

Board urges incorporation vote delay

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Plans for a November election to determine whether East Palo Alto should be incorporated as a city should be dropped until feasibility studies are completed, some members of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors said Tuesday.

The board took no formal action.

Board members indicated they believe the unincorporated area's effort to become a self-governing city before the year ends will fail, not because of strong opposition, but because too much work needs to be done.

The comments came as the supervisors decided to spend \$15,000 to hire a consultant to help revise the East Palo Alto Community Plan. A contract retaining expert services is to be approved next Tuesday, so no delays in the general plan work will result.

The consultant will analyze the economic ramifications of general plan elements.

The supervisors, in a meeting last week with the East Palo Alto Municipal Council, were shocked to learn such expert services had not already been sought. Supervisors Ed Bacciocco and Jackie Speier in particular criticized East Palo Alto leaders for not seeing the need earlier.

At last week's luncheon meeting, an obviously frustrated Bacciocco had asked East Palo Alto Mayor Barbara Mouton why the council had not done such a study.

Mouton replied that neither the council nor the East Palo Alto Citizen's Committee for Incorporation has the money to undertake such a study.

The citizens committee is working to put incorporation on the ballot by November of this year.

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John
Ward

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"Then why are we going ahead when we don't have even the basic information we need? It's incredible," Bacciocco said.

Supervisor Speier agreed with Bacciocco.

"I hate to be blunt," she said, "But there seems to be a move afoot here to incorporate, do or die, without any recognition of the fundamental issues involved."

Bacciocco then expressed fear that incorporation might hit a snag when the issue came before the board.

"When the council gets to the Board of Supervisors with the proposal, we're going to have a problem. You do not have the information we need concerning a careful fiscal analysis of various land use options."

Mouton asserted that the council had already recognized the problem.

"We are not pie in the sky kinds of people here in East Palo Alto," Mouton said, "we realize these kinds of things."

Bacciocco also complained that there seemed to be a "vacuum of responsibility," regarding liaison between the council and the board. Supervisor John

Ward suggested the responsibility should fall to County Manager Dave Nichols.

The supervisors also directed Assistant County Manager Jay Gellert to research the feasibility of doing a fiscal analysis.

Gellert met with the East Palo Alto Municipal Council Monday. County Manager Dave Nichols presented the report to the board Tuesday.

At Tuesday's board meeting, Speier called Municipal Council members' hopes the plan will be revised in time for November "unrealistic."

Bacciocco echoed her sentiments, adding, "At least warn them it may not happen."

Supervisor Bill Schumacher said he does not like the present plans to gather public input on the matter. He said more meetings with East Palo Alto residents should be scheduled before public hearings begin.

That would mean more time will be needed before the new plan can be adopted. However, Board of Supervisors Chairman John Ward directed County Manager Dave Nichols to schedule more workshop sessions.

Supervisor Arlen Gregorio indicated he understood his colleagues' concerns, but said officials should seek to meet the Municipal Council's timetable instead of immediately dropping it. The board then dropped the idea of formally telling the Municipal Council its concerns.