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The Voice of the Bass Lake Community

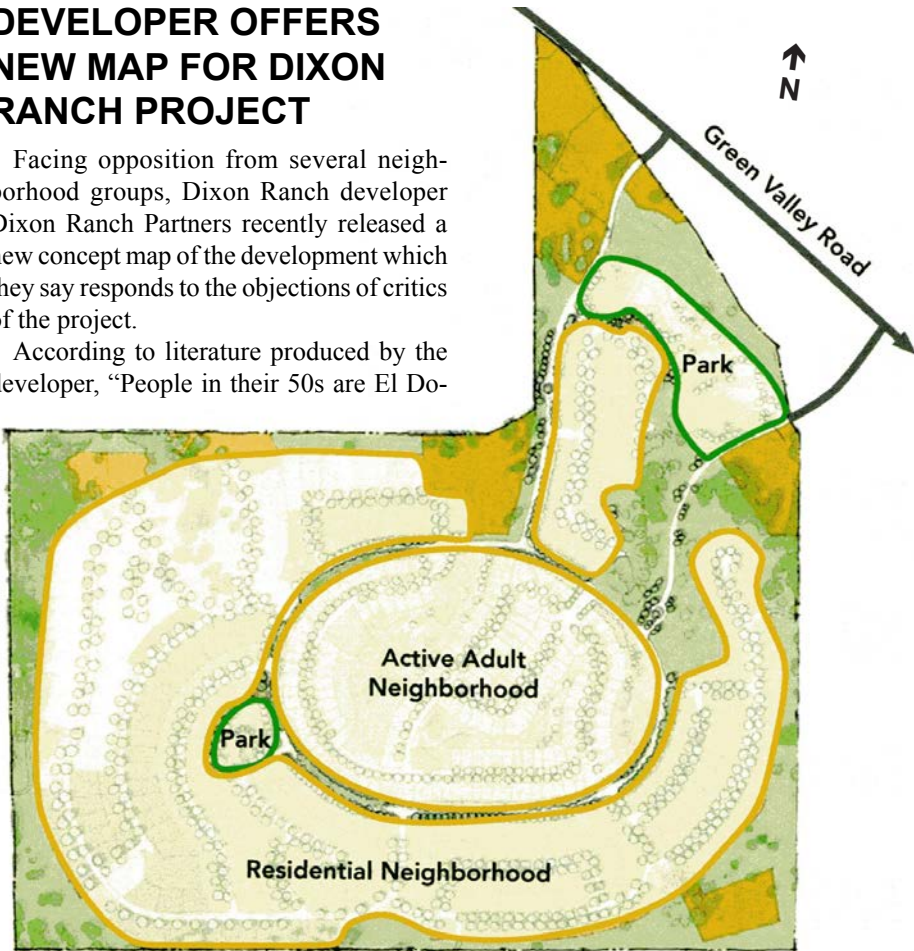
April 2015

www.basslakeaction.org

DEVELOPER OFFERS NEW MAP FOR DIXON RANCH PROJECT

Facing opposition from several neighborhood groups, Dixon Ranch developer Dixon Ranch Partners recently released a new concept map of the development which they say responds to the objections of critics of the project.

According to literature produced by the developer, "People in their 50s are El Do-



Dixon Ranch New Development Map

rado County's largest and fastest growing age group, and most of them will face obstacles to comfortable or safe family living in their own homes as they age. People 55 and older comprise almost one-third of El Dorado County's population and that factor increases significantly every year. Older residents tend to drive less often and hardly use highways. The only impact they have on school populations is through volunteering at the local schools. Their home designs also create obstacles to grandparents, parents and grandchildren living, visiting and thriving together, such as doors too narrow for wheelchairs; tubs and showers rendered useless by barriers to entrance; walls too weak to support grab bars; appliances too high or too low; steps at entrances; and no way to easily retrofit elevators in two-story

structures."

The developer says that Dixon Ranch is designed, and homes are planned, to encourage and facilitate aging in place, allowing people to remain in the community where they have lived their lives. According to them, Dixon Ranch has been planned with the belief that everyone benefits when families thrive with interactivity among grandparents, parents and grandchildren. All Dixon Ranch homes will have one entrance per house designed with no-step entrances, structural accommodations for future elevators or lifts in two-story homes and a host of other features not required by building codes but friendly to aging residents.

The proposed map proposes a total of 605 residential parcels, or lots. It includes a center core of 160 parcels with an average size

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GRAND JURY RAPS EDH CSD OVER CC&R FEES

The El Dorado County Grand Jury for 2014-2015 has found that the El Dorado Hills Community Services District (CSD) currently collects a tax for enforcement of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) from a number of homeowners who are not receiving those enforcement services.

