

SANTA BARBARA LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

February 1, 2001 (Agenda)

LAFCO 99-5: Martin Farrell Homes Annexation to the Mission Hills Community Services District

PROPONENT: Board of Directors of the Mission Hills CSD, by resolution.

ACREAGE & LOCATION Approximately 15 acres located north of and adjacent to Purisima Road, about 850 feet east of Harris Grade Road (APN 097-250-072).

PURPOSE: To provide water and sewer facilities and services for a proposed 42-lot residential subdivision.

OTHER CHANGES Notice has also been given to allow the Commission to consider amending the City of Lompoc's sphere of influence and annexing the site to the City

GENERAL ANALYSIS:

Introduction

The application before the Commission results from the County's approval of a 42-lot residential subdivision. A condition of approval of that project is annexation to the Mission Hills CSD.

The site is within the Mission Hills CSD's sphere of influence. It is contiguous to the St. Mary's Episcopal Church Annexation to the CSD approved by LAFCO in 1995. That annexation is not contiguous to the remainder of the District.

When the proposal was received, a portion of the staff's analysis focused on whether the property should be concurrently annexed to the City of Lompoc. Several factors, as well as history, support that potential addition to the proceeding.

The Martin Farrell Homes project is closer to the City than to the residential part of the District, being separated from the residential portion of the CSD by a Caltrans parcel. The site is across Purisima Road from the City, specifically property approved by the City Council for 121 units of single-family residential development (La Purisima Highlands).

Prior LAFCO decision re Bailey Avenue Corridor

In 1999 the Commission considered a proposal from the City of Lompoc to amend its sphere of influence in four locations. One, for proposed residential development, was a 272-acre extension to the west known as the "Bailey Avenue Corridor."

The Bailey Avenue area consists of prime agricultural land in active agricultural production. After considering all evidence and testimony the Commission denied, unanimously, the City's request to extend its boundaries in that direction.

For the City to achieve its land use objectives, expansion into areas of non-prime agriculture is necessary. Given the physical constraints of the Lompoc Valley, in which the City is bordered by agriculture to the east and the west, and by the narrow Miguelito Canyon to the south, expansion to the north is the only truly feasible alternative.

Government Code Section 56377 states that in reviewing proposals that could reasonably be expected to lead to the conversion of open-space lands to non open-space uses, LAFCO must consider the following policies and priorities:

- (a) Development or use of land for other than open-space uses shall be guided away from existing prime agricultural lands in open-space use toward areas containing nonprime agricultural lands, unless that action would not promote the planned, orderly, efficient development of an area.
- (b) Development of existing vacant or nonprime agricultural lands for urban uses within the existing jurisdiction of a local agency or within the sphere of influence of a local agency should be encouraged before any proposal is approved which would allow for or lead to the development of existing open-space lands for non-open-space uses which are outside of the existing jurisdiction of the local agency or outside of the existing sphere of influence of the local agency."

Overlap Agreement between City of Lompoc and Mission Hills CSD

The area north of the City of Lompoc adjacent to Harris Grade Road is known to as the "Wye" area. In a sphere of influence decision in 1987 LAFCO limited the City of Lompoc's sphere of influence to the area south of the Wye. The area north of the Wye was reserved for the community of Mission Hills.

In reality, that distinction – Lompoc on one side of Purisima Road/State Highway 1, and Mission Hills on the other side – has proved to be unnecessary. It has been determined by both agencies that properties can be within both the City of Lompoc and the Mission Hills CSD.

The Mission Hills CSD and City of Lompoc approved an "Annexation Agreement" in May 2000, which was presented to the Commission on July 6. The Commission directed the staff to consider this document in processing future applications.

While the agreement pertains only to the area west of Harris Grade Road, it represents a fundamental change in policy for the Wye area. By agreeing to and respecting the fact that within the area the District will provide water and sewer services and the City will provide other local services, the future of the Wye is one of overlap and cooperation and not separation.

