



BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

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Bennett Valley Homeowners Association

August, 1993

THE FIASCO OF THE FILL : *or How the Berm came into Being.*

If you have been wondering what the massive mound of dirt along Bennett Valley Road's scenic corridor is doing there, the following is a brief summary of how the "Berm" came into being, and what is presently being done about it: In the fall of 1992, Mr. Tom Geary was contacted by Mr. George Young, of Cheli & Young Construction Inc., who requested permission to use Mr. Geary's property to dispose of dirt from some excavation sites, including the excess fill left from the City of Santa Rosa's Water Transmission Project along Bennett Valley Road. The property owner agreed because he believed that the dirt could be graded into a natural earth berm, and serve as a sound barrier to moderate the increasing noise along Bennett Valley Road.

The proper permit was obtained for a 4' high, 4000 cubic yard placement of earth on Mr. Geary's land. This dirt was to be taken from the water transmission project and he made no mention of other excavation sites. It appears that Mr. Young intentions were deceptive and he naively imagined that somehow an extra 6 to 8 feet of dirt would go unnoticed. Mr. Geary reported to us that he was out of town for two weeks and was unaware that a problem was occurring.

As the monstrous mound kept growing, residents became increasingly alarmed and letters poured into Supervisor Mike Cale's office. The project was finally "red-tagged" because the permit was being so blatantly violated.

On June 4th, the BVHA Board and concerned neighbors met with Supervisor Cale and

County Counsel Sue Gallagher, and we were assured that the County would use every legal means available to them to achieve our mutual goal of having the dirt removed.

In early July the bulldozers were back in motion. Dirt was removed from the wetlands area, and the berm appeared to be getting somewhat smaller. Although the height has been reduced, the dirt appears to have been spread out to produce a longer and much wider berm. We suspect that what remains is far in excess of the 4000 cubic yards allowed by the original permit.

In the meantime, Sue Gallagher has reported that Supervisor Cale and the County do not have the support of the Building and Planning Departments. Their position is that even though the original permit was violated, it is still valid (whether it was obtained with, or without, misrepresentation). She said that, considering this, there were few avenues to pursue in order to void the permit.

Because the present state of the berm is unacceptable to the BVHA Board and many of its members, we will continue to pursue this matter.

Supervisor Cale has agreed to chair a joint meeting of concerned parties. These will include Mr. Geary, Mr. Young, the BVHA Board, residents and Homeowners.

The Meeting will take place on Thursday, August 5th at 10:00 AM at Mike Cale's office at the Board of Supervisors. Please come if you are interested!

P.L.U.M.B.

(Planning/Land Use Message Board)

This new column will appear in each issue to give residents a quick update on what has been happening or what is on the docket. Our new Information Hotline is in place, call 526-1443 for additional information or call the appropriate agency listed below.

1. William Bottasso Subdivision/Lot Line Adjustment/Certificate of Compliance #92-723, 4520 Sonoma Mtn. Rd. - approved by PRAC with conditions, 4/22/93.
2. Dr. Bob Gardner Subdivision -MNS#92-821, west and adjacent to Bennett Ridge. A four lot subdivision conforming to current zoning. Applicant has agreed to move one building site further away from Bennett Valley Road than originally planned. Call Sonoma County Planning Dept.: 527-1900.
3. Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Comm. BVHA requested that BV Specific Plan boundaries not be breached by new Commission's authority. We are working with Supervisor Cale to get the Bennett Valley Specific Plan area placed into one planning area instead of being split between three as now exists under the updated General Plan.
4. Use permit request for unmanned cellular telephone facility (antenna poles and equipment building) at 5123 Pressley Rd.(UP 93-182) Nick Chase is planner in charge. Planning is considering issuing a use permit waiver e.g.: no public hearing would be scheduled unless a resident or concerned citizen has questions or requests a public hearing. Mr. Chase is currently awaiting further information from applicant. Call Nick Chase at 527-1900 for input or to request a hearing.
5. Miles Development re-zoning (Fable annexation, a portion thereof) 4580 Bennett Valley Rd.- 12 lots on 3 parcels (4 at less than 1 acre, 6 at 1± acre, 2 at 2 ± acres) plus open space. City Planning contact is Sonia Binnendyk: 524-5454.
6. Hobby kennel/Hobby fancier permit. The County approved a trial run change in permit process. Requests, permits, complaints go through Animal Control Dept. No public hearing or permit appeal process provided at inception. Permits limited to no more than 10 dogs/parcel. County-wide. Call Gail Davis at 527-1900 or Supervisor Cale at 527-2241.

ED BRAUNER VISITS BVHA BOARD

At our regular monthly meeting on May 19, Ed Brauner, Assistant City Manager of Santa Rosa came to speak to the BVHA Board about the restructuring which the City Planning Dept. is undergoing at this time. This restructuring is an effort by the City to develop a more efficiently run development process. In addition to increased efficiency, the City looks at itself as a customer service agency, and therefore desires to become more user friendly. An effort is being made by the City, via Mr. Brauner and other city manager's office personnel, to meet with neighborhood groups, the building industry, and other special focus groups to explain the process by which the City hopes to improve upon the current planning/development process. The City desires to have better control of the p/d process as well as city growth so they need to develop a policy which provides appropriate transition between the growth management plan, the ordinances implementing the plan, and the housing development plan. A sub-committee has been working out guidelines for setting development fees, streamlining the processing of applications, and providing for development standards. Right now the City is in a review process looking at policies for potential conflicts, specific procedures, job descriptions, training programs for employees as well as the development community and the public, developing tracking programs, etc. All this is being done in an effort to be ready, if and when the City council gives the go-ahead to the proposed restructuring. After Mr. Brauner had explained the City's goals, etc., we had a question and answer period. Topics covered were affordable housing, narrower than normal streets, the Estuero and the wastewater reclamation plan, and the rumor that the City was going to put in a wastewater line via Bennett Valley Road to service the "proposed golf course addition." He stated that the golf course proposal was still in a "planning" phase and no decision about it would be soon forthcoming. He said that there would be public input if the project should get a go-ahead. He also said that YES, the City would bring a wastewater line down the opposite side of Bennett Valley Road (opposite the water transmission main line currently being installed) if an additional golf course were to be located adjacent to the Bennett Valley Golf Course, as the City would consider that the installation of a wastewater line would be cost efficient if a second golf course went in.

