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Laguna Woods supports local control of fairgrounds

By CLAIRE WEBB

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Story Highlights

City joins 20 others in support of Costa Mesa's efforts to maintain control of site.

LAGUNA WOODS-The City Council approved drafting a letter on Wednesday to state legislators in support of the City of Costa Mesa in opposing the sale of the Orange County Fairgrounds.

The council agreed it wanted the letter to emphasize the city's ability to maintain local control of the fairgrounds. In October 2009, the legislature voted to sell the fairgrounds to balance the state's budget deficit. Prior to the state's action, the City of Costa Mesa adopted a resolution opposing the sale, relocation or closure of the fairgrounds. Laguna Woods joins nearly 20 other Orange County cities in support of Costa Mesa's opposition to the sale of the property.



The Laguna Woods City Council voted in favor of drafting a letter to state legislators supporting the City of Costa Mesa in opposing the sale of the OC Fairgrounds.

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"We were asked by the City of Costa Mesa to take a stand on this," said Councilwoman Cynthia Connors. "It's not worth it to give up an asset such as this."

But the sale keeps moving forward after a pair of developers, Steven Craig and Dwight Manley, submitted a high bid of \$56.5 million for the 150-acre site during the public auction.

Costa Mesa said Wednesday it will set aside \$200,000 in its budget for costs associated with fighting the sale of the fairgrounds. The money is an effort to launch a ballot initiative to lock in the land-use designation of the fairgrounds.

Although the council voted in favor of supporting Costa Mesa, council members had differing views.

"We're charged with voting on our own issues," said Councilman Bert Hack. "I think I want to restrict our activities to our problems."

But Councilman Marty Rhodes said he wanted to support Costa Mesa to make sure the fairgrounds were protected.

"[The buyer] is never going to be satisfied with the income a fair would give him," said Rhodes of bidder Craig Realty. Rhodes said he worried the property might become a shopping center. "I don't want to see that lost."

Comments:

davesdubs wrote:

The Laguna Woods City Council did not authorize the writing of a letter to Sacramento opposing the sale of the Orange County Fairgrounds. It did approve a letter to Costa Mesa supporting its right to oppose the sale. This was a compromise between the positions of Council member Cynthia Connors and Mayor Pro Tem Bert Hack.

luvithere wrote:

I agree with Hack, it's not our concern.