

Hint Is Given City Council May Not Oppose Proposal

Supervisors yesterday authorized San Mateo Attorney Ernest Wilson to forward a corrected copy of the proposed act to create a county-wide water district to the legislature, and to move ahead for its adoption.

The action was taken without assurance from Santa Cruz city spokesmen that they favor the proposal now, but with indications that the city council might, at least, decide on a "hands off" attitude.

City Manager Robert Klein told the supervisors that, while he could not speak for the council, it was conceivable that the city would not oppose the legislation, inasmuch as the principal objection to previously drafted legislation was removed.

By the proposal Wilson drafted, the city does not have to come into a zone of the district unless it wants to, and the only tax to be levied on city residents, unless the city does enter a zone, is the district-wide, 2-cents per \$100 assessed valuation tax to cover administration.

A number of objections listed by the city water commission in its study of the proposed legislation were removed in a point-by-point review at yesterday's hearing.

Wilson proposed, and the supervisors okayed, one change suggested by Klein to provide that, if and when a city elects to include itself in a zone, the mayor or a representative designated by the city council will be made an ex-officio member of the district's board of directors. wording agreed to at yesterday's hearing specified that the ex-officio member will sit with the board only on matters pertaining to his zone.

Supervisor Frank Clement called for an additional provision giving the people of unincorporated districts the same privilege.

Wilson agreed to make another revision, providing that when a zone is formed by the people of an unincorporated area of the county, they, too, can have a representative as an ex-officio member of the board in matters pertaining to their zone.

John Pletschet, San Lorenzo valley weekly newspaper publisher, got assurance from Wilson that the valley could not be included in a zone, should Santa Cruz propose to form one, without separate approval by the board of directors of the valley water district or by its voters.

Other changes made in the proposal at yesterday's hearing were relatively minor. There was one change made to require approval by a majority of the members of the board of directors, which is the board of supervisors, for transaction of business, instead of just the majority of members present.

The act was revised to provide that interest accrued from zone funds will be used to pay off bonded indebtedness in that zone.

Another provision was changed to make it clear that the water district, while it may send out its bills with a private utility, will not be a collector for any private utility.

When the review was finished, some city-voiced objections still were not eliminated. Supervisor Francis Silliman joined with Wilson in balking at a suggestion from City Water Commissioner Wallace Richey for submitting the proposal to a vote of the people, instead of creating the district by legislative action, on the basis that it would take too long. Wilson pointed to 20 acts forming other county-wide districts which are on the books now, adding, "all of them are wide-open. We have tried to tie this down."

Wilson affirmed that choice on the part of the city to be precluded from a zone does not preclude the people in unincorporated areas served by the city water system.

One previously outspoken foe of the proposal appeared won over at yesterday's hearing. Capt. Edwin Pagenhart of the city water commission observed, "Now that we've gone through all this for water, it would only take one short clause to make it a general utility act."

He maintained a need is coming for a county-wide district to give the people of unincorporated areas sewage disposal and other services.

Wilson's answer was that such a sweeping change in the water proposal probably "wouldn't make me very popular with the legislature."

Silliman wanted to know, on completion of the review and changing, "Does the city of Santa Cruz stand on the proposal now that these corrections are made?"

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legislation if the city does object to it.

That is when Klein speculated that the council might decide on a "hands off attitude."

"In the Pajaro Valley we face a crisis," Silliman asserted. "I respectfully ask that our needs be met. We wish to pay taxes and carry our load. We will not take kindly to interference. If there is interference, we will consider it a hostile action."

Silliman made it clear that he joined with Supervisor William Deans in having no desire to "give the city a deadline it can't possibly meet" in stating its position, but he made it equally clear that he saw no reason why the city should have any objection to the legislation as it stands now.

The supervisors were unanimous in agreeing the proposed act cannot be held up for additional hearings.

One surprise objection was put forward during the hearing. James Kennedy of Mount Hermon said the association's attorney had some general objections to the draft and asked if Mount Hermon would have further recourse, once the hearing was closed.

Obviously irked, Wilson replied that the association would have recourse at the legislative level. He pointed out that the proposal had been subjected to two reviews, with adequate time for study.

On getting a green light to go ahead for enactment of the act forming the county-wide water district, by unanimous vote of the supervisors, Wilson said he intended to have a revised copy of the proposal in the mail to Sacramento by tonight, so that it can be printed and set for hearing.

City Councilman Tom Polk Williams Sr. said that, speaking for himself, he was satisfied that all the city water commission's questions had been answered. He pointed out, though, that the council could not act on the proposal until its meeting next Wednesday.

Pressed by Silliman to state his own feeling, Williams said he imagined his own recommendations to the council will be favorable.

Richey said the matter of submitting formation of the district to the voter was the only original city objection which hasn't been changed.

Clement reminded the supervisor that Sen. Don Grunsky is committed not to introduce the