



BASS LAKE BULLETIN

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DOT'S RUSS NYGAARD PRESENTS ROAD UPDATE TO BLAC

The Bass Lake Action Committee heard a presentation by Russ Nygaard of the county Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding the status of local road projects at its regular November meeting.

Russ began by explaining the changes in structure and reduction in staff positions that DOT was implementing pursuant to budget action by the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors. The Supervisors want to eliminate the outlying DOT divisions and centralize DOT management at the county center in Placerville. This will effectively eliminate the Foothills Division in El Dorado Hills, though DOT employees will still work at the present county offices in the El Dorado Hills Business Park.

The BLAC members were happy to hear that Russ will retain a position in the new organization, whatever form the DOT organization takes in the future.



Highway 50 HOV Lanes

Russ said that bids have been received for the proposed HOV lanes that will extend from the El Dorado County line to Bass Lake Road. The project was originally estimated to cost \$33 million, but, the winning bid was only \$27 million, well under what was expected, probably due to the downturn in the economy.

The new HOV lanes will be installed on the inside rather than the outside of Highway 50, using the center median. The estimated completion date is two full construction seasons and possibly beyond. Russ noted

that bridge work can be continued during the winter months, but that road work has to be done in good weather.

The project will require the replacement of all the bridges at El Dorado Hills Boulevard and preparing that site for the next phase of the interchange. The Clarksville bridge, which carries Highway 50 over Silva Valley Parkway, will be modified to fully bridge the median.

Bass Lake Road Improvements

Home builder D.R. Horton was to have improved Bass Lake Road from the fire station south to Highway 50. However, Horton has sold the land for its three projects along Bass Lake Road back to developer Norm Brown.

That puts the improvement of southern Bass Lake Road in with other high priority but unfunded projects in El Dorado Hills. For the Bass Lake Road project to go ahead, the DOT will need a builder to become active and generate traffic impact mitigation (TIM) fees.

Silver Springs Parkway

The Silver Springs road project has several components: the two Green Valley Road intersections, the northern Silver Springs Parkway portion, and the southern Silver Springs Parkway connector to Bass Lake Road portion.

Regarding the Green Valley Road intersections, the preliminary frontage improvements where Silver Springs Parkway will intersect with Green Valley Road are complete. The improvements for the intersection of Deer Valley Road and Green Valley Road project will begin very soon.

Regarding the northern Silver Springs

Parkway portion, the Silver Springs builder has postponed any home building for the foreseeable future. However, bonds were sold through a California State agency, so there are funds available to construct the northern part of Silver Springs Parkway, that part which is contiguous with the housing development. DOT will use those funds to build that portion of the road instead of the developer, and work should start in 2009.

Regarding the southern Silver Springs Parkway connector to Bass Lake Road, rights-of-way are still being secured for that portion of the road that will connect the northern Silver Springs Parkway portion to Bass Lake Road, down to the entry to Woodridge at Madera. This work will provide a new "T" intersection with Silver Springs Parkway where Bass Lake Road now has the sharp turn. The developer acquired substantially all the rights-of-way for this portion, but DOT will have to initiate a condemnation process for a small "orphan" parcel of land in the right-of-way that no one owns. This project will include construction of a northbound right turn pocket from Bass Lake Road into Madera at the entrance to Woodridge. Russ estimates that if things go without a hitch, construction on this portion could start in the spring of 2010.

Silva Valley Interchange

The Silva Valley interchange will take Silva Valley Road over Highway 50 at a point north of the present Clarksville underpass, and the road will be realigned to connect with the new interchange. The interchange cannot be built at the site of the present Clarksville underpass because, according to CalTrans, it would be too close to the El Dorado Hills interchange. This project is already funded with TIM fees, so preparatory work, such as the abandonment of Tong Road and the construction of part of the Country Club Drive extension that will serve as an access road for the Capital Korean Christian church, will probably begin in 2009. ~





THE STORY OF THE CORNUCOPIA

The oldest told history of the cornucopia involves Zeus, the greatest of all the Greek gods. When Zeus was born, his mother Rhea sent him to Crete to be cared for, thereby hiding him from his father, Cronus (or Kronos, who swallowed each of his children as soon as they were born in fear of a prophecy that he would be overthrown by his own son), who would have otherwise eaten him.

