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Incorporation proposal outlined for La Selvans

By ANDRE NEU

Details of a proposal for a new city including part of La Selva Beach were unveiled last night before that community's improvement association members.

About 30 persons were present for the group's quarterly meeting and those who expressed an opinion on the proposal indicated rather clearly they opposed it.

Speaking on the matter was Clovis Stricklin, a La Selva real estate man and former association director. He has been working with a group he identified as the San Andreas-Spring Valley Homeowners Association to incorporate much of the land between Watsonville and Rob Roy Junction, from the highway to the beach, into a new city, an area considerably larger than had been publicly mentioned in the past.

(Stricklin yesterday morning told The Register-Pajaronian he was not going to speak about the proposal, contrary to an earlier report. But last night he explained that he had been advised by members of his group to go prepared to answer questions about the project. Even though the subject was not on the agenda, association president Mike Watts called on Stricklin almost immediately to discuss the incorporation idea.)

Stricklin said his group was now going over Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) requirements that must be met before it would consider an application for incorporation.

Ultimately, the matter would come to a vote of the residents in the area involved.

The area under consideration, Stricklin said, encompassed about eight square miles. It covers the area from Rob Roy Junction along Highway 1 to Watsonville, deviating in places so that it skirts the city limits, then over to Beach Road and down it to the ocean. Pajaro Dunes would be included in the new city. To the north, the area would include everything — Sunset Beach, Monterey Bay Academy and Place de Mar — from the ocean inland as far north as Manresa Beach, then it would include everything from San Andreas Road inland as far north as Rob Roy. The upper, or inland part of La Selva would be included, but the lower, or ocean side of La Selva, Los Barrancos and north would not.

Stricklin said there was a great deal of interest in and support of the proposal "and opposition too," he admitted. He said some 80 persons attended one of his group's meetings about it.

The reason for creating a new city, Stricklin said, was "to have something to say about our own destinies in the area . . .

We want more control over land management, over zoning. A lot of the land (under consideration) has been zoned to the point of uselessness," he contended.

And, he warned, both Aptos and Watsonville "have eyes" on that area for themselves.

Asked if the proposal was "a backdoor method to bring in development," Stricklin insisted that land now being farmed in the area would continue to be so, but that there was "a lot of land in there that could be developed without the loss of farm land.

"There'll be no burst of a city over here but some of the land that could be used will be," he said.

Stricklin said that it took a population of at least 500 in an area to have it considered for incorporation by LAFCO.

"You just want population, that's why you're including us," one association member told Stricklin, "and we don't want 'ya."

Stricklin insisted there were 1,000 persons in the area and that incorporation could be done excluding upper La Selva, if need be. He said a survey would be undertaken to determine the desires of residents.

Another association member reminded him that a move to incorporate La Selva about 10 years ago was defeated by a 5 to 1 majority. Several other members said they didn't want anything to do with the proposal and one declared, "I don't care what they do, just leave us alone."

Stricklin said the move to incorporate was being worked out so that no increase in taxes would be necessary, a statement that many audience members indicated they doubted.

"You'll have to provide or bring in police, fire and water, and the cost of that will be borne by the people in the incorporated area," association member Joe Carraher said. "We may have an awful mess in Santa Cruz County but I suggest to you there'll be a bigger mess for the newly incorporated area.

"It's a hell of an expensive project," Carraher continued, "and it will take a huge tax load to put it across, though you may be able to do it in 20 years."

"This is a long way from reality," Stricklin replied. He said that the survey of the area would be made soon and that his group hoped to have its application in to LAFCO in three to four months.

He, and other association members, said the discussion of the project was merely for the information of the association. If upper La Selva Beach opposed incorporation, lines could be drawn up deleting that area, Stricklin concluded.

"That's enough, Clovis, you can sit down now," association director John Thompson told him from the audience.

Although rebuffed during his talk, Stricklin said at a break in the meeting that he thought reception to the idea from other La Selvans might not be so cold. And he conceded the project could take several years to come about.

In other matters last night, association members:

— Approved a 1976 budget of \$3,200, up 10 per cent from last year, according to Watts. Part of the increase was due to hikes in insurance, he said.

— Backed the association's directors in their move to file a formal bid to the Public Utilities Commission for use of a 688-prefix in La Selva, without extra cost to users. Watts said he had been told by phone company manager Fred Witmer that when the new 684-prefix is put in use in June, phone rates for La Selva, now considered a special district, would drop \$1.64. Special rates for calls to Santa Cruz, now considered long distance calls, might be available in the future, Watts said Witmer told him, but he didn't know when.