



BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

Vol. 15, No.2

Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association

July, 1992

BENNETT VALLEY PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD



Imagine a Planning Advisory Committee made up of Bennett Valley residents which would have real authority over land use plans and projects impacting the Valley; they would be first line reviewers and then make recommendations to the Planning Dept., the Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors.

A fantasy dream?...not necessarily. There is already alive and well such a model in the unincorporated area of Kentfield. In 1982, the Marin Board of Supervisors passed a resolution establishing the Kentfield Planning Advisory Board which was mandated to set policy on all planning projects and environmental issues. This Board has been successfully active for ten years, and they remain a well-respected body in the community.

We are fortunate to already have a dedicated Design Review Board that has been given some of this authority. However, there has arisen incidents whereby this authority has been over-ridden by the county. Because we believe that the Design Review Board needs to be given more clout, a group of B. V. residents met to discuss the viability of the Kentfield plan. We are only in the preliminary discussion stage, and we would like to broaden our base of active participants who are interested in formulating a vision of what the Valley should be in the next decade. If you are interested in becoming part of this process, please call #528-9645.

ANNOUNCING OUR SPECIAL HOT LINE

If you have any questions or comments concerning
The Voice or issues relating to our Valley,
please call our new Hot Line #528-9645

EXPANSION OF CITY'S BOUNDARY

It has come to our attention that there has been a "behind closed doors" discussion going on about expanding the urban boundary into rural Bennett Valley to include an additional 18 holes of golf at the B. V. Municipal Golf Course. As a trade-off to the developer who would be providing the land for the expansion and who is proposing this plan, increased density would be allowed in his as yet undeveloped county subdivision which abuts the current ultimate urban boundary. Depending on with whom you talk, the proposal is either in the discussion only stage, or it is in advanced planning. (This proposal may have a connection with the proposed Water Transmission Main covered on the next page.) We have not been able to see specific plans, but the information that we have received includes the following two possible scenarios. 1) The golf course would be expanded south and east of its current position, encompassing land as far east as the eastern boundary of Bill Pistenti's property, go across B. V. Rd. (with a tunnel underneath the road) to encompass property to the south, including possibly the properties in between. Estate size lots would be a part of this expansion proposal. Or 2) The golf course would be expanded to the southeast and cross B. V. Rd. to the west across from the fly casting pond.

While the specific details vary somewhat in these proposals, the basic premise is the expansion of the urban boundary, intrusion into rural Bennett Valley and breaching the natural geographical opening which was instrumental in the original, specific designing of the urban buffer.

(continued on next page)

GOLF COURSE (continued)

Either scenario would be contrary to the Santa Rosa General Plan, the Sonoma County General Plan, and the Bennett Valley Specific Plan. The negative impacts of this idea are far ranging, including but not limited to economic, environmental, planning and zoning, aesthetic, and transportation/circulation.

Expansion of the urban boundary is considered by your Board to be a serious threat to the Bennett Valley we have worked hard to protect and preserve for the past 20 years. We will be meeting with Supervisor Mike Cale to discuss this and other projects, and we will keep you informed. Call our Hotline #528-9645 for more information.

B.V. Rd. WATER TRANSMISSION MAIN

The city of Santa Rosa approved the negative declaration on the Bennett Valley Rd. Water Transmission Main Project on April 28, 1991. This project consists of a 16 inch diameter pipe extending from the intersection of B. V. Rd. and Farmers Lane southeast along B. V. Rd. to a point 100 feet southeast of the Matanzas Creek Bridge. This represents an intrusion into rural Bennett Valley as lands south of Dan Galvin Park are outside the ultimate urban boundary of the city. It will follow the route of the southeast bound lane of B. V. Rd. and will require that a 6ft. deep and 3 ft. wide trench be dug in which to lay this pipeline. This new pipeline will connect with a pipeline which years ago was extended from the end of Summerfield Rd. (now the city's ultimate urban boundary) to the water tank southwest of Matanzas Creek on the slope of Taylor Mt. The project includes the installation of several new fire hydrants along B. V. Rd. This project was identified in the city's Water Master Plan although the BVHA did not become aware of it until notice of the negative declaration was sent in November, 1991.

The purpose of this water main is, ostensibly to provide better water pressure to the urban Bennett Valley and Townview Commercial areas during fire protection draw-down as well as provide water availability to handle total build-out of the parcels outside the city limits but within the ultimate urban boundaries. i.e., south of Farmers Lane, Ronne Dr., Holland Heights, Mt. Taylor Rd. and Bennett View Dr. areas. According to the initial study, the area noted as being of greatest concern re: marginal water pressure under fire flow conditions is the Townview Commercial area at Farmers Lane.

Your BVHA Board has responded to the negative declaration in writing and at a hearing before the City Council. The areas of concern raised were:

- a. Socio-economic and environmental impacts have not been sufficiently addressed.
- b. The potential for housing expansion and other developments as a result of additional water capacity has not been recognized, acknowledged or mitigated.
- c. Size of the water main appears to be greater than that which is sufficient to provide the necessary services.
- d. Alternative routing for the pipeline within the urban boundaries has not been looked at or pursued.
- e. Any expansion of the urban boundary should be a result of policy decision made with due process - public hearings, etc. and not presented as a "fait accompli".

The BVHA Board recognizes the importance of long range planning and the need to provide adequate fire protection. We also believe it is important that proper attention and due consideration be given to all aspects and effects of a project and that clarity of information and completeness of research be provided.

For additional information, contact Mr. Lauren Brown, Deputy Dir. Utilities # 524-5182



NEW ZONING PERMIT POLICY A VIOLATION OF RIGHTS?