Melisseus, king of Crete, had several daughters, and they accepted the task of raising Zeus. The nurses hung Zeus in a cradle from a tree, so that he could not be found in heaven, nor on earth, nor in the sea. Their she-goat, Amalthea, provided milk for the young god. Zeus eventually broke off one of Amalthea's horns, and in remorse he endowed the horn with the wonderful power of becoming filled with whatever its possessor desired. He gave the horn to the King's daughters as a form of thanks, and from then on, the horn, or cornucopia, from the Latin cornu (horn) and copiae (plenty), became symbolic of plenty and it was said that whoever had it in his or her possession would never starve.

Mythology was a popular theme in classical paintings, and the cornucopia became a decorative motif, often portrayed as a curved goat's horn overflowing with fruit and grain. The horn of plenty was regarded as the symbol of inexhaustible riches and plenty; and it became associated with several deities, especially Tyche (Roman: Fortuna), the goddess of riches and abundance.

Today the cornucopia, also known as the "horn of plenty," is one of the most common symbols of a harvest festival and often finds its way to the Thanksgiving table as a centerpiece. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday! ~



The clubhouse at Oak Knoll Park in the Hills of El Dorado

LIVELY OAK KNOLL PARK PARK PLANNING MEETING

More than forty residents of the Hills of El Dorado and Woodridge filled the meeting room at Oak Knoll Park on Wednesday, October 29, for a lively discussion with representatives of the El Dorado Hills Community Services District (CSD) regarding possible future plans for the park.

Kent Malonson, Associate Planner, led the meeting and was assisted by two other CSD representatives. EDH CSD Director candidates (now directors-elect) Guy Gertsch and Noelle Mattock also attended to hear residents' issues.

Kent kicked off the meeting by observing that Oak Knoll Park is probably under-used because it doesn't satisfy the needs of the neighborhood. He said that the primary goal of a park redesign is to generate more traffic and increase use. Kent said that if the park were more active, there would be more traffic of the positive kind, and it would reduce negative and disruptive traffic.

Then Kent shared the results of the recent survey sent to the 550 Hills of El Dorado and Woodridge residences asking what activities they would like to see in the Park. There were 141 surveys returned, for a 25% response rate, which means that the survey was statistically acceptable, and fairly represented the response of the community. The survey provided for four answers to each survey option: not desirable, somewhat desirable, desirable, and very desirable.

While 72% of the survey respondents said that leaving the park as it is was not desirable or somewhat desirable, the overall survey results, as to which particular changes would be desirable, were somewhat mixed.

For example, with respect to physical changes at the park, while 43.6% responded

that converting the present swimming pool to a spray ground was desirable or very desirable, 56.5% responded that doing so was not desirable or somewhat desirable. Note that the survey responses may not total 100% because of rounding. The complete survey results are posted on the Bass Lake Action Committee website.

The consultant architect then presented a picture board showing a summary of the park's assets and constraints. The park's assets included existing oak trees, existing turf, an established play area, and an existing building. The constraints included poor circulation, limited security lighting, a tall fence, the pool and patio are closed for most of the year, there is a significant slope, the play structure for 2-5 year-olds is not used at all, there is no designated picnic area, and there are limited recreational activities and park utilization.

There followed a presentation of some of the ideas that the CSD staff and an outside consultant had put together to change and upgrade the park. The architect presented the several possible changes to make the park more usable: improve the landscape frontage with low shrubs, have additional picnic areas, add horseshoe pits, put in bocce ball courts, fill in the pool and make an accessible patio, lower the fence, take out the fence that separates the patio and the grassy area, and target the play structures to the 5-12 year age group. The architect also presented suggestions on how to make the clubhouse more usable by expanding the great room for activities such as arts and crafts camp, seminars, parties, bunko, recreation classes, after school programs and

(continued on next page)

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Hello Everyone,

Veteran politician Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill was right when he said "All politics is local." Tip knew that political victories are won vote by vote, precinct by precinct. Now the election is over, and it's time for congratulations for the winners, and condolences for the losers.

