

County Planning Board Envisions More Area For Large Lot Ag Zone

County planning commissioners Wednesday postponed action on general plan rezonings in order to enlarge areas to be set aside for large lot agricultural tracts.

The Napa County Conservation, Development and Planning Commission has conducted a series of public hearings on proposed rezonings affecting nearly 5,500 acres of land in northeast Napa.

The rezonings are part of the county's plan to bring zoning into conformance with the general plan.

The current proposal affects a total of 1,049 parcels, rezoning the majority to 10 acre minimum residential country (RC) or 20 acre minimum agriculture-watershed (AW) lots.

Commissioner Andy Beckstoffer said the commission must examine the viability of agriculture in the area. He said commissioners had to consider not only those lands in agricultural production today but also those which have future agricultural potential.

"If we surround these areas with homes, then agriculture eventually loses out to urban pressure," Beckstoffer continued. "We may be forced today to zone many lands not now suitable for agriculture to AW to protect against the loss to urbanization.

"What we're doing is defining the new boundaries of the City of Napa," the county commissioner pointed out. He recommended that all lands north of Hardman Avenue be zoned to AW.

Other commissioners agreed that they had to address the incompatibility of agricultural spraying and the like when considering if parcels should be rezoned RC.

Beckstoffer and Commissioner Vic Fershko agreed that placement of RC zoning on certain fringe areas might lead to the spread of urbanization.

In particular, the commission indicated some 60 parcels would be renoticed for rezoning to AW. Those include lands around the intersection of Soda Canyon Road and Silverado Trail, lands north of Hardman Avenue and east of Silverado Trail and lands surrounding the intersection of Old Soda Canyon Road and Atlas Peak Road.

The commission asked staff to mail notices of the proposed new zoning to all affected parcel owners.

The entire matter was continued to the commission meeting Nov. 7 at 9 a.m.

In other business, commissioners approved a request of Kaiser Steel to expand its fabricating bay and enlarge its administration building at the plant site south of Napa.

Sitting as the Airport Land Use Commission, the planning body responded to the Local Agency Formation Commission's request for comments on the proposed incorporation of American Canyon. The substance of the response was that the commission felt the airport and primary impact area of the county airport master plan should be excluded from the incorporation proposal.