



LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

ACTION MINUTES
PROTEST HEARING FOR THE PROPOSED
"CENTRAL & APTOS/LA SELVA FIRE CONSOLIDATION
(LAFCO PROJECT NO. DC 20-02)

Date: Wednesday, January 6, 2021
Time: 11:00 a.m.

Location: Virtual Setting (Zoom Webinar)
Teleconference: 877-853-5257

The January 6, 2021 Protest Hearing is called to order by declaration of Joe Serrano, LAFCO Executive Officer. There were 35 public attendees joining this meeting.

CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Joe Serrano welcomed everyone for attending the protest hearing. The hearing is being conducted by LAFCO staff in accordance with the Commission's Protest Hearing Policy.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joe Serrano opened the floor for public comments.

Becky Steinbruner indicated that she had difficulty locating the steps to connect to the protest hearing. Sarah Melton emailed the information that morning. She expressed again a desire to have an in-person meeting within the district boundaries. She supports the consolidation and encourages the affected fire districts to further evaluate various factors, including but not limited to the level of service, cost of service, and governance for the new fire district (successor agency).

She also expressed appreciation towards the scheduled transition from at-large to district-based elections for future elections involving the successor agency's board and hopes that the successor agency can find a way to keep the new in-lieu Board members somehow involved during the transition period.

SUMMARIZATION OF LAFCO RESOLUTION NO. 2020-30

Mr. Serrano reviewed the terms and conditions outlined in the resolution approving the fire consolidation. This resolution was adopted by the Commission on November 4, 2020 and will be recorded once all the terms and conditions are fulfilled.

ORAL OR WRITTEN PROTESTS, OBJECTIONS, OR EVIDENCE

Mr. Serrano indicated that one of the conditions in the adopted resolution was to conduct a protest proceeding which would allow affected registered voters and landowners to voice their opposition towards the fire consolidation. If LAFCO receives less than 25% in opposition, then the approval of the consolidation moves forward. If LAFCO receives between 25% to 50% in opposition, then the consolidation requires a special election. If LAFCO receives more than 50% in opposition, then the consolidation is terminated. Protest petition thresholds are based on the number of registered voters and the total assessed land value within the consolidated area.

Mr. Serrano opened the floor for any oral or written protests. He indicated that no opposition was raised.

DETERMINATION OF THE VALUE OF WRITTEN PROTESTS

Mr. Serrano informed the attendees that a total of zero petitions were received from registered voters or landowners. Based on this turnout, the consolidation will move forward. He emphasized that this outcome is attributed to outreach efforts from Central and Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection Districts as well as the coordination between the boards, staff, union representatives, and its community members over the years.

Mr. Serrano opened the floor one last time to ensure that everyone attending had an opportunity to address the fire consolidation effort. A resident from the Aptos/La Selva area wondered whether the level of service would negatively change due to the consolidation. Mr. Serrano reassured the resident that, in accordance with state law and the Commission's Policy, the level of service will not change as a result of the consolidation. The consolidation is anticipated to improve the level of service. The identity of the communities within the consolidated area will remain strong because the firefighters, staff, and fire stations from both fire districts (Central and Aptos/La Selva Fire) will remain in place.

ADJOURNMENT

The next LAFCO meeting is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. Wednesday, February 3, 2021.



RACHÉL LATHER, VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Attest:



Joe A. Serrano, Executive Officer