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# Cure was worse than disease

Many people were disappointed when the Soquel Creek County Water District directors failed to go ahead with annexation of outlying service areas at their Aug. 2 meeting.

The annexation of Aptos, Aptos Terrace, Rio del Mar, Seacliff, La Selva Beach, and the Vienna Woods-Park Wilshire area had been requested by the district directors themselves, and had been approved by the Local Agency Formation Commission.

The delay, for a "tour of the boundaries" Aug. 22, meant that the residents of the annexed areas could not enter a candidate and vote in the Nov. 2 election for two district directors. There was a justifiable suspicion that the present directors wished to assure their own continuance in office.

But as unwise as the action of the water district directors may have been, the effort by a handful of disgruntled persons in the annexed areas to call off the entire annexation makes even less sense.

By getting LAFCO to rescind its resolution approving the annexation, the unhappy handful have only succeeded in cutting off their noses to spite their faces.

The annexation would have meant a small reduction in water rates for the annexed areas, because the district has a slightly lower rate inside the district than outside it.

Even on a minimum billing, the water user would have saved \$6 a year. The average saving would have been more like twice that amount.

So the disgruntled opposition, in an attempt to spite the water district directors, have merely handed them a bonus of several thousand dollars in extra income, and handed their neighbors and themselves higher water bills.

But this is not the most unfortunate result of this spiteful action. The residents of the Vienna Woods-Park Wilshire area, which has been plagued with water shortages, thought they had finally solved their problems by agreeing to annexation to the water district.

The district now requires annexation before serving any new water users. Now the annexation is off again, their water

supply is in doubt, and the Vienna Woods-Park Wilshire people had nothing to say about it.

Their leaders didn't even know what was taking place before LAFCO. The requests for calling it all off came from the Aptos Terrace Improvement Association, the Aptos Chamber of Commerce, and the Rio del Mar Improvement Association.

Actually, the whole thing seems to have been engineered by not more than two or three people. The Rio del Mar Improvement Association president admitted that there was no formal action on the request to call off the annexation by his board of directors. He merely followed the advice of the association's "water committee", which appears to consist of one person.

It took only the suggestion of one other individual to induce the directors of both the Aptos Chamber of Commerce and the Aptos Terrace Improvement Association to request cancellation of the annexation.

The most puzzling question in the whole situation is why LAFCO became involved in this childish form of retaliation. Public officials entrusted with promoting orderly development in the county might be expected to act more responsibly.

Following the LAFCO meeting, one member of that body said he felt it was all silly, and that the average person in the annexation area didn't care all that much about voting for directors. He thought most people would rather have gone ahead with the annexation, despite the unfortunate conduct of the district directors, and received the cut in the water bill.

It's too bad he didn't say this more clearly during the meeting and vote on his sensible conclusion.

The annexation is just as logical as it ever was, and just as inevitable. There isn't much doubt it will eventually go through.

There will just be more fuss, bother and inconvenience about it all, especially for the Vienna Woods-Park Wilshire people, who will now have to come back with another annexation request or find some other way to get water.

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