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Wildomar incorporation consultant: Proposed city viable

By: BRIAN ECKHOUSE - Staff Writer

WILDOMAR -- Now that county leaders have agreed to subsidize a would-be city of Wildomar for up to 10 years, the consultant for the community's incorporation group concluded last week that the proposed city would be financially viable.

Monday night, opponents of incorporation had a chance to publicly question consultant Gary Thompson's methodology and conclusion, yet no critic -- and there have been many -- explicitly did so.

Most critics recently have passed on discussing their beliefs in public forums or have declined interview requests. During the 30-minute discussion of incorporation at Monday's Wildomar Municipal Advisory Council meeting, only three critics spoke -- and not for very long. About 35 people were in attendance.

One critic, resident Martha Bridges, asked a representative of county Supervisor Bob Buster to clarify the status of a proposed 254,000-square-foot Super Wal-Mart -- which Thompson said he factored into the would-be

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city's anticipated sales tax revenues.

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Wendy Kolk, Buster's legislative aide, said some studies required for the proposed megastore to be built are still being reviewed by the county. Thompson indicated in the report that the Wal-Mart would be coming before the county Planning Commission this fall, but Kolk clarified that no date for the project's consideration has been scheduled.

Yet, Thompson said that, even if the Wal-Mart proposal fails to move forward, Wildomar could still have enough money to incorporate. Several other commercial projects are being built or are in entitlement process -- projects that will pump the would-be city full of sales tax revenue, incorporation proponents have contended. Available grant money to a city was not projected in Thompson's report, he said.

Then, there's an infusion of dollars coming from the county.

A previous analysis Thompson issued indicated Wildomar would have financial trouble at some juncture in its first 10 years of operation as a city if the county didn't contribute some funds to help staff a proposed fire station on Clinton Keith Road. It could open as soon as the fiscal year starting July 1, 2009.

In an effort to guarantee that Wildomar would have financial solvency as a city, the county Board of Supervisors voted in late July to give the community money the county expects to save annually by having Wildomar incorporate.

"The problems evaporated," Thompson said.

Thompson projects the county's annual savings from Wildomar's incorporation at \$238,000 to \$310,000 in the first 10 years of operation.

"OK, we'll take the money," piped in resident Tracy Lobos from the audience.

More county funds could be on the way.

In the spring, the Board of Supervisors directed county officials to negotiate a contract with the would-be city splitting the costs of operating the fire station, which would be built with developer fees.

Thompson's latest financial analysis found that a city of Wildomar would have an annual reserve fund between \$2.4 million and \$13.3 million, with the higher amount partially reflecting Wal-Mart's development.

The consultant's analysis is being reviewed by George Spiliotis, the chief executive officer of the Local Agency Formation Commission, which assesses cityhood bids and boundary changes. Spiliotis said he probably will issue a recommendation on the incorporation bid Thursday -- one week before the commission is scheduled to consider it.

Cityhood proponents hope to get the bid on the ballot in February and to incorporate July 1, 2008.

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Mars wrote on Aug 14, 2007 10:52 AM:

" Could this be the reason my Husband and I have to pay double the taxes this year on our new house? Also, I would like to see some law enforcement in the area. I've lived here for 15 years and I think I've seen a sheriff about 5 times maybe. I'm all for cityhood, but I'd like the same benefits the other cities have. "

More Sheriff's wrote on Aug 14, 2007 11:44 AM:

" With Cityhood, there will be Sheriff's that patrol only Wildomar City. Currently, the Sheriff's have to patrol all the unincorporated areas from Wildomar to Corona. After Cityhood, the Sheriff's would be on contract to patrol boundaries of the new City only. "

To Mars wrote on Aug 14, 2007 1:39 PM:

" Promises, promises, and more empty promises. There will be the same small number of officers and they can only be stretched so thin. Cityhood holds the promise of things getting worse as well as better. The people who want to run the new city will promise you anything to get elected. "

Go Figure wrote on Aug 14, 2007 3:26 PM:

" The new city name from Wildomar to "MooreCashAde" is now available on a Google search. We are moving up in the world. "

Jon wrote on Aug 14, 2007 4:12 PM:

" It sounds like most of you are not happy with the county services we currently have and think city services wouldn't be any better. We're going to have one or the other. Well, I think we can make our city services what we want a whole lot easier than going through the county where votes are counted very little. "

Wildomar wrote on Aug 15, 2007 2:58 PM:

" Wildomar should annex itself to Lake Elsinore and Murrieta and appoint members from their community to serve on those cities' governing boards. I doubt those cities would take over and change Wildomar from the town it prides itself as. Also, the residents should draw up agreements with Lake Elsinore & Murrieta (Such as restrictions on how small a lot can be and so on.) Besides, both cities are improving their image and "corrupting" Wildomar would not be in their best interests. Rather, I believe they would provide better services and highlight Wildomar's prized attributes and potential. "

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