

## RESPONSES DIFFER FOR ROAD FEES

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December 12, 2012  
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SAN ANDREAS - This is a tale of two road fees.

One, Calaveras County officials thought might be controversial because they were planning to increase it. It wasn't.

Not a single person stood at Tuesday's Calaveras County Board of Supervisors meeting to comment on a proposed 2.99 percent increase in the county's Road Impact Mitigation fee before the board voted 4-1 to approve it.

In contrast, when supervisors were poised to approve a change that would have allowed money that has been collected for decades to be spent fixing a long-neglected street near Valley Springs, they learned that residents there oppose doing the road repairs.

"You lied to us," said an angry and shaking Peter Racz, the owner of one of seven homes on Buena Vista Court.

Racz said he's upset that property owners on the court have for 21 years been paying \$38 a year each toward road maintenance work that never happened. He said he and other Buena Vista Court owners don't want to be part of County Service Area 1, which maintains roads in the sprawling Rancho Calaveras housing tract near Valley Springs.

Debra Mullen, an analyst for the County's Public Works Department, said that after the neighborhood was subdivided and built 21 years ago, the seven properties on the court were annexed into the service area. But for reasons that are unclear, county officials never accepted the short court into the public road system.

So Buena Vista Court property owners got billed each year for the \$38 Rancho Calaveras/CSA 1 fee, but it wasn't legal for the county to maintain the road because it wasn't dedicated for public use.

Now, the original pavement from 21 years ago is wearing out, and it is important to begin making repairs, Mullen said.

Everyone on the Board of Supervisors was poised to accept the road and start that maintenance work, but then Racz said he and his neighbors don't want it, and what's more they don't want to be part of the service area.

Supervisors were puzzled.

"This whole discussion is absurd," said Supervisor Tom Tryon.

But Supervisor Darren Spellman, whose district includes Buena Vista Court, said he didn't want to force road repairs on people who don't want them.

Ultimately, the measure died for lack of any motion that could win a second.

Tryon pointed out that in order to secede from County Service Area 1, the seven residents would have to start a bureaucratic process that costs thousands of dollars.

Supervisor Steve Wilensky did some math and realized that in the last 21 years, the seven properties on Buena Vista Court would have paid \$5,586 into the service area account.

Mullen said the CSA would certainly spend more than that amount if it were allowed to re-pave the court now.

Still, the board decided to take no action in the hope that someday the residents of the court will want their road repaired.

"It will cost more to repair it if we wait," Mullen said.

And, in the meantime, the residents of Buena Vista Court will continue to be assessed their \$38 annual fee.

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