

Granite Bay residents form coalition to fight development

BY GRAHAM WOMACK
OF THE PRESS TRIBUNE

A flurry of development projects in recent months has inspired the formation of a group of concerned residents and business people, Defend Granite Bay.

On Tuesday, this group will face one of its first battles.

The Placer County Board of Supervisors is expected at 10:30 a.m. to consider approving The Park, a proposed 56-home subdivision and 0.81-acre park on 16.3 acres near Sierra College Boulevard.

The project has stirred opinions on both sides, with the Placer County Planning Commission voting 5-1 on Aug. 25 to recommend it to the board, after Granite Bay's Municipal Advisory Council voted 3-2 in July to not recommend it.

The project would require existing land to be rezoned from low to medium-density residential and for minimum lot size to be lowered from one acre (43,560 square feet) to 6,000 square feet. Opponents say the project isn't in keeping with the large lots and low population density that characterize Granite Bay.

"This is not about being a snobbish community," said Larissa Berry, president of Defend Granite Bay. "This is just trying to keep it rural."

On the other hand, Placer County has witnessed sizeable growth in recent years, going from about 250,000

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Larissa Berry, president of Defend Granite Bay

people in 2000 to 350,000 in 2010, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In its 2014 statewide economic forecast, the California Department of Transportation projected Placer County's population would cross the 400,000 threshold in 2019.

"Now we've got to realize that this is not going to be an agricultural area that we envisioned in the beginning," Planning Commissioner Larry Severson said during the Aug. 25 meeting. "And that's kind of sad for all of us. But there (are) just a lot of people in this world right now, particularly in this corridor."

Defend Granite Bay members don't want to kill this project, or 15 others that Berry said are in the pipeline. They'd just like the projects to adhere to the Granite Bay Community Plan.

"I'm not objecting to development," Keith said. "But why put 56 homes on land that's zoned for 16 homes?"

Group treasurer Carla Novaresi lives adjacent to the development site and worries about new neighbors complaining about her cows,

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Kirk Uhler, District 4 Supervisor

goats, chickens and turkeys. She likened it to people who move in next to an airport.

"They're fine with it until the planes start flying," Novaresi said.

Bill Halldin, a spokesman for developer Jon Tattersall of Maverick Partners West, told The Press Tribune that his client has worked to address neighborhood concerns, reducing the size of the development from 94 homes to 56 homes and earning a letter of support from the Sacramento Area Council of Governments.

"We think it's a good project," Halldin said. "It's had a lot of public input."

District 4 Supervisor Kirk Uhler said the group has yet to request to meet with him but that its fears are misplaced.

"The rural feel of Granite Bay as it exists today will exist in perpetuity," Uhler said.

Regardless of how the board votes on Tuesday, there's a larger issue at play for Berry.

"There seems to be a real disconnect between the board of supervisors and reasonable development throughout Placer County," he said.

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