CC&Rs are contractual limitations on a property owner's rights such as architectural design and ongoing maintenance. Those restrictions are placed on the property deed, recorded with the county, and made a condition of purchase by subsequent owners.

A special per parcel tax was adopted in 1983 for the specific purpose of giving to the CSD the responsibility for enforcing homeowner CC&Rs within the district. This was done because many homeowners were and are apprehensive about creating a disagreement between them and their neighbors by complaining about a violation of the CC&Rs. The duty of the CSD is to follow up on any complaints, and the CC&R Compliance Officer is supposed to routinely drive through the neighborhoods spotting the violations that are the subject of the most common complaints. The CSD has the authority to initiate legal action against those who do not comply with the CC&Rs.

The CSD receives a special tax of \$10 a year from each parcel in the district for CC&R enforcement. However, many parcels in the district are organized into discrete Home Owner Associations (HOAs) that enforce their own CC&Rs without assistance from the CSD. Some of those HOA homeowners complained to the grand jury

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Hello All,

It feels good to be able to talk about good things that are happening, and that's a welcome change.

For instance, the big pothole on Bass Lake Road near Country Club was finally given a good fix, along with several others nearby. Thank you Supervisor Mik.

In addition, the new Bridlewood Canyon, Sierra Crossing and Woodridge propane pricing agreement with JS West propane starts the first of this month, preserving their favorable propane prices for another five years.

Also, sometime in the foreseeable future we will see the northern part of Bass Lake Road repaved with an asphalt overlay, which will make driving a lot smoother on that part of the road. Estimates are for work to begin late this year or in the summer of 2016. But at least it's a project to which funds have been committed.

And in 2016 the Silva Valley interchange with Highway 50 will be completed. Hopefully its opening will ease the traffic flow on Bass Lake Road, though unfortunately it is predicted to double the traffic on Silva Valley Parkway.

As far as the dry weather goes, warm days, cool nights and dry weather will produce grapes of taste and quality that many vintners say they haven't seen since the last drought, and that means better wine. As Benjamin Franklin said, "Wine is constant proof that God loves us and loves to see us happy."

All of which reminds us that life is pretty good, and that we should count our blessings everyday.

May you have a blessed Easter.

Sincerely,

John E. Thomson

President

DIXON RANCH *(continued)*

of 6,720 square feet which is dedicated to active adult housing, with its own clubhouse, recreational amenities and open space. Surrounding the active adult section will be another 445 parcels which are divided among five classes of homes, ranging from lots of 7,920 average square feet to estate residential lots averaging 2.3 acres.

Open space and parks will occupy 84 acres of the site. Park facilities include a 9.2 acre village park near the entrance that is proposed to be dedicated to the El Dorado Hills Community Services District, and a 1.9 acre neighborhood park that will be maintained by the homeowners.

Opponents to the project, based on the previous development map, assert that (1) the elementary and middle schools serving the project area have zero capacity to accommodate students from Dixon Ranch, (2) while only 10% oak tree removal is allowed for this site, the project proposes the removal of 44%, (3) the safety hazard of the direct access driveways, as discussed in the Green Valley corridor traffic study, has not been addressed in spite of the added traffic from the project, (4) the distance between the western project access and the existing West Green Springs Road does not meet the County's current standards, (5) the conversion of this project site from rolling hills of grass and oaks into high density residential is erroneously said to be "visually compatible" and have no significant impact, (6) the project does not comply with state air quality standards, and (7) testing shows asbestos on site.

Information on the new map can be obtained from the developer at Dixon-Ranch.com. Views of the residents opposing the project may be obtained from the Green Valley Alliance at greenvalleyalliance.org. ~



GRAND JURY *(continued)*

that they do not receive any specific service in return for that tax.

In its report, the Grand Jury states that: "In a letter to the Grand Jury, CSD management stated that the \$10 levy "is a 'Special Tax' . . ." and that "[T]here need not be a direct benefit tied to the property owner or taxpayer." but that it ". . . can be used to pay for public services and/or facilities that provide general benefits." They acknowledged that "[A] special parcel tax is a charge for specific purposes against a landowner . . ." [Emphasis added.] At the same time, they seemed to ignore the 1983 Board resolution and ballot measure which authorized the levy as a special tax for the specific purpose of enforcing CC&R for each tract within the district boundaries. The taxes collected for this specific purpose of CC&R enforcement have been and continue to be used for other purposes."

The report also states that there are 27 HOAs within the El Dorado Hills CSD. Of those, 19 enforce their own CC&Rs. Documentation supplied by the CSD shows that the remaining eight rely on the CSD for CC&R enforcement.

