

A barrier to East Palo Alto's cityhood falls

By Phyllis Brown
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LAFCO denies sanitary district's request for exclusion

REDWOOD CITY — What was probably the final barrier to East Palo Alto's incorporation fell Wednesday when the San Mateo County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) denied the East Palo Alto Sanitary District's request to be excluded from the proposed reorganization.

Commissioners Arlen Gregorio, John Ward, Arthur Lepore and John Lindley voted to deny the request. Commissioner Jeannine Hodge voted against the matter. She wanted to hold a hearing to reconsider the matter.

The commission's decision came after only an hour and a half of discussion.

Earlier incorporation hearings have lasted for seven hours or more.

The Sanitary District's exclusion would have seriously damaged the proposed city's financial base, experts have agreed, since sewer fees are to be part of the city's general fund revenues.

One LAFCO official said the property taxes and fees accrued by the district would constitute approximately 10 percent of the city's general fund revenues.

The commissioners discussed the issue Wednesday afternoon in the Board of Supervisors Chambers in the Hall of Justice and Records in Redwood City.

After hearing the request from district president Joseph Sanders, the commissioners concluded that no new information had been presented to make them reconsider their Nov. 17 decision to approve incorporation.

Sanders said his primary reason for making the request was his fear that the district has no more sewage treatment capacity.

However, Commissioner Arlen Gregorio saw that as a good reason to dissolve the district.

"I feel that, if there is a capacity problem the new city would be better equipped, politically and financially, to handle it," Gregorio said.

Commissioner John Ward said that his position on the matter was not changed by Sanders' arguments.

"There has been no evidence today that would alter my personal attitude on this subject," Ward said.

When the commission voted in November to approve incorporation, they also voted to dissolve the Sanitary District and several other special purpose districts, including the Ravenswood Recreation and

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Parks District and the East Palo Alto Waterworks District.

Under the LAFCO plan, the special districts would become departments of the new city of East Palo Alto. Their duties, sewer and water service and recreation, would be assumed by the city.

Crime rate drops in EPA

By Phyllis Brown
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EAST PALO ALTO — The number of crimes committed in East Palo Alto has decreased in the last year, an official of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department reported Thursday.

1981, school burglaries down from 21 in 1980 to 12 in 1981, and auto thefts down from 25 in 1980 to 19 in 1981.

Kidnappings are down from 9 in 1980 to 3 in 1981, and arsons down from 7 in 1980 to 5 in 1981.

LAFCO Chief Executive Officer B. Sherman Coffman said Wednesday that no other challenges have been filed with the commission.

However, in order to expedite the consideration of any that may arise, the commission has scheduled a special meeting for 8:30 a.m. Monday.

The Board of Supervisors is scheduled to vote on incorporation Monday afternoon.

However, it is unlikely, after the length of time, the amount of study and the volume of public testimony given on incorporation that any requests for reconsideration will be heard.

East Palo Alto Crime Prevention Officer David Hayes said Thursday that the community's crime rate has decreased in most areas, because of an increase in the number of arrests in the area.

Hayes said East Palo Alto's crime rate was lower during the period from January to September of 1981 than it was from January to September of 1980.

The crime rate increased in several areas, including weapons violations, which are up from 55 in 1980 to 68 in 1980.

Hayes added that the number of arrests is up in all categories from 1,200 in 1980 to 1,700 in 1981.

The crime rate has decreased in almost every category, Hayes said.

There were 13 homicides in 1980, but 3 in 1981; 17 rapes in 1980 and 9 in 1981, and 74 assaults in 1980, compared to 66 in 1981.

The number of assaults on police officers dropped from 8 in 1980 to 6 in 1981.

Robberies are down from 133 in 1980 to 106 in 1981, auto burglaries down from 228 in 1980 to 216 in 1981, commercial burglaries down from 55 in 1980 to 44 in 1981, residential burglaries down from 535 in 1980 to 402 in