Those who live in the homes that will be built in the overlap area will be residents of both the City of Lompoc and the Mission Hills CSD. In that sense, the agreement implies a reversal of the 1987 LAFCO decision limiting the City's sphere of influence.

The Martin Farrell Homes project is east of Harris Grade Road. It is adjacent to the service area agreement that was approved by the City and the CSD. In our view the property is similar the areas west of Harris Grade Road and future residents should receive municipal services from the City and water and sewer services from the CSD.

Additional Development Projects in the Vicinity

The Martin Farrell Homes project is not an isolated development and decisions made by the Commission regarding this matter may serve as direction for future annexations.

Other residential projects are proposed for the Wye area. Anticipation of residential projects west of Harris Grade Road was a catalyst for adopting the "overlap" agreement.

The Bluffs at Mesa Oaks is a proposed 109-unit project adjacent to and north of the Martin Farrell Homes project. The County is processing it but discussions are occurring between the developer and the City relative to annexing the site, depending in part on what happens with respect to the Martin Farrell Homes project.

Concurrent Annexation to the Mission Hills CSD and the City

The LAFCO staff has met with the CSD staff and Jon Martin, the developer of the project to explore the possibility of concurrent annexations of the site to the CSD and the City. We also attended and spoke at two public meetings of the District governing board.

The staff has also consulted with the City staff and the developer, and spoke about this matter at a meeting of the City Council, which was called in response to my December 15 letter to the City Manager, a copy of which is attached.

There are some differences between the County development standards applied to the project and development standards that would normally be applied in the City. As a result, Jon Martin and the City are in negotiations regarding the best way to resolve these differences, possibility through the adoption of a pre-annexation agreement.

Attached is a January 23 letter from the City suggesting that LAFCO may want to continue its consideration of this matter from February 1 to a future meeting. The staff concurs and feels this extra time will allow the City and the developer the opportunity to see if matters can be resolved.

PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Land Use, Planning and Zoning - Present and Future:

The property is currently vacant. The site is within District sphere of influence. County General Plan and zoning designations are DR-4.6, Residential, 4.6 units per acre. The proposed use conforms with this designation.

Surrounding land uses are a church to the west, vacant land zoned DR-4.6 to the north, a vacant anticipated Caltrans right-of-way to the east and vacant land pending a 120-unit residential subdivision in the City of Lompoc to the south.

2. Topography, Natural Features and Drainage Basins

The topography of the site and surrounding area is gently sloping from north to south. There are no significant natural boundaries affecting the proposal.

3. Population:

There are no dwelling units on the site. Approval of the proposal could result in 42 units, which represents a potential population increase of 126 residents based on a factor of 3.01 persons per dwelling unit

5. Governmental Services and Controls - Need, Cost, Adequacy and Availability:

The District will provide retail water service and sewage collection and treatment for the project. Its "Plan for Providing Services within the Affected Territory" is on file in the LAFCO office as required by Government Code section 56653.

6. Environmental Impact of the Proposal:

The County of Santa Barbara, as lead agency, prepared and certified a mitigated negative declaration for the project. Copies were previously distributed to Commissioners.

7.

Landowner Consent, Annexing Agency Consent and Registered Voters:

The proponent certifies that the property owner has given written consent. The territory is uninhabited; namely, there are fewer than 12 registered voters.

8. Boundaries and Lines of Assessment:

The property is contiguous to the District. The boundaries are definite and certain, although containing minor errors.

There are no conflicts with lines of assessment or ownership. A map sufficient for filing with the State Board of Equalization has not yet been received from the proponent.

ALTERNATIVES FOR COMMISSION ACTION

Following review of any testimony or additional materials that are submitted, the Commission should consider one of the following options:

Option 1 Annex the property to the Mission Hills Community Services District.

Option 2 Amend the City of Lompoc sphere of influence to include the area and annex the site to the Mission Hills Community Services District and the City of Lompoc.

Option 3 Deny the application.

Option 4 Continue this matter to a future meeting.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the Commission accept any available public testimony and continue this matter to the next LAFCO meeting.

BOB BRAITMAN
Executive Officer
LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

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