

Franich annexation foes' 'balanced attack'

By LANE WALLACE
STAFF WRITER
MAR 24 1994

There will be a "balanced attack" of opponents to the annexation and development of Tony Franich's East Lake Avenue land when the issue comes up next month.

Six appeals have been filed over last month's approval of the annexation — two from nearby residents, two from farmers and two from advocates of low-cost housing.

The appeals will be heard April 14 by the Local Agency Formation Commission, the same agency that approved Franich's application to annex the 72-acre site just east of East

Lake Village shopping center.

LAFCO's approval ended — at least for the moment — Franich's 13-year battle to annex the property. He has an agreement with the city that will allow him to develop it.

Because the annexation issue has been talked to death over the last few years and the same people who approved it will hear the appeal, a reversal of the approval would seem unlikely.

But LAFCO could conceivably do some minor tweaking of the annexation approval to avoid a future lawsuit. The appeal must be heard before opponents can challenge the annexation.

LAFCO also has the authority

See ATTACK / back of section ►

ATTACK

► From Page 1 MAR 24 1994

to make changes that would favor Franich. The annexation was approved on a 3-2 vote, with Ray Belgard, Gina Koshland and Mick Routh in favor and Gary Patton and Bob Garcia opposed.

Opponents have nothing to lose by appealing, because there's no fee for the appeal.

These are the six appeals:

- From Duane and Pattie Crawford, who live in the retirement community across East Lake Avenue from the Franich property. They say full development would create too much traffic and are asking for a 36-acre project instead.

- From the Citizens Against Annexation, many of whom live in the retirement community. A letter from Louis Corrigan, chairman of the group's steering committee, says the Franich site "is a natural barrier to further destruction and urbaniza-

tion of the fertile Pajaro Valley." When that barrier is removed, Corrigan said, no means will be available to stop development eastward to the hills.

- From the Comité de los Derechos Hermanos (Committee for Human Rights), saying the annexation will mean the loss of agricultural jobs. Franich's gift of nine acres for low-income housing is not enough, the committee said.

- From the League of United Latin American Citizens, which questions whether all necessary legal steps have been followed. It also says the buffer between the Franich site and adjacent farm land is inadequate.

- From the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, which raises a number of issues, including the long-term effect on employment by reducing the amount of agricultural land.

- From nursery owner James Nagamine, who owns property adjacent to Franich's. He also calls for a wider buffer, and asks for more measures to mitigate the impact of development.