Congratulations to our new supervisors-elect John Knight in District 1, and Ray Nutting in District 2. They both ran on their managerial experience, and their ability to get the job done, so we'll be watching what happens during the coming months as the county grapples with the economic slowdown and the county budget woes.

Congratulations also go to Guy Gertsch and Noelle Mattock, directors-elect to the El Dorado Hills Community Services District. The CSD is attempting to serve an unincorporated city of 45,000 residents, and that can be a daunting challenge. But both Guy and Noelle appear to be full of energy and ideas, so we'll be watching them, too.

Not so local is Jack Sieglock, our new state assemblyman-elect. "Who's Jack Sieglock?" you say. Jack is succeeding assemblyman Alan Nakanishi. Both Jack and Alan are from Lodi, so it's easier for us to get to our assemblyman's capital office in Sacramento, which is 30 miles away, than it is to get to his district office in Lodi, which is 50 miles away.

The coming months and years will be trying ones for those in office. Perhaps our new office-holders should remember another of Tip O'Neill's famous sayings, "It's easier to run for office than to run the office."

John E. Thomson

President

PARK MEETING *(continued)*

evening programs. These ideas met with a mixed reception.

A number of attendees thought that the CSD proposals to put a landscaped margin around the edge of the park where there is now unkempt open space was a good idea. They said that if the CSD were a homeowner, the shoddy landscape maintenance at the park margins would be a violation of the CC&Rs. Kent pointed out that most of the grounds are considered open space and all that the CSD is allowed to do is cut the weeds once or twice a year.

Meeting attendees who live near the park were upset that so much untoward activity occurs at the park. Some commented that the park is an eyesore to those who live nearby, that the park is filled with teenage thugs, that there is constant teen activity, and that the park attracts scary-looking people. Other attendees complained that neighborhood children can't play in the park because of the "riff-raff" present in the park.

Long-time residents said that when the Hills of El Dorado was established, there were a lot of little kids in the neighborhood, and that these are now the teenagers who are causing all the trouble.

Some attendees seemed to want a small splash pad. The architect seemed to be pushing "misters" instead. Someone else suggested making the park into a dog park. Another attendee suggested tearing the park down and moving it to Woodridge.

There was considerable discussion about the Landscape and Lighting Assessment District (LLAD) fees. It was noted that the park is located in the Bass Lake Village LLAD, which is made up of the Hills of El Dorado (zone A) and Woodridge (zone B), and the LLAD fees pay for all of the park upkeep. Some attendees pointed out that Woodridge residents pay a three times larger LLAD fee than the residents of the Hills of El Dorado, and that Woodridge LLAD fees pay for all of the park maintenance fees. One of the attendees mentioned that he had tried to rent the clubhouse for a social event and was told he would have to pay \$80.00 per hour rental. Attendees agreed that the high cost is a factor in neighborhood groups not utilizing the clubhouse meeting rooms. An attendee remarked that since local LLAD fees go to maintain the park, there should be a lower rental fee for usage by residents of the Hills and Woodridge than for people living outside those communities. One participant asked if it would make any difference to our assessments if the park

were taken out, but no one had an answer to this question.

Regarding the cost to improve the park, Kent said that there was a \$175,000.00 reserve, which could be used to do some renovations, and then the EDH CSD could wait until additional funds accumulated in the reserve to do more. Kent also said that there would be a meeting in January at which the LLAD budget for this area would be discussed. He encouraged residents to attend the meeting to see how the money is used.

Kathy Prevost of the Bass Lake Action Committee said that if they use that money to make a nice park, anyone in El Dorado Hills would be able to use it; while the EDH CSD funds other parks for general community use. She wanted to know why the EDH CSD isn't funding Oak Knoll Park. She said that there was supposed to be a park built in Woodridge, and in-lieu funds were given to build that park. Where did those funds go since the park in Woodridge was not built?

