

## **Letters to the Editor**

### **Group educates Calaveras public**

Calaveras Enterprise 1-15-10

### **MyValleySprings a positive influence**

The Valley Springs News 1-20-10

Editor:

I served on the Planning Commission for three years from January 2005 to January 2008. When I first sat on the Commission, we held our meetings facing an empty auditorium. During the three years I served, I witnessed a huge change in the level of knowledge and participation in the planning process.

When the first big project in Valley Springs came before the Commission in 2005, the chambers filled with people anxious about its impact on their community: traffic, safety, property values and the natural environment. As citizens discovered that they could have a voice in the development of their community, they began to study the planning documents and comment on them in a constructive way that would allow the developers and community agencies to make changes that would benefit not only their own projects but the surrounding community.

The most shining example of informed community participation, in my view, has been MyValleySprings.com (MVS). Since 2005, they have conscientiously worked to educate themselves and their community, developed an informative user-friendly website, held educational meetings, obtained funding to carry out their projects, and encouraged community participation in an open and transparent fashion. I'm saddened by the high level of conflict that has developed during the community planning process in Valley Springs.

A simple review of MVS's website will reveal that they have continually sought the opinions and participation of their neighbors and have provided maps, photos, and documents to inform the public. Having worked on these same issues for many years in my own community, I am envious of their achievements. Securing a quarter million dollar grant to fund a community planning process should be a source of pride for the whole community. No person or view has ever been disregarded during the planning process.

Please remember that all the General Plan visioning meetings held in our county placed the preservation of open space and a rural lifestyle at the top of the priority list. Let's get busy using the planning professionals and the good will of dedicated community volunteers to make plans of which we can all be proud.

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