What would be your reaction if an activity in your neighborhood which you found disruptive, disturbing, or irritating was approved by the county without allowing you any input into the matter unless you paid an appeal fee of \$225 or more? Such a situation exists under the recently created, streamlined process called the zoning permit. Specifically, the animal regulations ordinance was changed. Previously a use permit was required for any property owner who housed 5 or more dogs or had a commercial kennel. Built into the use permit process was a public hearing whereby any landowner had the opportunity to comment on the application and use prior to a decision being rendered. However, today there is separate category for a hobby kennel and a separate process. A hobby kennel is considered to be 5 or more adult dogs, but not more than 10. Under this new permit process, a person may apply for a zoning permit for a kennel and be granted one without a public hearing unless an appeal is filed costing the appellant \$224.00. (this fee is reportedly going to be increase by \$50.00) Once issued, the zoning permit stays with the land, not the applicant/owner. Questions and comments should be directed to the Sonoma County Planning Dept. #527-1900 or Board of Supervisors #527-2241



MEMO FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our thanks to all our old members who renewed their membership, and we also thank and welcome our new members. Your memberships are critical in helping us alert you to possible threats to the Valley. Consider the following current issues being monitored and acted upon by the Board.

1. The proposed 130 acres golf course and subdivision.
2. The 16 inch water transmission pipeline and the subsequent serious traffic disruption.
3. Increased requests for multi-lot subdivisions, many seeking to parcel out current ranch property. While some multi-acre residential development is within reason, we want to maintain overall density restraints.

These three immediate issues give you an idea of the seriousness of the problems that we face. In order for the Homeowners Association to be effective on your behalf, we need more active members. Please become involved and urge your neighbors to become members.



A FACE LIFT FOR THE GRANGE

Nestled among centuries old oak trees in sight of Mt. Yulupa (the mountain of the burning bird) stands a tall white frame building, the Bennett Valley Grange Hall #16 Patrons of Husband, the oldest Grange Hall in the U.S. In August of 1990, Grange members decided that this grand old (now in its 119th year) Hall needed a face lift.

Steve Waud volunteered to do the job, and it was his community 4H project to Bennett Valley. In the same spirit that inspired early Grange members to take on a difficult task, Steve and his volunteers labored for over a year to complete the job. The total out-of-pocket expenses were only \$406.95, and the completion day on November 1991 was a memorable event for all those involved in the project.

This grand old Hall is now standing stately and shining, and with gratitude and appreciation we extend our heart and hand to this simple non-assuming man, Steve Waud.

Ann Burow

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin McCarthy	President
Lois Brown	Vice-Pres.
Nancy Batson	Secretary
Sam Dakin	Treasurer
Michael Bates, Kate Ecker, Bill Wright Tamara Bouultbee, Dave Steiner	

The Board meets the 3rd Wed. each month.
We invite your attendance and input



SONOMA COUNTY FARMLANDS GROUP

At our March 18th meeting, we were treated to an outstanding presentation by Glenda Humiston, Executive Director of the Sonoma County Farmland Group. Glenda is a dynamite spokesperson for the preservation of our valuable farmlands, and she also travels all over the state sharing her expertise with other endangered rural communities.

The message of the Farmlands Group is that Sonoma County's agriculture is a unique economic resource, but in spite of its demonstrated value, much of it is being lost to urban development. Farmlands are being lost to urban sprawl 5000 acres every year-190,000 acres over the last 40 years.

Preserving farmland is good business as every acre not converted to residential development saves tax dollars. Studies show that local governments - therefore all of us - pay more to provide local services to residential subdivisions than to farms. In addition, this added expense is not offset by tax revenues. One 1968 study found that the net loss to local government due to development ranged from \$700 to \$2200 per dwelling depending on the density of the development. Local government must spend that much more to provide roads, sewers, schools, fire, police, and other services than it spends if the land is kept in farms.

You can help by buying local products, supporting the Ag Element in the General Plan, and participating in Farmlands Group activities. If you would like more information about becoming a Farmlands Group Member, contact Sonoma County Farmlands Group, # 576-0162

THE PERILS OF PAMPAS GRASS

Bennett Valley resident, Mrs. Grace Jaeger, asked us to please warn homeowners of the damage that can be caused by pampas grass. It can spread out of control and is then impossible to eradicate. She has watched with dismay how pampas has spread in the hill of Marin, Novato, and Bodega Bay. It has become such a problem south of Half Moon bay that the selling of pampas has been outlawed in that area. Mrs. Jaeger is greatly concerned that if we continue planting it in the Valley, we could have serious problems in the future.



BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITY DAY 1992

**Sunday, August 16, 12:00-5:00 p.m.
Matanzas Creek Winery**

**Meet your neighbors - bring a friend - for a great day of
community fun. Auction, raffle, a delicious
chicken/salmon/pasta dinner, and wine pouring by ten Sonoma
County celebrities.**

**If you have a donation of an item or service, please call Carol Galeazzi at 544-0826
If you can donate homemade bake goods, please call Nell May at 545-1216**

CORRECTION

In the last issue of the Voice, information was presented which appeared to indicate that the BVHA Board had taken a collective stand on Measure C. Historically, the Board has always abstained from taking a stand on issues that are voted on by the public. We regret any confusion which might have arisen over the mistaken inclusion of partisan information in our newsletter.



**BENNETT VALLEY
HOMEOWNERS ASSOC.
P. O. Box 2668
Santa Rosa, CA 95405**

**BENNETT
VALLEY
VOICE**

**BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
SANTA ROSA, CA
PERMIT NO. 945**

Robert & Lois Brown
5145 Burnham Ranch Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95404