

DIVIDED CALAVERAS BOARD MOVES TO UPDATE GENERAL PLAN

NEARLY \$300K ADDED TO \$1M ALREADY SPENT

By ***Dana M. Nichols***
November 14, 2012
Record Staff Writer

SAN ANDREAS - A bitterly divided Calaveras County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday voted to try yet again to complete a long-awaited update of the General Plan that guides development and land use.

Supervisors have already spent nearly \$1 million on consultants over six years and still don't have a finished plan.

Tuesday, they voted to spend an additional \$299,960 to hire Raney Planning & Management of Sacramento to finish key environmental studies and the General Plan documents. The vote was 3-2, with lame duck Supervisors Tom Tryon and Gary Tofanelli opposed.

Tryon and Tofanelli said the decision should wait until January, when three newly elected supervisors are sworn in on the five-member board.

They also estimated it would cost more than \$300,000 and take longer than the scheduled year to complete the General Plan.

"It looks to me like we are just starting the process over again," Tryon said.

Tryon noted the turmoil of the past six years, with several restructurings of the Planning Department and five people having served as the county's top planning official.

Tryon also said Sheriff Gary Kuntz has been waging an effective "fear-mongering campaign" to pressure supervisors to spend money on hiring more sheriff deputies rather than finishing the General Plan.

"Would they rather not do this and fund more deputies?" Tryon asked of the new supervisors who will be sworn in in January.

But a board majority said they were tired of delays and they believe voters are, too.

"I'm going to finish my term and take responsibility for what comes up on my watch," said Supervisor Steve Wilensky, who is leaving the board voluntarily after having served two terms.

Tryon and Tofanelli, in contrast, lost to challengers Debbie Ponte and Cliff Edson, respectively.

Ponte, who was at the meeting, said she supported the board's plan to hire a consultant to help finish the General Plan.

"I'm glad they voted on it today," Ponte said. "We might as well move forward."

Contact reporter Dana M. Nichols at (209) 607-1361 or dnichols@recordnet.com. Visit his blog at recordnet.com/calaverasblog.

http://www.recordnet.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20121114/A_NEWS/211140313/1/A_COMM02