

Supervisors to revisit contentious community plan

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by Nick Baptista, The Valley Springs News

Discussion and possible action on a new Valley Springs Community Plan is on the Board of Supervisors agenda for Tuesday's meeting.

The item is continued from the May 4 meeting where a new community plan presented by the Calaveras Council of Governments received sharp criticism from members of the public.

The proposed Valley Springs Community Plan update had been in the works for nearly two years.

Instead of accepting the update as proposed or rejecting it and continuing with a community plan dating back to 1975, the board continued the matter to give District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli time to meet with interested parties to resolve concerns and reach a consensus.

The methodology used to develop the community plan update and proposed land use changes that would likely lower property values were among the concerns expressed at the May 4 meeting and earlier meetings on the update.

However, MyValleySprings.com, one of the groups asked to participate in the process has pulled out of Tofanelli's meetings and is critical of the supervisor's approach on the issue.

"We are concerned with the lack of public involvement and transparency in the new group," Joyce Techel, president of MyValleySprings.com, told the county Planning Commission at its May 20 meeting. "We are concerned how the participants were selected. This group is meeting outside of the existing community plan update process. Will all of the efforts and public participation over the last year to create an updated draft Valley Springs Community Plan boundary and land use map be discarded?"

She also submitted a letter to the Board of Supervisors and the county planning department expressing MyValleySprings.com's concerns with the newly formed Valley Springs Community Plan group.

"We feel it would be a conflict of interest to participate in a small, hand-picked group working behind closed doors," she writes. "We are unwilling to ignore and abandon over a year's worth of existing public input and direction on a Valley Springs Community Plan update."

The community plan is scheduled for consideration after 9:10 a.m. The meeting is in the board chambers at 891 Mountain Ranch road, San Andreas.