MEMO FROM THE BOARD

We were very heartened by your response to the requests for memberships and your opinion on the Golf Course issue. Thank you for your overwhelming interest. The results of the survey were:

Survey answered by 289 BVHA members.

No to Golf Course project	272
Yes to Golf Course Project	9
Golf Course O.K. but no surrounding development	8

When we took your concerns to each City Council member individually, they all believed (with the exception of Mayor Maureen Casey) that they could not turn their backs on a project that was such a "sweet deal" and that it would be "such a beautiful addition to the City". In other words, it appears that they have no regard for our concerns and interests. Somewhere between our meetings with Bill Knight and Sharon Wright, the Developer and the City got together and changed the game plan. Instead of intruding into the county to build high density housing, the developer would now place his multi-units within the city boundaries (probably somewhere on the current golf course), while still developing his new executive golf course plan and his already approved seven parcels.

We have no say over what the City does, and the golf course extending into the county would be considered a greenbelt or community separator. It is assumed that the City and the County believe that this new ploy would be more palatable, but they are mistaken because of all the reasons so vividly stated by Michael Bates in the last issue of the Voice, and which were supported by the vast majority of you.

BVHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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The Board meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7:30 at the B.V. Fire Station. We invite your attendance and participation. A phone or Fax message can be left for the Bennett Valley Homeowners Assoc., c/o Sam Dakin at 526-1443 or we prefer you write to: BVHA, P. O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, CA 95405.

Needless to say, we have been very distressed by the cavalier, fait accompli attitude of the City. The threat of the city omnivorously sprawling down Bennett Valley will continue to be ever present.

Recently several BVHA Board members have become interested in, and supportive of the idea of incorporating Bennett Valley into a township in order to preserve and protect the natural setting and the way of life here. This idea is not universally endorsed by the BVHA but we feel it is well worth looking into. There is an upcoming meeting on the subject sponsored by the Bennett Valley T.A.C. (Township Alternative Committee) on August 5th. Please see below! T.A.C. receives no funding from BVHA.

Township Informational Meeting

**Thursday, August 5th at 7:30 PM
Yulupa Elementary School
2250 Mesquite Drive**

All Homeowners are encouraged to come!

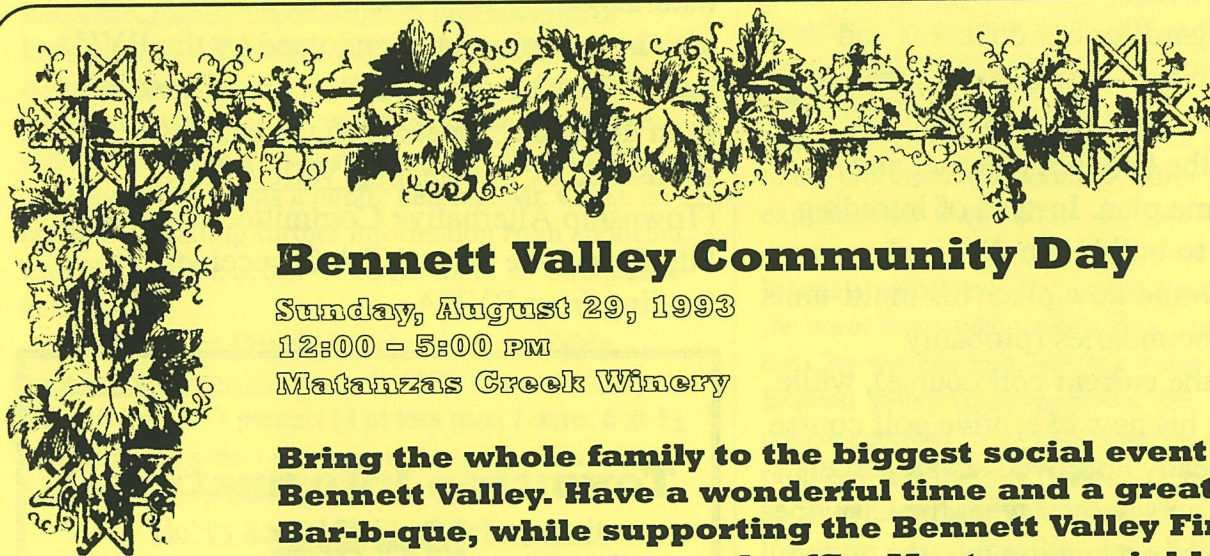
**Bennett Valley
Community Day:
Sunday, August 29
Matanzas Creek Winery**

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**BENNETT
VALLEY
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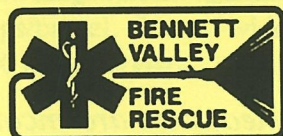
Bennett Valley Community Day

Sunday, August 29, 1993

12:00 - 5:00 PM

Matanzas Creek Winery

Bring the whole family to the biggest social event in Bennett Valley. Have a wonderful time and a great Bar-b-que, while supporting the Bennett Valley Fire Department. Auction and raffle. Meet your neighbors. Wine tasting. See the fire engines and other emergency services equipment on display.



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