

Scotts Valley council says 'right-on' to critical report

5-29-85

By LAURIE SLOTHOWER

Sentinel Staff Writer

SCOTTS VALLEY — City Council members are reacting favorably to a county grand jury report which, in many instances, criticizes city administration.

Councilmen Joe Miller, Ray Carl, Phil Liberty and Mayor Barbara Leichter agree with most of the recommendations in the document, issued Tuesday after a seven-month investigation.

The difference lies in who they believe is at fault for many of the problems it detailed.

Councilman Roger Anderson could not be reached before press time.

The 44-page report drew a number of conclusions about city government, among them:

- The city has spent too much time and money updating its General Plan, particularly on unnecessary consultants;
- council meetings are so long they may discourage citizen participation;
- city employees are subject to public embarrassment and are deluged with so many requests for information it causes delays and inefficiency;
- and, department heads and some members of the City Council do not trust the leadership abilities of Administrator Bob Rockett.

The grand jury recommends a number of solutions to streamline government processes.

The City Council is already acting on many of these problems, say Leichter and Miller, who are part of the controlled-growth majority of the City Council.

Last year, the council approved purchasing bonds to fund completion of

'What aggravates me is that a lot of the things the grand jury said are things Phil (Liberty) and I have been saying for the past 10 months.'

— Councilman Ray Carl

They point to the council's efforts to have performance evaluations of city employees and its attempts to get city offices moved into the new building at MacDorsa Drive, two suggestions contained in the report.

the new City Hall building.

Said Miller, "I thought the grand jury report was right-on about a lot of things that I have been upset about for months."

Miller also said he has wanted for a long time to separate the jobs of city manager and city administrator, "but Bob Rockett has a certain contract."

This may change when Rockett leaves, Miller said.

All four council members contacted agree that meetings are too long.

Miller said he's all in favor of time limits for council discussion.

"We have felt we did not want to stifle the free flow of information," said Miller. "But I know how I'm going to vote on every item on the agenda before the meeting starts. What Ray Carl says doesn't make a bit of difference to me."

Leichter said the council as a whole has

wanted to spend time discussing items. "I have given both the council and members of the public a pretty free rein because in the past I felt that in the past they've been cut short," she said. "But that's something for the council to discuss."

Carl said delays in council meetings are of prime importance to him, as well.

He said the grand jury "was critical, but I think they were justifiably critical."

"What aggravates me is that a lot of the things the grand jury said are things Phil (Liberty) and I have been saying for the past 10 months," Carl said.

Leichter and Miller took exception to the grand jury questioning the wisdom of hiring an outside consultant to review the draft General Plan.

Carl and Liberty have both stated they felt the \$4,200 expenditure was a waste of taxpayers' dollars.

But Miller and Leichter said many of the consultant's recommendations echoed statements made by the state Office of Planning and Research in its review of the planning document.

"That's the grand jury's opinion, but it's the council's right to hire consultants to help it with city processes," Leichter said.

The report also recommends that a grand jury commission a management audit — at county expense — of Scotts Valley government.

Leichter said she found the report "pretty non-specific" and said the council will issue a written report on it sometime within the next three weeks.

Liberty noted, "There may well be a majority response and a minority response to the report."