42nd KZGN News Talking Points Editorial

How should the county vote on the land use management plan tomorrow?

Before I start today’s editorial, there are still comments coming in about last week’s editorial, and I have received additional news since then. The editorial asked: “Should the city fund private industry, only to get sued by one of those companies?” Additional comments are as follows: Larry asked, “Is Pertexa going belly up?” Peter said, “Not going belly up. I heard the head dude and city staff got in a knit match. So the guy at Pertexta got mad and decided to say ‘screw Ridgecrest’ and is looking to move the operations out of town.”

Now the update. I have learned that Pertexa is dropping their claim against the city. Yes, they did lay some people off in February, and Councilwoman Lori Acton is one that got laid off. I heard they have received their entire cash payment for their whole contract now. They are doing ok financially. They are not planning any move out of Ridgecrest. Note: their contract with the city states that if they did move out of Ridgecrest, they would have to return the grant money they received from the city.

Now, on to today’s editorial: How should the county vote on the land use management plan tomorrow?

Tomorrow is the big Kern County Board of Supervisors meeting here in Ridgecrest. It happens tomorrow afternoon at 1:00pm. It’ll be at the Ridgecrest city council chambers at City Hall. This will really be the last time people can provide inputs to them before they vote to approve or not approve. Believe me, even if you have already attended any previous meetings either at city hall or any other venue in the valley before, you need to attend this meeting, as well. Nothing you have said in the past will replace you actually showing up before the whole board and making your comments. Be silent, and others will speak for you and you might not like the outcome. You might not like the outcome anyway, but if you sit home and say nothing, then you’ll have to live with whatever everyone else decided without your inputs. I know many of you believe that “it’s probably decided already, so why should I waste my time going there?” I’m here to tell you, that the people can influence the decision. Don’t fall into the apathy belief. You can make a difference by voicing your opinion tomorrow.

Now on to the topic, I’m glad I’m not on the board on this one. Many hold the argument that we’ve done nothing for so long, we have to start doing something………now! I agree that water conservation is necessary. I can’t dispute that some people in the county areas have their well levels dropping. But as far as the county plan goes, it really doesn’t do much to change the situation. Yes, as supporters say, at least it’s doing something. I just wish it did more to prepare us for the future. I wish the plan included recommendations for providing a solution to import more water. It doesn’t. I wish that the plan would better provide more guidance for conservation in the areas not under the Indian Wells Valley water district. The people served by the water district are under mandatory conservation requirements. The people that have their own wells aren’t. I don’t see the plan addressing and making the suffering equal to all residents of the valley. I know that might not be popular with county residents, but I have to ask: How about joining us in conservation? If the plan gets approved, current agricultural farms will be allowed to continue. Sharing in no conservation requirements the city has. The plan only stops new agriculture from developing. How about the plan recommending real long term suggestions? I’ve heard many suggestions for long term planning, such as: How about a pipe line from somewhere to here. Consider this. How about a resolution of the Kern County Board of Supervisors encouraging the state to stop the delays in building of the necessary infrastructure to build water storage capabilities? Stopping the nonsense of letting 74% of the fresh water that falls in California annually from flowing out into the Pacific Ocean via the San Francisco Bay? How about building the necessary water storage facilities we need to capture that water in good rain and snow years? If we saved that water, and it was available for the farmers in the Central Valley, then they would not need water from say the Kern River that flows into Lake Isabella. That water would then be available for some other use. How about a pipe line from the Kern River into the Indian Wells Valley? I’m not suggesting keeping water from the lake there. I’m only suggesting that in good snow runoff years that surpasses the needs to make the lake viable again, that they make any over flow available.

Sure it would be expensive. But, this country builds pipelines everywhere. So why not here? So, join us at the meeting tomorrow afternoon.

In conclusion, I don’t think the plan goes far enough and is fair to all the residents of the valley. Some people get hurt more than others. If everyone agrees we need to do “something” then let’s do “something” as a whole. Not just attack some.

I’m Tom Wiknich, and that’s what I think. I’d like to know what you think. If you have any comments about this editorial, or would like to discuss or recommend a topic, I’d like to hear from you. Please email them to info@kzgn.net.