

Ben Lomond Residents Search For A Town Identity

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Like an ink spot, Ben Lomond is viewed differently by various people.

Some citizens currently are viewing it as the San Lorenzo Valley town that is losing its identity and is missing that indefinable item known as "character."

For the second time in a month, citizens rallied together Monday night to create some kind of force so, as Businessman Mike Doyle put it, "Ben Lomond doesn't become that fuzzy place between Felton and Boulder Creek."

Most of the gripes expressed by the 25 people who met at the former centered on three things.

The riverside park, some complained, has filled with thugs and is inaccessible to townfolk; Others were bothered that the library has been closed, while some others complained that Highway 9 has become a speedway through the town.

"Our urban core is useable six hours a day and after that it's no man's land," Doyle pointed out. Even as the meeting went on, sounds of breaking glass erupted from the once-tranquil park.

Citizen Ken Kinzie suggested "providing some access to Loch Lomond from Ben Lomond." This, he said, might alleviate the situation at the park by opening up the lake to more young people.

One woman said she was afraid to walk the streets and go to the park, calling Ben Lomond "the pit bull capitol of the world."

"I don't think Ben Lomond will amount to anything until that problem is solved," she said.

"There's too much negativism in Ben Lomond," citizen Faye Ellis exclaimed. "If you don't go to the park and you don't go downtown, you are being negative and are creating the problem."

Paul Ellis said that a central valley library in Ben Lomond would have given the town some identity, but this idea had been rejected over the years by the library board.

All bemoaned the fact that all

the books had been removed from the Ben Lomond branch of the city-county library system as the city and county closed libraries to save money due to Proposition 13.

Loudest of all was Alice Earl Wilder, lifelong Ben Lomond resident and constant observer of the county Board of Supervisors.

"This library here doesn't belong at all the to county," Wilder claimed, "It belongs to the Brooks Trust." She said the supervisors all are trustees of the Brooks Trust, though none of them seem to know that.

She pointed out that, according to the trust, if the library isn't maintained for five years, the property will go to the school

district.

Wilder encouraged all citizens to take their complaints to the supervisors, especially this week during budget hearings.

"Yes, we can go talk to our supervisor, but if we can see some positive things through ourselves, I think we'll feel better," citizen Chuck Green said.

"People tell us we will never have a stop signal here and we can't believe them," said Riverside Grove resident Carlyn Jacquot. "Boulder Creek is united and Felton is united and we think we should be united and get a traffic signal here."

Three Riverside Grove residents came armed with a list of

proposed town improvements. At the top of the list was a traffic signal for the Glen Arbor Road and Highway 9 intersection.

All seemed convinced they needed some type of organization to get citizens involved in improving the town and giving it some identity.

Doyle remarked that the Ben Lomond Business Association was inactive, but already had a tax-exempt status and was incorporated.

A committee was formed to look into the legalities of forming a citizen organization out of the business association. This step, Doyle said, would save time paperwork and money. The associa-

tion also has an existing treasury, he said.

But most citizens were opposed to being associated with the business association. "There is something about a business association and the name of it that acts as a detriment," Kinzie stated. He suggested holding a town meeting.

Citizen Tom Finn suggested calling the group, Friends of Ben Lomond, and starting a project right away. "You have to win something first, to draw attention. Maybe we should work on a stop signal or the library," Finn said.

At meeting's end, the group decided to gather more citizens together and meet probably at Wilder Hall Aug. 31.