high school. In addition to showing unanticipated support (or lack of opposition to) incorporation, it revealed this about Aptos residents:

—Fifty-eight percent of them don't like the way the land is being developed.

—Forty-nine percent don't like the planning and zoning services.

—Only 47 percent of them like the police service they're getting.

But there is a lot they do like, such as the water, fire, road and solid waste disposal services.

Although there has never been an open declaration in favor of incorporation by the Chamber board, directors did vote to undertake a serious study of the matter. At their meetings, Chamber president Lucile Aldrich and director Mrs. Glenn Specht have been the most open advocates of incorporation. In Schwerling, they have another director in their corner. In discussing the results of the survey, he said:

"If I can take my principal's hat off and speak as a resident, I would like to see incorporation. There are more advantages to it than disadvantages. I'm encouraged by this sampling."

Mrs. Specht agreed. Saying she had anticipated a "gut-level 'no'" attitude toward incorporation, the survey

indicated instead that "people are open to the idea."

The League of Women Voters is also studying the Aptos incorporation issue as part of a series of community studies. Mrs. Specht is chairman of the League's incorporation study committee. Residents are also being surveyed by letter by that group, and that she hoped to get between 300 and 600 responses. "I hope we'll get the same kind of encouragement," she said.

"Those who oppose incorporation," Schwerling said, "say there would only be another layer of government, with a loss of the voice of the people." He disagreed, saying, "We would have more local control with incorporation," and pointed out that, because of proposition 13, no new taxes could be levied.

There were some other interesting facts turned up by the survey. Of the 287 people questioned, 120 had lived in Aptos for less than five years, and 167 for five or more. One-hundred of them were renters, and 187, or 65 percent, owned or were buying their homes.

On the matter of incorporation, 105 thought the Chamber should pursue the matter, 149 were opposed and 33 had no opinion.

It was pointed out that there was no way to separate the renters' responses from those of the property owners, nor to tell in which areas of Aptos the support (or lack of it) for incorporation was the strongest. It was also pointed out that although only 46 percent of those questioned were dissatisfied with the traffic controls in Aptos, that wouldn't indicate the level of dissatisfaction by Aptos Village residents as opposed to those who live in Rio del Mar.

The most significant percentages developed by the survey were: Opposed to Chamber's study of incorporation, 52 percent; dissatisfied with land use, 58 percent; dissatisfied with zoning-planning, 49 percent; dissatisfied with traffic control, 46 percent; satisfied with water service, 64 percent; satisfied with fire service, 60 percent; satisfied with road service, 58 percent; satisfied with police service, 47 percent; satisfied with solid waste disposal, 46 percent.

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