

Planning
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Annexation wins approval

By DAN YOUNG

The excitement — if any — generated by Tuesday night's City Council meeting is yet to come.

Compared to the last several meetings, when large groups of citizens turned out to address controversial subjects, this was a sleeper.

The only item on the agenda that showed any promise for stimulating conversation was a resolution finalizing the annexation of the 72-acre Tony Franich apple orchard.

The environmentalist Resource Defense Fund group, which last month lost a lawsuit over the 1982 annexation, had promised to appeal the decision unless the council reversed itself and opted for a partial annexation of the Franich property.

The council, however, didn't even discuss the possible appeal Tuesday night, and, with little fanfare, approved on a 7-0 vote a resolution forced upon the city by Superior Court Judge Harry Brauer, who, in finding for the city in the lawsuit, said the council must explain why an alternative of partial annexation was rejected.

Once that explanation was given, Brauer said, the annexation would be legally accomplished.

Planning Director Bob Ellenwood laid out to the council his department's reasoning as to why total annexation was the only feasible alternative, and the council was quick to agree with those findings.

Partial annexation was unfeasible, Ellenwood said, because:

—It would not financially support street construction in the area.

—It would provide an impractical 0.4 acres of park-land dedication.

—It would result in a limited storm-drain system.

—It would not provide a reasonable acreage of developable land.

Whether the Resource Defense Fund will now follow up on its threat to take the city back into court remains to be seen, but Tom Brown, the group's lawyer, did say last month his clients would definitely appeal the decision should the city take the course of action it took Tuesday night.

Brown was in court this morning, and unavailable for comment.

In other business, the council:

—Gave initial approval to an amended parking ordinance that allows for the storage of cars, motor homes, trailers or boats in front- and side-yard setbacks.

The council earlier this year approved a new ordinance outlawing parking in the setback areas, after several councilmen complained of cars being parked on lawns.

The ordinance was suspended earlier this month, however, after the city manager's office began receiving complaints concerning the new law.

As rewritten, the ordinance will allow parking in the setback areas if the areas are paved. The council is expected to give final approval at its May 8 meeting.

—Praised Assistant City Manager and Fire Chief Vern Hamilton for a "job well done." Hamilton, who has been serving in the dual capacity for three years, will leave the city May 1 to take over as fire chief in the city of Napa.

Fourth District Supervisor E. Wayne Moore was also on hand Tuesday night to present Hamilton with a proclamation from his office.

—Approved a resolution, as recommended by Hamilton, opposing the collection of user fees by the county for the operation of the 911 emergency communications system.

—Was told by Mayor Ann Soldo that she, City Manager John Radin, and Councilman Frank Osmer would be in Washington, D.C., May 6-9 to lobby for money to fund the second phase of construction for the sewer plant.

The city is tentatively scheduled to receive about \$26 million in federal grants for the plant and \$10 for an outfall line in 1986, but the trio hopes to convince lawmakers the city needs the money sooner.