

From: bill.stephans@edcgov.us
Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2009 1:36 PM
To: Erica Sanchez
Cc: Chris.Flores@edcgov.us
Subject: Re: Summer Brook Subdivision

Ms. Sanchez:

The El Dorado County Agricultural Commission heard this item July 11, 2007. It appears that looking at the current land use/zoning map, the Planning Commission did not take the Ag Commission's recommendation (attached) to deny the land use change. To my knowledge, there was a parcel southeast that retained an Exclusive Agriculture (AE) zoning. I think the AE parcel had draft horses similar to, if not, Clydesdales. During the Ag Commission's meeting, other neighbors testified regarding grazing of livestock but I am not sure that area, with the new RE-5 zoning/LDR land use and adjacent RE-10/Rural Residential land use to the north, would support commercial grazing. As we have seen in other areas, once residential uses become established adjacent to grazing land, problems occur which tend to shut down commercial agricultural operations, fences are breached, dogs tend to injure livestock, constant neighbor complaints and trespassing become a nuisances.

About 10-15% of the parcel is listed on the Department of Conservation Farmlands map as "Farmland of Local Importance" (attached map). The soils are good for pasture, irrigated pasture, rangeland and horticultural endeavors (attached map). With water available, it is my opinion that a commercial ag operation could be initiated and be successful although as I said earlier, grazing livestock could have its problems. This being said, the recent zone and land use change could pose inconsistencies with the GP if ag were initiated.

The Ag Commission recommended denial of the project in favor of retaining the GP land use of RR to be more consistent with the area and the larger RR parcels to the north. Testimony was also taken in 2007 that supported protecting these larger parcels as historic grazing land with a minimum 40 acre parcel size as stated in GP Policy 8.1.2.2. It was stated that these lands were in grazing since the 1880's.

In answer to your questions...

In your opinion, if not for the proposed subdivision, what is the feasibility of the project site being used for economically viable agricultural production? As stated earlier, portions of these parcels are designated by the state as "Farmland s of Local Importance". The soils appear to be able to support various agricultural crops.

Are adjacent parcels currently being used for grazing lands or other agricultural uses? Some testimony was taken that suggested non-commercial ranches are in the vicinity, however, no commercial farming operations appear to be in the vicinity at this time, at least to my knowledge without doing specific site visits.

Would the proposed subdivision be inconsistent with the surrounding land uses? It appears that the recent zone/land use change has extended the higher density residential uses further into the original GP Rural Residential areas than first contemplated by the EIR which supported the adoption of the GP. Without further study and analysis, I believe the parcel southeast adjacent to the project parcels wishes to retain the Exclusive Agriculture zoning...so this project could pose problems with any agriculture on that parcel. Also, the Ag Commission's recommendation which not taken, would have, I believe, been more consistent with the EIR and GP..

Best Regards,
William J. Stephans
El Dorado /Alpine County
Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer
Please Note New Email Address:
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"Erica Sanchez" <erica.sanchez@edcgov.us> wrote on 10/26/2009 02:39:33 PM:

> Mr. Stephans,
> The Summer Brook annexation to EID (APNs 102-210-12 and 102-220-13)
> was brought before the LAFCO Commission on September 23, resulting
> in a split 3-3 vote (one voting member was absent). The project
> will be reconsidered at our December 2 meeting. One of the issues
> of concern brought up at the September meeting was project's
> potential impact on agriculture, in both the project site and the
> surrounding area.
> In your opinion, if not for the proposed subdivision, what is the
> feasibility of the project site being used for economically viable
> agricultural production? Are adjacent parcels currently being used
> for grazing lands or other agricultural uses? Would the proposed
> subdivision be inconsistent with the surrounding land uses?
> Thank you for your thoughts on this matter, if you have any
> questions I can be reached at (530) 295-2707.
>
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