

Live Oak General Plan Approved In Spite Of Attempted Roadblock

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After more than two years of labor pains, the Live Oak General Plan was finally born late Tuesday afternoon.

County Supervisors Phil Baldwin, Gary Patton and Ed Borovatz guided the plan down the final stretch — over the objections of Cecil Smith and an attempted roadblock by Marilyn Liddicoat.

The 3-2 vote came after supervisors had passed a series of amendments to the plan resulting from testimony at a pair of public hearings.

Baldwin, Patton and Borovatz also passed an accompanying resolution, proposed by Baldwin, to direct the Community Resources Agency (CRA) staff to notify permit applicants that a facilities program, when adopted, and any countywide housing policies, if adopted, requiring permit approval

would apply to all applications reviewed after adoption of the Live Oak General Plan.

Supervisors asked the CRA to report back with a facilities plan in 30 days.

Patton this morning explained that the purpose of the facilities program will be "to make sure now that a general plan exists and development can go forward that the development go forward in a logical manner and that it's clear that the facilities needed for development will be there."

According to a preliminary CRA staff report, those facilities include water, sewer, roads, roadside improvements and drainage.

In the meantime, Patton said, "Developers can come forward, there is no longer any moratorium, and applications can immediately be processed, but with the warning that at a future time those developments may be expected to meet certain standards."

The facilities plan is now "philosophical" with details to be presented by CRA staff within the 30-day period the board ordered, Patton explained.

He was the target of Liddicoat's roadblock attempt on the vote on the general plan.

She called on Patton to abstain from voting "because his law office represents the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) which owns several parcels of land and they stand to benefit monetarily."

Patton, refusing to abstain, replied: "Neither I nor any of my clients will benefit from this plan."

"How about your law office?" interjected Liddicoat.

"My office is a building and has no clients at this time," Patton replied.

"There is nothing to any charge that I have a

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conflict of interest or that I am violating any legal-ethical standard," he said.

Opponents of the plan and backers of the recall movement claim that Patton's father, Philips, has represented the ACLU in property transactions in the Live Oak area.

"Frankly I have no information on this — I do not know that he has such clients."

The senior Patton is in Washington, D.C., and unavailable for comment this morning.

Had Patton abstained in the voting, the general plan would have been blocked on a 2-2 vote.

Patton joined Baldwin and Borovatz in praising the general plan and urging a vote on adoption.

Baldwin, who represents the Live Oak area on the board and moved to put it to a vote, called the planning document "compassionate" and one "the residents of Live Oak can be proud of."

"The plan recognizes that Live Oak will grow but it insists that growth be planned and take place at a pace consistent with the provision of adequate services."

Baldwin, during a public hearing phase on the plan Tuesday, tried to dispel fear he said he had heard that the plan would encourage high-rise

development and a population of 34,000-36,000 people in the area by the year 2000.

"County zoning ordinances do not allow for any high-rise condominium or apartment complexes and none are projected as part of this plan," he said.

Baldwin also explained that the population projection includes some 7,000 persons who will be residing in the city of Capitola and some 5,000 who will be living on the north side of Highway 1, not normally considered part of Live Oak. He also argued that the plan was not being "rushed to judgement" since planning began back in 1975.

Smith, however, took a differing stand on that question. Looking down the table at Patton, Borovatz and Baldwin, the Watsonville-area supervisor said, "You're headed toward moving to adopt this plan today despite today's (public) testimony and staff input."

Later Smith added, "I have problems with this plan and I'm not convinced that this is what the citizens want..."

Liddicoat echoed Smith's remarks, saying, "I feel we are much too premature."

The public testimony prior to the board action

was a capsule look at the two years of fighting associated with the plan's development.

However, unlike a previous hearing which dealt primarily with individual property conflicts with the plan, Tuesday's hearing dealt with philosophies.

There was much support for the plan, evidenced by many public speeches and applause when the final vote came down.

Opponents of the plan called it arbitrary and an infringement on property rights. More adamant speakers called the plan "fascist" and likened it to a general plan for a Russian city.

One woman stepped forward and punctuated her remarks by placing paper crowns decorated with swastikas in front of Patton, Borovatz and Baldwin.

First District candidate Bob Morton refused to leave the speaker's podium when his five minutes (limit set by supervisors) was up, so Borovatz recessed the meeting.

Morton was still at the stand after the recess, but took his seat when his questions were answered. A city policeman who had been summoned stood by the door.