

Patterson Area Neighborhoods Association
543 San Blas Place
Santa Barbara, CA 93111

Tin Campbell
Chairman,
Santa Barbara LAFCO
By email

Re: Agenda Item #10: Municipal Service Reviews and Spheres of Influence

Dear Chair Campbell:

When your commission takes up the above agenda item on Thursday regarding the spheres of influence for the cities of Santa Barbara and Goleta, please consider that there is much confusion and misunderstanding amongst our members and many Goleta Valley citizens about the sphere of influence process as initiated by the Committee for One. To date there has been little opportunity for the vast majority of residents of the Goleta Valley to acquire any knowledge or understanding about the options regarding the sphere of influence, the process involved, the options for LAFCO to consider, and the resulting implications of its decisions.

We believe that before LAFCO makes a decision on the city of Santa Barbara's/Committee for One's sphere of influence request LAFCO needs to simultaneously consider the City of Goleta's request for a sphere change.

We believe the Committee for One's request should be examined for sufficiency against LAFCO sphere of influence guidelines before any deliberations are undertaken.

Because of the long term significance of the scope of Committee for One's request, PANA believes that a full hearing is needed so that all citizens, whatever their personal preferences may be in terms of being affiliated with either SB or Goleta or to simply remain as part of the county, have an opportunity to understand what will happen with a sphere change.

There is widespread concern that the Committee for One's petition does not accurately represent the views of many in Goleta Valley who have expressed a lack of understanding about the process or their options. Thus, we are requesting that your commission provide another opportunity for the community to gain unbiased information and to have the opportunity to provide public input.

An indication of this sentiment can be found in the August 28th letters to the editor section of the News-Press. A Robert Kiedling from Santa Barbara offered the following thoughts:

“Several points should be made regarding Wednesday's article on the move toward incorporating the western Goleta Valley into the city of Santa Barbara's 'sphere of influence' and its likely eventual annexation into the city.

- The petitions represent about 11 percent of residents affected, if the signers were properly screened.

- The co-president of the group that solicited the petitions stated: ‘The residents have flatly rejected being part of Goleta or having the status quo.’ The petitions represented a small percentage of the residents, and were not worded objectively to offer the signer choices of no annexation, city of Goleta annexation or city of Santa Barbara annexation.
- A City Council member was quoted as saying: ‘We’re not asking for more taxes.’ What is another reason why Goleta and Santa Barbara are so vigorously competing to acquire this area?

I, and many others residing in the western Goleta Valley, do not wish to be included in either city’s sphere of influence or to be annexed. The question properly belongs on the ballot and should not be based on a questionable petition process.”

Although PANA does not necessarily agree with all of Mr. Kiedling’s opinions we do believe that there are a significant number of our neighbors who would agree that this question does need more discussion so that the best possible decisions can be made regarding a sphere of influence.

Sincerely,



Tim Schmidt
President, Patterson Area Neighborhoods Association