

January 12, 2016
Regular Meeting
Board of Supervisors
Item #9a

RPAC Workshop
Scott Burns

Scott Burns

From: Richard Bonnet <wabbit@frontier.com>
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2016 1:06 PM
To: Larry Johnston; Fred Stump; talpers@monoca.gov; Tim Fesko; Stacy Corless; Scott Burns
Subject: Regional Planning Committees Workshop

Dear members of the Board and Mr. Scott Burns:

I am not able to be in Bridgeport to attend the teleconference of the Board of Supervisors meeting on January 12, 2016. Instead, I am sending you this email which includes my concerns and suggestions regarding the Antelope Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee(AVRPAC). I hope they may be discussed during the RPAC Workshop section of your meeting tomorrow.

CONCERNS:

- A. Willingness to receive community input and allow enough time for input.

This concern still exists as illustrated by a couple of incidents at the January 7, 2016 meeting of the AVRPAC.

1. A local citizen, Mr. Jon Hafstrom, prepared a presentation in support of the Dark Sky regulations. Time for his presentation was listed on the meeting agenda. During his presentation, a committee member asked Mr. Hafstrom how long he has lived in the Antelope Valley. He responded that he has lived here for three years. He was then asked if he owns property. He responded that he does not. The committee member then stated that he did not know why we were being required to listen to Mr. Hafstrom's presentation. I am paraphrasing, but other community members in the audience can attest to the gist of what I say. Many of us in the audience were appalled by the questions directed at Mr. Hafstrom. I don't believe that there are, nor should there be, any criteria to be met regarding the length of residence or ownership of property in order for a community member to express an opinion regarding matters before the committee. I suggest that the line of questioning was in conflict with the Brown Act. Here is a quote from the Brown Act Pamphlet of 2003 published by the California Attorney General's Office:

Throughout California's history, local legislative bodies have played a vital role in bringing participatory democracy to the citizens of the state. Local legislative bodies – such as boards, councils and commissions – are created in recognition of the fact that several minds are better than one, and that through debate and discussion, the best ideas will emerge. The law which guarantees the public's right to attend and participate in meetings of local legislative bodies is the Ralph M. Brown Act.

2. A committee member gave a speech in which he stated that the committee had been able to accomplish a lot in the last four years. He opined that this was due to people not going on and on and on about topics on the agenda. Again, I am paraphrasing. Again, other community members can attest to the gist of what I say. The committee member's opinion indicates, to me, an unwillingness to seriously consider community input. In effect, he equated community input with a bothersome "going on and on and on."

When I first became a member of the AVRPAC, I asked various people, including members of the native population, why they did not attend the meetings. The universal response was, "They (meaning the AVRPAC) don't listen." There seems to be an ongoing reluctance to solicit and consider community input.

- B. Terms for membership on the AVRPAC:

At the January 7, 2016 meeting of the AVRPAC, the committee voted against terms. Theoretically, without terms, committee members could remain on the committee for their entire lives. Such a policy greatly reduces the chances of other community members to become part of the committee. It does not seem very democratic to me. I understand that continuity is important. Many such committees have 4-year terms that are staggered to accommodate the need for continuity.

SUGGESTIONS:

- A. Review the Brown Act with committee members.
- B. Shorten the agenda to allow more time for community input.
- C. Institute 4-year terms for membership on the committee. Is it legal for the Board of Supervisors to mandate term length?
- D. Record the number of yea and nay votes in the minutes for each vote.

In conclusion, I offer a commendation for Mr. Scott Burns. Mr. Burns has always proceeded in a professional and courteous manner at all of the AVRPAC meetings that I have attended. Some of my concerns in the past, as a committee member, were taken under consideration solely due to Mr. Burns. Some concerns were mitigated because I took them directly to the Board of Supervisors, Planning Department and Planning Commission. If not for Mr. Burns or my own volition, those few concerns would never have made it beyond the AVRPAC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Claudia Bonnet
wabbit@frontier.com