One attendee said that the EDH CSD didn't know about the park being built by the Hills of El Dorado developer, Forecast Homes.

In the general discussion that followed, someone else said that a splash pool is noisier than a pool. Someone else asked what the EDH CSD was doing to improve security in the park. The Parks Supervisor said that they had upped the security level. Someone asked why not have a basketball court when there are all those mobile basketball hoops all over the neighborhood. Someone else wanted to know why tennis courts could not be build. The architect said that there wasn't enough room. Others were concerned with traffic increases if the park is made nicer.

The architect asked for a show of hands for and against the various proposals. A majority of the attendees indicated that they would like to see the pool closed, a bocce ball court installed, a basketball court installed, the picnic areas improved, and swings for more than infants and toddlers.

The bottom line, as one resident put it, is what this will cost. He said that it's hard to say one is for or against something when it is unclear what it costs and how it will be funded.

The architect said that they would bring cost information for the various components and identify funding resources to the next community meeting, which will probably be held in late winter or early spring. They will ask for residents' buy-in before the final decisions are made and then the budget will be presented to the CSD board.

Kent ended the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. ~



DOES PROPOSITION 13 STABILIZE STATE AND LOCAL FINANCE?

For decades, Proposition 13 has been portrayed as the reason for the woes of local government, limiting property tax revenues even as California's housing market soared. Proposition 13 severely restricted the state's ability to raise property tax rates and is regularly blamed by politicians for cuts in some government services. But the thirty-year-old law is has emerged as a stabilizing economic factor.

Proposition 13 generally limits any increase in the assessed value of a home to the rate of inflation, limited to 2% a year, as long as that property doesn't change hands. This limitation has kept tax assessments, and the property tax collected on homes, lower than the inflated housing values during the long real estate boom. A California homeowner who saw the value of his house double over the last few years didn't worry about his property tax doubling because of the Proposition 13 limitation. Of course, under Proposition 13, when a home is sold, the home is immediately reassessed at its selling price, which naturally boosts tax revenue.

Of course, this also meant that the county tax assessor had to watch as existing property values soared without a commensurate rise in tax revenue for local government to spend. However, this also means that local government spending didn't spike to unsustainable heights spurred by increasing property tax revenues, only to see spending severely curtailed in coming years as housing prices crashed to earth.

Although housing prices have dropped, many homeowners purchased their homes long enough ago that their property is still worth more than its assessed value. If a home was purchased for \$500,000 in 1998, for example, it could not now be assessed at more than about \$609,500, whatever its market value.

Although officials agree that they are seeing its stabilizing effect, many critics main-

tain that the measure continues to stymie the state's ability to provide services and fix its aging infrastructure. Without Proposition 13, they argue, governments would be taking in more property tax revenues.

Jack Kyser, senior vice president and chief economist at the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp., said the numbers show that Proposition 13 is a "stabilizer" that prevents soaring tax bills for homeowners but also prevents tumbling tax revenue for governments.

Jon Coupal, president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Assn., said the revenue numbers show the value of Proposition 13. "Many honest county assessors have told us that Prop. 13 has more than once in times of economic uncertainties been a godsend to local governments," he said. ~



*November comes
And November goes,
With the last red berries
And the first white snows.*

*With night coming early,
And dawn coming late,
And ice in the bucket
And frost by the gate.*

*The fires burn
And the kettles sing,
And earth sinks to rest
Until next spring.*

— Clyde Watson



BLAC ELECTIONS AND CHRISTMAS PARTY SLATED

The Bass Lake Action Committee will elect officers for 2009 at the Annual Christmas Party, which will be pot-luck, held from 5:00 to 9:00 PM on Saturday, December 6, 2008, at the home of John and Fran Thomson, 501 Kirkwood Court, El Dorado Hills. For further information, and to find out what dish to bring, please contact Fran Thomson at 530-677-3039.

The nominees for office for 2009 are President, John Thomson; Vice President, Kathy Prevost; Secretary, Hal Erpenbeck; Treasurer, Tasha Boutselis-Camacho; and Director-at-Large, Fran Thomson. ~

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