

City of Calabasas

8/3/09 Mountain View Estates Annexation Meeting

On Monday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009, a community meeting for Mountain View Estates residents was held in the Calabasas Civic Center Founders Hall. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the LA County Local Area Formation (LAFCO) annexation process, and to take questions and answers from residents.

Present for the City and participating in the presentation and discussion were Mayor Pro-tem Barry Groveman, Council Members James Bozajian, Mary Sue Maurer and Dennis Washburn, City Manager Tony Coroalles, Community Development Director Maureen Tamuri and City Planner Tom Bartlett.

The following are a list of questions and answers provided at the meeting.

**1) *Who can vote as part of a LAFCO election process? Can any registered voter in a household be included?***

- a) During the LAFCO protest hearing, any registered voter in a household, and each affected property owner is eligible to file a written protest. Two separate columns of protests are kept by LAFCO – one for the registered voters, and one for property owners. The outcome of the protest hearing is purely mathematical and is based on the number of written protests received. Oral or written testimony in favor of the annexation has no bearing since it is only written protests that are counted.
- b) At the conclusion of the protest hearing, if an election is ordered by LAFCO, then all of registered voters residing in the annexation area may vote.

**2) *Must you be present at the protest hearing to file a protest?***

- a) No. Only written protests filed with LAFCO are counted.

**3) *What are the real benefits to annexation? Is there one place where they are available?***

- a) The City's website ([www.cityofcalabasas.com](http://www.cityofcalabasas.com)) is being maintained with information available to residents, and will be modified to include a simple list of benefits.

**4) *Why is the City so aggressive in pursuing annexation?***

- a) The City is complying with the direction provided in the newly adopted 2030 General Plan, which identifies Mountain View Estates and other areas as desirable for annexation. The City also has had a long history of pursuing annexation with this community. Because the City was unsuccessful in opening a dialog with the HOA board about our interest in annexation, it conducted a direct survey of residents.

**5) *Can the City take our open space for Gates Canyon Park?***

- a) The City cannot purchase your open space without your permission, as you own it. The City has never taken open space through eminent domain. We are a City which acquires and

protects open space, and fights to preserve it, as evidenced by our funding of the Ahmanson Ranch lawsuit. In order to take the community's concern about acquiring the expanded park area through eminent domain, the City is willing to back its promise to not do so by entering into a contract which would impose very severe financial penalties if such an action was undertaken.

**6) Car washing – can the man who has washed my car for 18 years still do it?**

- a) Yes, if they obtained a car washing permit from the City and took some extra care to not let water discharge run down into the storm drain. This involves buying a tarp and some concrete blocks at a hardware store which acts as a small “bathtub” under the car. Then the car washer would use a standard wet/dry shop vacuum to suck up the water and discharge it down a sewer.

**7) What is the difference between the County's zoning for our open space and the City?**

- a) Effectively, none. Both zones are development restricted and offer the highest protections to maintain them in a passive state. Additionally, the City's municipal code offers additional protections in that it requires any change in open space zoning to be approved by a vote of the people.

**8) How does the City's Landscape and Maintenance District (LMD) work? Can we keep our current maintenance liaison?**

- a) Participation in the City's LMD is by election. The results are tallied at a publically noticed Council meeting. Each LMD separately accounts for its costs. All contracts are publically bid and the lowest bid is selected to do the work. Each HOA, in consultation with the City, determines the amount of services it wishes to purchase and make part of the contract.
- b) Each HOA selects a representative to serve as a liaison to the City's Landscape Director, Steve Ball. So yes, your current landscape representative could continue on in that role.

**9) What amount of property tax would the City likely receive from MVE, and what would be done with it?**

- a) The City receives approximately 4.7% of the 1% property tax paid by homeowners to the County. So, for a home having an assessed value of \$2M, the City would receive annual tax revenue in the amount of \$940.00. Based on the tax assessor's records, our overall revenue will be lower, as most homes are listed at a reduced value. If you look at our annual budget, it identifies how we use tax funds in general. It is only fair that if your community gives us tax dollars, that they be used to your advantage. So we are offering to use a part of these tax dollars in a way that would directly benefit you, and that is by taking over the HOA's current responsibilities along Mureau Road. We also are open to working with your HOA

board to identify other areas of concern around your community for application of these revenues.

**10) How will police & fire safety services change? How would they change as a result of transitioning to City contracts?**

- a) The City contracts with the Los Angeles County Sherriff and Fire Departments to provide safety and emergency services, so the providers will not change. What you will see is your tax dollars going towards additional services which directly benefit residents. For example, the City's Public Safety Taskforce, lead by two council members, has obtained council approvals to increase the level of service in key safety areas, such as teen intervention and traffic patrols.
- b) The City also offers a very aggressive emergency response program, including an AM radio station and reverse 911 calls which are activated during emergencies. This program is led by retired LA County Fire Captain Jim Jordan, whose emergency response experience includes the World Trade Center bombing and Hurricane Katrina.

**11) Please explain how the City might use the property tax revenues to take over Mureau Road landscaping maintenance, and how would that be better for MVE? How can MVE be assured the quality of care & maintenance will not diminish?**

- a) The City is proposing to use the property tax revenue it will receive if MVE is annexed to take over the landscape and maintenance of Mureau Road. These are currently areas paid for by residents through their HOA dues. If the City takes on these services using MVE property tax revenue, it would decrease your HOA expenses and could result in reduced dues for property owners.
- b) Residents can look to other areas of the City to assure themselves that we invest heavily in the quality of our streets. We are currently embarking on a program to use federal stimulus money to expand our street overlay program.

**12) Why did your code enforcement officers try to get into our community?**

- a) Because your board alleged that City staff members were going door to door to speak to residents about annexations, we sent out an email to all employees asking if any of them had recently visited MVE. We received word back from our two code enforcement officers, saying that they had heard that MVE may be annexed, and were curious. As a result, during their rounds, they stopped at your gate, identified themselves, and asked if they could drive around and see the community. They were denied access, and never got in. The City stands by our statement that no staff has received direction to or has gone door to door to speak to residents about annexations.

**13) What do you know about a proposed senior project next to MVE?**

- a) The City is aware of an application for an approximately 240 unit senior care facility adjacent to MVE on the east side along Mureau Road. The project is in County of LA jurisdiction. Further information can be obtained from the LA County Planning Department. The City has been briefed on the proposal by the developer of the project.