

LAFCO

Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission

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August 7, 2008 (Agenda)

Local Agency Formation Commission
105 East Anapamu Street, Room 403
Santa Barbara CA 93101

Out-of-Agency Service Extensions on Prime Agricultural Land

Dear Members of the Commission:

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Commission review this report, accept public testimony and provide direction regarding a policy for extending out-of-agency urban services to prime agricultural land.

DISCUSSION

The Commission on May 1 considered an application from the Goleta Sanitary District to annex approximately 22 acres of prime agricultural land to provide sewer service for construction of the St. Athanasius Orthodox Church as approved by the County.

Alternatives considered by the Commission were to (1) annex only the 4.6 acres where the church would be built or (2) authorize the District to provide services on an out-of-agency basis to the approved church project. The Goleta Sanitary District insisted the entire parcel be annexed even though about 80% of it was to remain in agriculture use. It was noted in the meeting that including land within a sewer district can facilitate and encourage urbanization of the entire parcel.

It is proposed that the Commission consider adopting a policy, such as the following, to provide guidance to applicants and agencies that it is the Commission's intention to restrict the extension of urban services to agricultural lands to serve only specific approved uses.

Draft policy

It is the policy of the Santa Barbara LAFCO to restrict annexations of prime agricultural land to specific urban uses as approved by the local planning agency or, alternatively, to allow the extension of urban services on an out-of-agency basis without annexation only for the permitted uses.

This policy shall not be construed as indicating the Commission will approve proposals for urban development on agricultural lands but rather provides an indication that should such approval be granted it is to be restricted to the specific area in which an approved land use requiring urban services is to would occur.

Had such a policy been in place local agencies as well as the property owner would be aware of the Commission's interest in such matters and the County planning staff could have appropriately conditioned the St. Athansius Orthodox Church project.

This staff report is being provided to the County and city planning staffs and those special districts that provide water and sewer services.

Please contact the LAFCO office if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

BOB BRAITMAN
Executive Officer