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Pair obstruct Wildomar efforts

By: GARY ANDRE - Commentary:

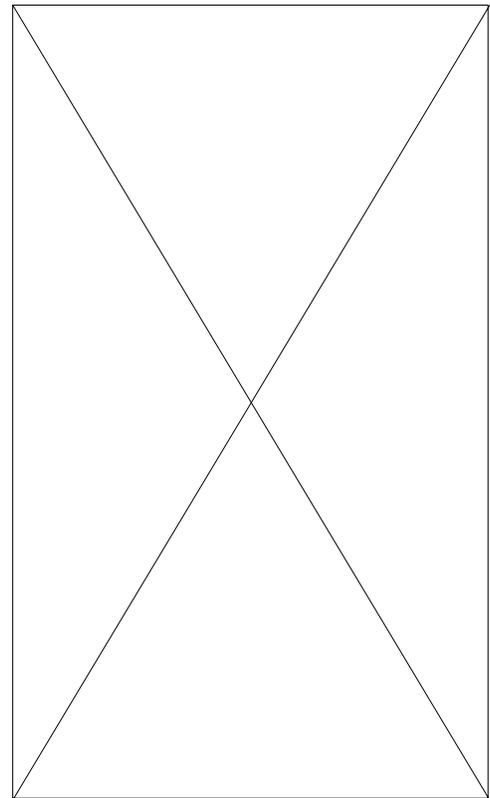
Five years, thousands of hours logged by volunteers, thousands of dollars donated by individuals and businesses to bring us to today -- a much anticipated hearing to consider Wildomar's application to grant residents the right to vote on cityhood.

Gerard Ste. Marie and his neighbor, Steve Beutz, seem to have a perverse shared desire to tear down years of hard work by the community of Wildomar. With less than two weeks to the cityhood hearing, Ste. Marie put up \$25,000 in an effort to thwart the right of the people to vote and by doing so caused the Local Agency Formation Commission to delay the hearing to July 26.

A few years ago, Mt. San Jacinto College expressed an interest in building a much-needed satellite campus in Wildomar. In 2004, Ste. Marie filed a lawsuit stating the county of Riverside had no right to sell a parcel of land to the college without a vote of the people (indicating the parcel should remain a regional park).

Following Ste. Marie's lead, Beutz felt it was necessary to "stop the money-grab" (his words on his Web page) and gladly takes credit for almost single-handedly defeating a proposed bond measure for expansion of Mt. San Jacinto Community College.

When community meetings indicated there was a strong interest in opening parks in Wildomar, four years of joint efforts by community activists and the county brought a \$25-per-year parks maintenance assessment to the ballot. The majority of Wildomarians voted for the assessment (including a proviso for an increase to \$45 per year with the completion of a proposed east-



side 10-acre park).

Beutz again felt an urge to resist the will of the people, filing a lawsuit against the county contesting the assessment because he believed these were neighborhood, not community parks.

Ste. Marie and Beutz have expressed concerns about the installation of new sewer lines for commercial projects on the west side of the community, believing this will initiate an additional assessment on their property taxes. Their flawed understanding of the development process could lead to yet another detrimental lawsuit.

Fortunately for the community of Wildomar, the flip side to the Ste. Maries and Beutzes of the world are the volunteers who have the interests of the whole community at heart and have put in innumerable hours to build a better and enduring community. Their efforts shine in comparison to people like Ste. Marie and Beutz who do nothing for the community except gripe and file lawsuits.

I'm not a doctor but I believe the best prescription for what ails these gentlemen would be to get out in the community and get educated about the community's real wants and needs as well as how the development process really works. If they want to volunteer, the community of Wildomar will gladly accept their help. They might find out that we're nice people. We could even become their friends, if they let us.

-- Gary Andre lives in Wildomar.

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## Comments On This Story

**What's the Problem? wrote on May 24, 2007 6:46 AM:**

" Mr. Andre, you need to get used to people disagreeing with you and the other proponents of WIN, its part of the process called democracy. As a property owner in Wildomar, I see the cityhood issue being rammed down people's throats, whether they understand the financial consequences of this entity or not. Also, as a property owner that would have been subject to both the park fees and the impact of that college, I strongly disagree that either were necessary and supported by the majority, which is probably why the county didn't put the issue to a vote in the first place. As a property owner, cityhood is not something I want. I see county control as the lesser of the two evils. I've been to some of the WIN meetings and secret, behind the doors, Wildomar Roundtable Meetings, where a few are making decisions that affect the majority without the benefit of vote or ability to input ideas, and frankly, I didn't like what I saw or the ideas that I heard. There's more people like me, but WIN doesn't want to acknowledge it. Its great that Steve and Gerard are standing up against WIN and I applaud them for their efforts. "

**Hmmmm?? wrote on May 24, 2007 7:29 AM:**

" Let me see - Gerard won his lawsuit against the county, proving that the county violated the law. And, he plunked down \$25K to confirm that the county's deal with the prospective city is illegal and Steve is questioning an illegal tax via the courts that was passed by a bare minimum of voters rather than the majority of the people it would affect. On the other hand, Gary Andre and his co-horts continue to hold secret meetings regarding significant land use decisions with the county (Wildomar Roundtable), supported the white-elephant community college (who's paying for all of that traffic to come through our new city?), and supported the purported illegal tax (only residents were able to vote, ignoring the wishes of all of the of non-resident property owners in Wildomar). If the WIN people are of the same caliber as some of the people who have served on Murrieta's city counsel (and it seems they are), I vote for Steve and Gerard. Seems like the WIN crowd wants incorporation to serve their personal agendas and gain control for their benefit rather than it being in the best interests of the community or something that the ENTIRE community has voted for. I don't see how Gary can state that he represents the 'majority', because it simply isn't true. The majority has never been asked for their opinion or asked to participate in the process. Gary's diatribe sounds like sour grapes to me. "

**Well Gee! wrote on May 24, 2007 10:06 AM:**

" I'm glad both Steve and Gerard were able to take the time to comment on this. I wish you would both learn that stopping others from advancing our community, enhancing our services or bringing local control to Wildomar is not an accomplishment. It's easy to rant and rave, complain and file lawsuits when you stand for nothing yourself. If your entire goal is to stop everyone else from accomplishing anything I guess you are a success. Did your parents ever expect that you would grow up to be a bag of sand? "

**To 'Well Gee' wrote on May 24, 2007 1:54 PM:**

" from HMMMM? I'm not Gerard or Steve, but I give them kudos for standing up and fighting for what they believe in. Like I said before, WIN and its supports do not represent the entire community, rather a small fraction of power hungry people who want to control and dictate to others. The point I was trying to make is that the legal process wasn't followed by the County, the college or WIN and for that reason alone, neither WIN, the county, nor the college have the right to mow over other people in the community to get what they want. They need to follow the law and the rules like everyone else. "

**From Whats the Problem wrote on May 24, 2007 1:59 PM:**

" I have never personally met either Steve or Gerard, but I applaud what they are doing because I believe in democracy, not oligarchy. "

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