

Cities Stay Same

LAFC Reverts To Old Rule, About Supervisors Voting

By TOM HONIG

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The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFC), changing its rules more often than the National Football League, has canceled an earlier policy of disqualifying certain directors from voting on certain issues.

At its meeting Wednesday, LAFC directors, on a 3-2 vote, junked a policy of having representatives of the county board of supervisors disqualify themselves from voting as LAFC directors if an issue in question lies within their supervisorial district.

LAFC also operates under a rule barring representatives from city governments from

voting if an issue involves the city they are from. That rule is still intact.

Wednesday's vote included no votes from the two city representatives: Santa Cruz Mayor Joe Ghio and Capitola Councilman John Dixon. The two voting representatives from the board of supervisors,

Gary Patton and Ed Borovatz, along with Director Robley Levy, a public member, voted in favor of the measure.

The vote means that the county board members — Borovatz and Patton — will vote on all issues, while Dixon and Ghio will be disqualified if Capitola (in Dixon's case) or

Santa Cruz (in Ghio's case) are involved.

Dixon blasted the majority vote, saying, "The board of supervisors, now, has apparently decided that it doesn't give a hang about county-city relations."

He added that if board members can participate in every vote, so should city-appointed members.

Borovatz disagreed with Dixon, saying that his vote to reinstate all voting privileges to supervisors only reflects the wishes of the majority of the board.

"I must take heed when the board expresses its pleasure," Borovatz said.

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Watsonville Annexation, But..

With Watsonville Mayor Bill Johnston hopping mad and threatening lawsuit, the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFC) Wednesday gave its approval to the annexation of some 200 acres of land to the western portion of Watsonville.

But LAFC refused to include all the property that Watsonville wanted, and Johnston said, "We're not through; we'll see you in court."

At issue were a few parcels of land which LAFC directors — including two directors quite vocal about the issue, Gary Patton and Robley Levy — want to ensure remain as agricultural land.

One parcel in particular, belonging to the Mine Brothers, became a focus for argument. The Mine Brothers, and the City of Watsonville, presented evidence that the soil was not good for farming, yet LAFC agreed with Patton that "portions of the property are prime agricultural land."

He said that soil quality is not the only consideration for deciding whether land can be farmed, and said that "greenhousing might be possible."

Although the final vote was 5-0, one of the directors, John Dixon, said he voted favorably "a bit reluctantly" because of the exclusion of the Mine property.

son fumed about the exclusion of some of the land. "Why do they think they know any more about agriculture than the city

of Watsonville does?" He complained that there was no reason to deny the annexation "just because three persons on

LAFC want to." He complained that the evidence did not back up LAFC's vote, and promised to take the matter to court.

Population Growth Puts Demand On Groundwater

Population Monterey Bay placed a heavy groundwater stress on the region's water indicates.

The report, U.S. Geological Association of Area Government concludes that ment and increased wells have caused a depletion of water

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