

FRESNO LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION (LAFCo)

(Fresno County, California)

“MINUTES”

REGULAR LAFCo MEETING –JANUARY 7, 2009

Call to Order: Chairman Lopez called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m.

Members Present: Commissioners Susan Anderson, Larry Fortune, Victor Lopez, Henry Perea and Trinidad Rodriguez

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Rick Ballantyne, LAFCo Executive Officer
Darrel Schmidt, LAFCo Deputy Executive Officer
Kenneth J. Price, LAFCo Counsel
Candie Fleming, Clerk to the Commission
Samantha Hendricks, LAFCo Technician II

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Minutes from the regular LAFCo Meeting of December 3, 2008.**

The minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

4. **Potential Conflicts of Interest: Any Commission Member who has a potential conflict of interest may now identify the item and recuse themselves from discussing and voting on the matter.**

There were no conflicts of interest noted.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

5. **Consider Approval: Request for a One-Year Extension to Complete Proceedings for the City of Parlier “Annexation No. 05-02” Reorganization (LAFCo File No. RO-05-36).**

Deputy Executive Officer Darrel Schmidt presented staff’s report and indicated that economic and current housing market conditions were being provided as justification offered in support of the extension request. He stated that while staff could support the time extension, further extensions should not be granted unless additional justification and/or substantial progress is made in the coming year.

Commissioner Anderson inquired as to whether the Commission would be expected to grant extension requests to all applicants based upon economic conditions and the slowing housing market. Executive Officer Ballantyne explained that while it is obvious that the present economy has resulted in a slowdown of housing and development activity, that the major reason for the extensions has been the inability on the part of the developers to file a final map. Also, that in order to be consistent with past Commission actions, fair warning of the Commission’s policies should be given to all applicants

seeking extensions upon the first extension request. Mr. Ballantyne explained that no extensions have been granted where such a warning was previously offered. Also, that the Commission may soon be placed in a situation to consider an extension(s) solely based upon economic hardships.

Chairman Lopez then opened the public hearing. With no other testimony offered, the public hearing was closed. A motion to approve the extension was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

OTHER ITEMS:

6. LAFCo Agricultural Preservation Policies: Update Regarding Agricultural and Open Space Mitigation Policies.

Executive Officer Rick Ballantyne provided introductory remarks concerning the *Model Farmland Preservation Program* that is currently being prepared by the Council of Fresno County Governments (COG) in cooperation with the American Farmland Trust. He introduced the panel of guest speakers that included Tony Boren, Jerry Prieto, Lynn Gorman, and John Wright. Mr. Ballantyne reported that the Agricultural Preservation Policies and actions contained within this Program would soon be presented for consideration and adoption by the (COG) and its member agencies; and therefore, should be considered when LAFCo updates its own agricultural preservation policies.

Tony Boren, Fresno COG Executive Director, provided an overview of the *Fresno Model Farmland Preservation Program* and the reasons why he believes that it is important for the County and the Valley. He reported that some very talented and dedicated people were currently working to help develop the Model Program and that it would soon be considered for adoption by the COG represented by COG's fifteen cities and the County of Fresno.

Jerry Prieto Jr. (Fresno County's former Agricultural Commissioner) described how the County's "Strategic Farmland Map" was prepared and the factors that went into its making. He added that the Farmland Map should be used as a "planning tool" in determining the direction of future growth and that it should be referred to in the *San Joaquin Valley Blueprint* as well as local plans and policies.

Lynn Gorman, Fresno County Deputy Director for Public Works and Planning shared her thoughts related to the *Model Farmland Conservation Program*. She stated that the LAFCo Commission was the first public agency to be presented the *Model Farmland Conservation Program Report*. She indicated that how urbanized areas grow dictate the amounts of farmland that may be preserved.

John Wright (former Planning Director for the City of Clovis) also addressed the Commission. He indicated that the *Model Farmland Conservation Program* for Fresno County did not contain all the possible answers for preserving agricultural lands, but was a beginning and did contain good information that will help inform local government decision makers.

Jeff Roberts of Granville Homes stated that it was a good time to consider Agricultural Preservation Policies—but suggested that any mitigation fees imposed on new construction to provide easements may not be appropriate and may not be supported by the building industry.

Mike Prandini representing the Fresno County Building Industry Association (BIA), expressed concern over fees that provide for conservation easements for farmland. Also, that whatever actions that local government takes will have a great impact and must be carefully considered. Mr. Prandini stated that whatever LAFCo does to preserve farmland most likely will restrict urban growth.

CLOSED SESSION

7. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION Title: Executive Officer

The Commission along with LAFCo Counsel Ken Price and LAFCo Executive Officer Ballantyne adjourned into closed session. No reportable action was taken.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

No public comments were offered

ADJOURNMENT

The Commission adjourned the meeting at 3:18 p.m. and announced that its next meeting would be held on February 4, 2009, at 1:30 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Chamber - Hall of Records, Room 301, Fresno, California.