

Glenwood vote fallout

# Scotts Valley planner gets ax

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SCOTTS VALLEY — Fallout from last week's Glenwood Meadow development vote has led to political shuffling on the planning commission.

In the wake of voters rejecting the 145-home project, pro-Glenwood Councilman Chuck Walker has dismissed anti-Glenwood Planning Commissioner Lawrence Fogel and announced plans to replace him with pro-Glenwood Commissioner Michael Shulman.

Shulman, who had walked door-to-door to urge voters to approve the Glenwood plan, resigned Friday after expressing dissatisfaction with anti-Glenwood Councilwoman Sheryl Ainsworth, who had appointed him two years ago.

But if everything goes his way and a City Council majority backs him up, Shulman could be back on the commission by Wednesday night — this time working under an appointment from Councilman Walker.

Friday's events are unlikely to change the commission's political make-up significantly, since Ainsworth gets to pick Shulman's board successor.

But the realignment illustrates how the commission and council are still struggling with the divisive Glen-

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wood debate. Shulman and Walker argue that this re-examination of political loyalties is necessary. But Ainsworth insists these changes are another example of emotions running high over the Glenwood issue.

Walker said Monday that he had planned to dismiss Fogel for months because they don't see eye to eye on major issues, but he held back until the Glenwood matter was over.

"I didn't want it to become a political football," Walker said. "If he votes 'no' on the project and then I end up relieving him as commissioner, it'll look bad."

Scotts Valley planning commissioners are political appointees who serve at the whim of City Council members. Individual council members appoint the commissioners, but the choices must be ratified by the full council.

In theory at least, the commissioners are expected to share basic planning philosophies with the council members who appoint them.

The planning commission maneuvering is simply the latest example of how polarizing the Glenwood issue has been.

The city's voters last week rejected Palo Alto developer Chop Keenan's plan to create 145 home lots at Glenwood Meadow, the largest piece of remaining open space in the city. Voters turned out in record numbers to shoot it down by a 3-2 margin. Keenan has said he would come back to the city with a smaller project.

Shulman said Monday that he's pleased that Walker wants to keep him on the planning commission and pleased, too, that he's no longer working under Ainsworth's appointment. He said he had planned to resign anyway.

"I couldn't work with Sheryl anymore," he said, because she had abandoned her originally moderate position on Glenwood and gravitated to the anti-Glenwood side.

"I just didn't know which way she was going," he said of Ainsworth. "I can't serve effectively if I'm walking on eggshells all the time, knowing she could change her position and tell me to leave."

Ainsworth said she had not planned to dismiss Shulman although she had caught flak for having an increasingly vocal Glenwood supporter as her appointee.

"There are some people in the (anti-Glenwood) camp who had raised some eyebrows," Ainsworth said. "They didn't come out and tell me, 'Why don't you fire this guy?' or anything obvious. But certainly there was some concern that my own planning commissioner was not only taking the other stance but actively campaigning."

Ainsworth now has the option of replacing Shulman with Fogel to keep him on the board. If such a switch takes place, the makeup of the planning commission would be unchanged.

But she said she had not made up her mind as of late Monday. She said Fogel needs to be a "a little more vocal if he were my commissioner. I'd need to work with him to get that swing vote out."

Ainsworth said she had no choice but to take a strong stance on Glenwood, especially toward the end of the debate.

"In the election process, the middle ground no longer becomes really tenable," she said. "Everyone starts moving to the sides and that is kind of what happened here. Michael (Shulman) went from not being sure he was going to approve the project to being its greatest advocate."

Fogel may be the odd man out. He said Councilman Chuck Walker's phone call dismissing him was a surprise.

"We were on different sides on the Glenwood thing but I hadn't taken a very strong (position)" Fogel said.

Fogel has been on the commission since 1970. He and Cliff Barrett were the only "no" voices when the Planning Commission voted on the Glenwood issue last year, before the matter headed to the City Council, where it was approved.

Ainsworth did not question Walker's firing of Fogel. "That is within Mr. Walker's rights to do that," she said.

But she questioned the timing.

"I frankly feel that there are some people who have gotten pretty emotional about this election," she said. "I thought it would have been better to make any of these decisions after things cooled down a little."