The CSD, in replying to the Grand Jury, in general said the following: The ten-dollar per parcel amount is a "Special Tax" and not an "Assessment." Assessments and special taxes are two distinctly different types of funding mechanisms. A Special Tax is considered a type of tax—not a fee, charge or special assessment. There need not be a direct benefit tied to the property owner or taxpayer. A special parcel tax is a charge for specific purposes against a landowner, which can be used to pay for public services and/or facilities that provide general benefits. A Benefit Assessment is based on the concept of assessing only those properties that benefit from improvements either directly or indirectly through increased property values. Once approved, assessments are placed on property tax bills each year.

However, based on its investigations, the Grand Jury found that the special tax is no longer being used exclusively for CC&R enforcement, the CSD receives tax funds from almost 8,200 parcels for CC&R enforcement they do not provide, the parcels in HOAs that enforce CC&Rs are paying twice for CC&R enforcement, and most CSD taxpayers are unaware of the special tax and its original purpose.

A copy of the full 2014-2015 Grand Jury Report may be found online at https://www.edcgov.us/Government/GrandJury/2014-2015_Grand_Jury_Report.aspx. ~



NEW EDC ANIMAL SHELTER HOSTS GRAND OPENING

El Dorado County Animal Services hosted a special grand opening celebration for its new Animal Services shelter facility on March 29th at the new shelter location, 6435 Capitol Avenue in Diamond Springs. The event included tours of the facility, animal demonstrations, educational booths from animal welfare groups, face-painting, and refreshments.

“We are extremely thankful for everyone who has supported this effort,” said Henry Brzezinski, Chief Animal Services Officer. “The shelter project was truly a collaborative effort and a joint venture between the County, animal welfare partners and community members.”

Construction on the facility began in March 2014 and was completed ahead of schedule in October 2014. The \$5.7 million project was funded by the County’s General Fund and Tobacco Settlement dollars. Local animal welfare groups and citizens also helped raise funds to help pay for equipment and other items for the facility. The former non-profit PAWED (People for Animal Welfare in El Dorado County), raised over \$250,000 for the project through their Finishing Touches campaign. Those funds were used to purchase equipment for the shelter’s new surgical and grooming rooms, the barn, housing units for the cat adoption area, k-9 turf and shade sails for one of the dog exercise yards, and other items.

The new shelter facility houses lost and abandoned cats, dogs, livestock and small animals. It features new adoption areas and places to visit with the animals, a barn, pasture areas for livestock and secure fenced exercise areas for the dogs. A public counter helps residents with business needs, such as getting and renewing licenses and permits.

The facility’s normal hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday for business needs, and 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday for shelter services (such as adoptions

and reclaiming lost pets). For questions about the celebration event, or for general Animal Services information, please call (530) 621-5795 or visit www.edcgov.us/animalservices. ~



FRANCISCO DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT STARTED

The Transportation Division of El Dorado County’s Community Development Agency will be performing road work around the intersection of El Dorado Hills Blvd north of Brittany Place at Francisco Drive in El Dorado Hills, until May 8, 2015.

The project will complete an overlay and the addition of Class II bike lanes to Francisco Drive in El Dorado Hills, construct a free, right-turn pocket from Francisco Drive onto El Dorado Hills Boulevard, extend the north bound left-turn pocket on El Dorado Hills Boulevard to remove much of the queue, and extend the existing pedestrian path on Francisco Drive to Brittany Way. Motorists and especially large trucks are advised to avoid Francisco Drive whenever possible and use Green Valley Road and El Dorado Hills Blvd. Closures of pedestrian crossings in the area and temporary detours of pedestrians may also occur at times during the construction period.

Francisco Drive in El Dorado Hills will be closed from the intersection of El Dorado Hills Boulevard to Cambria Way beginning on Wednesday, April 1, 2015 and continuing for 7 days, 24 hours per day, until reopening on Wednesday, April 8, 2015.

This road closure will facilitate the construction of the right-turn pocket flowing from Francisco Drive to El Dorado Hills Boulevard. Once complete, this project will improve the overall flow of traffic from Francisco Drive south onto El Dorado Hills Blvd. This closure will provide enhanced safety to the traveling public during this phase of the construction, as well as decreasing the overall construction time of the project.

During this closure, access will be available to Cambria Way and Embarcadero Drive. Detours around the road closure will be clearly posted and in effect for the duration of the closure. Pedestrian access will remain open along the temporary pedestrian path around the work zone.

