

October 22, 2010

Dear Editor,

I just finished watching a video of public comments from the October 19 Board of Supervisors meeting at which the draft Valley Springs Community Plan was presented. Regrettably, I was unable to attend and voice my support for the consensus community plan produced by an open, public process led by the Calaveras Council of Governments (CCOG) and funded by a grant from Caltrans. As a former board member of MyValleySprings.com (MVS), a community plan project partner, and co-author of the Caltrans grant, I was extremely proud of Project Manager Tyler Summersett's presentation and moved by the subsequent comments from several citizens in support of the plan.

As I reflect on the long road to creating an updated community plan that I started walking with MVS in 2006, I am struck most by the strident opposition to change. Clearly, the 1974 community plan and its boundaries do not reflect the evolution of the community. Yet, a small group of reactionaries chose to insist upon the sanctity of the old boundaries. Rather than recognizing the existing community by bringing people together under the umbrella of "Valley Springs," they promoted isolation and separation by insisting that neighbors and friends are divided by an outdated boundary line. A committee of citizens guided by this separatist premise was appointed by Supervisor Tofanelli to create an updated community plan using the old boundaries. Not surprisingly, the result is a draft community plan that lacks contemporary context.

Now, the two draft plans are in competition. I urge you to express your support for the CCOG consensus community plan as the preferred alternative for Valley Springs to Supervisor Tofanelli and the entire Board. MVS promotes "responsible growth and development through public participation in community planning in order to preserve the quality of rural life in the greater Valley Springs area." The draft community plan submitted to the Board of Supervisors by CCOG on the 19th reflects and upholds that mission. I am proud to have been a part of creating a plan to help Valley Springs adapt to the realities of a changing world.

Sincerely,
Muriel Zeller
Valley Springs