

Water Supply, 1970-79

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Official reason given for killing water annexation

The Soquel Creek County Water District board of directors learned why the Local Agency Formation Commission first approved, then a month later rescinded, an annexation that would have tripled the district's size.

The explanation came in a letter from Executive Director E. R. Hanna of LAFCO read by District Manager Robert Johnson.

Hanna said that going ahead with the annexation would have allowed the "disgruntled" to "make headlines and lots of newspaper copy."

On July 21, LAFCO approved the annexation to the water district of its entire present service area, including La Selva Beach, Aptos, Aptos Terrace, Rio del Mar, Seacliff, and the Vienna Woods-Park Wilshire area.

On Aug. 2, the district board was expected to adopt a resolution of intention to annex the service area and set a date for a public hearing.

Instead, the directors decided to tour the boundaries of the annexation area on Aug. 22 to make sure they could serve it all, even though their own manager drew the proposed annexation boundaries.

Some of the residents of the

annexation area cried "Foul!" because the delay would have prevented them from entering a candidate and voting in the Nov. 2 election for district directors.

Three of the organizations that had requested the annexation asked that it be dropped. They were the boards of directors of the Rio del Mar Improvement Association, the Aptos Chamber of Commerce, and the Aptos Terrace Improvement Association.

Acting on their request, LAFCO on Aug. 18 rescinded the July 21 resolution consenting to the annexation of the entire service area to the Soquel Creek County Water District.

This action also caused some controversy, and generated a newspaper headline or two. The La Selva Beach Improvement Association announced it was still in favor of annexing to the district, as did the Vienna Woods-Park Wilshire Homeowners Association.

The latter group is especially anxious to annex because it is seeking water service from the district, which won't be granted without annexation.

Seeking to explain LAFCO's action, Hanna said it was based "solely upon the written withdrawal of support by three of the

five supporting organizations."

He added, "To have permitted the proposed annexation to proceed would have placed your board in a difficult position at the subsequent public hearing, would have generated a campaign to secure written protests to kill the annexation, and provided a forum for the disgruntled to filibuster and make headlines and lots of newspaper copy."

Hanna suggested that now the district can proceed to annex the service area in smaller units. He said he was sure a resolution from the board to annex the Park Wilshire and La Selva could proceed through LAFCO "with no fuss."

"I can't speak for the Seacliff area," he added, "because we have received no communication from them."

Johnson told the board that the position of the Seacliff Improvement Association is that it never took back its annexation request, so it still stands.

The water district board decided against making any new annexations requests. It took the position that it has already asked for the annexation, never rescinded the request, and it is up to LAFCO to act on it.

The problem was back in the commission's lap.