The county is using a total of \$915,000 of federal funds and \$150,000 of State funds for the overlay and right-turn pocket project. Construction cost of the overlay with Class II bike lanes is estimated at \$310,000. Construction of the right-turn pocket, extension of the north bound left-turn pocket on El Dorado Hills Boulevard, and extension of the pedestrian path is estimated to cost \$755,000.

Anyone with questions regarding this construction project may contact the County Transportation Department main line at (530) 621-5900. ~



CALIFORNIA GAS TAX FOLLIES CONTINUE

The California State Board of Equalization (BOE) voted unanimously in February to reduce the state’s excise tax on gasoline by six cents, although consumers are unlikely to see the tax reduction reflected in prices at the pumps.

The state excise tax on gasoline in California will be lowered from 36 cents to 30 cents, according to the BOE. The tax reduction will take effect on July 1. The excise tax on diesel fuel will rise by two cents, from 11 to 13 cents.

In 2010, California state legislators introduced a “fuel tax swap,” a reduction in the state excise tax but an increase in state sales tax on gasoline. The move allowed legislators to pull funding from the state’s transportation budget to fund other projects. It also mandated that the BOE adjust the state excise tax on its own each year.

“To the average taxpayer out there, there’s no way they understand what the issue is and how much tax they actually pay on a gallon of gasoline,” said BOE Vice Chair George Runner (R-First District), who had

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GAS TAX *(continued)*

argued for a 7.5 cent tax decrease. He criticized what he called a “bizarrely complex” gas tax system in California, and said the Board itself struggled with the complex tax formula set up in 2010. “Clarity of tax is essential for taxpayers,” he stated.

Runner is also a leader in the fight against the state’s controversial fire tax; he supports a class action lawsuit that seeks to overturn the tax and return millions of dollars back to taxpayers

According to the American Petroleum Institute), California has the second-highest combined state and federal gas tax in the nation behind Pennsylvania, at 63.79 cents per gallon. The national average is 48.23 cents per gallon. At 30 cents per gallon, the newly-reduced state excise tax will still be 10 cents higher than the national average.

Despite the reduction in the excise tax, consumers are unlikely to notice a change in price at the pumps, due to other factors that affect gasoline production. ~

Credit: Breitbart News



Spring Song

Hark, I hear a robin calling!
List, the wind is from the south!
And the orchard-bloom is falling
Sweet as kisses on the mouth.

In the dreamy vale of beeches
Fair and faint is woven mist,
And the river’s orient reaches
Are the palest amethyst.

Every limpid brook is singing
Of the lure of April days;
Every piney glen is ringing
With the maddest roundelays.

Come and let us seek together
Springtime lore of daffodils,
Giving to the golden weather
Greeting on the sun-warm hills.”

— Lucy Maud Montgomery



BRIDLEWOOD CANYON, SIERRA CROSSING, AND WOODRIDGE PROPANE AGREEMENT EXTENDED FIVE YEARS TO 2020

Bass Lake Action Committee (BLAC) has successfully concluded a new agreement which extends the favorable propane prices for Bridlewood Canyon, Sierra Crossing and Woodridge with provider JS West of Placerville. The new contract starts April 1, 2015 and ends April 1, 2020. Existing JS West customers do not have to do anything to continue their favorable price arrangement.

BLAC members Ed Bowman, Steve Slatery, Frank Sulzberger and John Thomson made up the negotiating committee. The committee members want to express their thanks to JS West Business Development Manager Bette Best for her cooperation in concluding the new agreement.

For existing JS West customers, tank rental on a horizontal tank will continue to be \$65.00 per year, and tank rental on two vertical 120 gallon tanks will continue to be \$78.00 per year. All tank rentals will include the pigtail, regulator, blocks and tank(s).

The new agreement preserves the old price of fifty cents over the Bay Area Targa Refinery wholesale price plus up to ten cents a gallon transportation per gallon. There are no surcharges or other fees. JS West will also fill your BBQ bottles at time of delivery at

Bass Lake Action Committee
501 Kirkwood Court
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

your house, or at their Placerville yard, at same residential discount.

There will be no charge to new customers to switch tanks and to pump the propane in their old tank into their new JS West tank. New customers have a choice between a 250 or 325 gallon horizontal tank or two 120 gallon vertical tanks. New customers will receive two years of free tank rental, after which the normal tank rent applies.

Residents of Bridlewood Canyon, Sierra Crossing and Woodridge who are currently with other propane providers and who wish to sign up with JS West may contact Bette Best, Business Development Manager, at 530-306-0096 or 530-642-7001. ~



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John E. Thomson, Ph.D.
President and Editor
doctorjet@aol.com
530-677-3039

For additional information see our website, basslakeaction.org or contact

Vice President Kathy Prevost
blacinfo@aol.com
530-672-6836
