

Planning
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City Council shoots down annexation

By STEVE SHENDER

The city of Watsonville will not carry developer David Wray's Freedom annexation torch for him.

With Mayor Bill Johnston abstaining (because he had business dealings with both proponents and opponents of Wray's annexation bid), the City Council voted 5-1 Tuesday afternoon against initiating annexation proceedings for 185,122 square feet of unincorporated land on Roache Road in Freedom.

Sole supporter of the developer's annexation application was Councilman Frank Osmer.

The council's action means that if Wray still wants to pursue the annexation attempt, he will have to file his own application with the county's Local Agency Formation Commission. But, given the council's unwillingness to back the annexation bid in the first place, that would likely be a fruitless endeavor.

Wray had sought the council's support for annexation of seven parcels of land between Roache Road and Airport Boulevard. Included among the parcels proposed for annexation was a 19,166-square-foot lot on which Wray is seeking to build two residences with a common driveway.

In 1980, the developer, who could not build on the lot because of a county-imposed sewer moratorium, attempted to have the parcel and several adjoining lots annexed to the city. Council members objected then to the irregular, T-shaped boundary lines of the proposed annexation area, and Wray's bid was rebuffed.

Subsequently, Wray returned with a new application which included several more parcels, filling out the area proposed for annexation, and in December, the Planning Commission recommended zoning for the property, should it be annexed.

Following the Planning Commission vote, all of the newly included landowners wrote to the city to say they wanted nothing to do with Wray's annexation plans.

Wray continued to push for the annexation, even after the county told him early this month that he could hook up to the sewer system.

Councilwoman Betty Murphy wondered Tuesday afternoon why the developer was still trying to annex to the city, since the sewer moratorium had been lifted in his case (and a number of others).

"Perhaps he thought he could get a building permit faster?" she asked.

"I don't think we should be questioning Mr. Wray's motives," Osmer replied.

If the property Wray seeks to develop remains under county jurisdiction, he will reportedly have to wait until 1984 to secure a building permit for his project.

REFERENCE

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