

Dr. Bob Karman, Yucca Mesa.

I am thoroughly amazed at the indifference of the Town of Yucca Valley to the people it planned to include in its sphere and later to annex. When I had the privilege of co-authoring a General Plan revision in the town in which we used to live we had several islands of homes which were surrounded by our incorporated town. The question before us was whether they should be annexed into our town. Rather than guess what their opinion was or should be, a developer, the retired chairwoman of an urban planning department at a local university, and I, an environmentalist, walked those neighborhoods and talked with everyone who was available. We three had different views on things but we got along and got the job done. We recommended what the people wanted: to stay in the county. I thought that's how responsible government worked: you at least polled the people to see what their ideas were. I found that it used to be that way here too.

LAFCO Resolution #2406, dated February 17, 1993, documented the fourth attempt of the Town to incorporate. On page 2, item 4, LAFCO summarized the effort:

A survey was conducted as part of the proponent's feasibility study, and it showed that 53% of the registered voters residing within Yucca Mesa supported incorporation. Bearing in mind the percentage of support, the proponents (of incorporation) felt that Yucca Mesa had its own community and identity and should not be encroached upon. The incorporation group concentrated its campaign effort in Yucca Valley where the survey showed a 65% support level.

It continues by explained the Mesa's options:

... residents of Yucca Mesa retain the option of requesting a sphere of influence amendment in the future. Inclusion within the Yucca Valley sphere of influence would provide the vehicle in which the Town and residents of Yucca Mesa could work towards planning the area's need. Then, if Yucca Mesa wished to become part of the Town, the annexation process would be available to them.

In 1993 LAFCO affirmed that the Town saw the Mesa as having its own identity. Sixteen years have passed and Mesa residents are once again asserting that. We still have a separate identity and having had 16 years to see the direction of the Town we re-affirm our desire to continue our separate identity.

Thank you. We love our Mesa!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Carl Schmitt, Yucca Mesa

"In our Yucca Mesa Community Survey we found unanimity in that we should remain a rural, low density, slow-growth community. You have not indicated any change from that in your proposal to LAFCO but you do not speak for any future councils and staff and their decisions. The Founders of Yucca Valley agreed that it would be a rural town but their subsequent actions have transformed it into an urban area exhibiting many negatives associated with that.

In our survey, specifically item 19, You will see that 87% of us indicated we want a minimum parcel sized at 2.5 acres. We want any development done without the kind of difficulties you have created for yourselves in the years since incorporation. We never, ever want a water-quality control agency to swoop in telling us we need a sewer system because we overbuilt. We trust the County standard that is a maximum of two septic systems allowed on a single acre. On a minimum 2.5 acres we have space to spare above that standard. And that is, in fact, one of our priorities: SPACE. We want space between us and the next guy. Many of us came from large cities to rural San Bernardino County to have open space and barnyard animals and allow our families to grow up without the crowding and crime that too often come with pro-growth cities and towns.

We love our dark skies and witnessing the Milky Way and shooting stars. While the lights of Yucca Valley have brightened disturbingly. You have to come to the rural Homestead Valley Communities, like Yucca Mesa to experience the depth of the night sky as it really is. We know. We live there.

We are diverse with a common love for the desert and rural living. There are large uscale homes with corrals and there are manufactured homes and even refurbished cabins that some in Yucca Valley would avoid as unacceptable. And yet we wave at one another in passing on our many dirt roads. Should anyone have an obvious need we work toward helping. We survive as a separate community knowing next time it could be one of us in need and that together we live on the Mesa.

And, of course, as it is, we love our Mesa!

David Cooper, Yucca Mesa.

Tonight I want to talk about planning, overbuilding, and infrastructure. If you will please review survey items 17 and 22, you will immediately see that residents of Yucca Mesa believe the town has overbuilt and in the process has created problems for itself that it needs to address on its own without extending its plight into other areas, and that it wants the High Desert Water District to stay independent and not become a municipal water district.

The Town is a classic example of an area dominated by developer interests without appropriate concern for its residents and their future prospects. From its inception and from incorporation onwards Yucca Valley has bought into the urban development myths that bigger is the way to go, that adding hundreds of houses NOW without either funding or plans to fund infrastructure such as roads and sewers is the way to go. Setting very low developer fees gives outside developers a free ride but as times get tough and infrastructure needs start to nag at you, you turn not only to your own residents but to an unincorporated area such as the Mesa for a solution. Except for one of you, the council has tried to get a Super Wal Mart through without really looking at the impact thoroughly. You cannot bear to adopt an adequate developer fee as suggested by your own choice of consultant. In a recent meeting you still debate the matter with Mr. Huntington wisely pointing out that if you give the developers a discount or waive the fee totally the public will eventually pick up the tab through further assessment districts. How many items such as a sewer system, storm drainage, roads, etc. a population with a median household income of \$30,000 per year can bear is another question.

You are not alone in this. It's a national problem. I quote from a Florida newspaper:

When our county impact fees were among the lowest in the state, it promoted growth. Our infrastructure did not grow at an equivalent rate. **This creates not only present-day problems, but will have effects for years to come. Now that consultants propose the higher impact fees, the development community is outraged that growth may be curbed while our infrastructure catches up. The development community does not understand that the pendulum swings, and it is time to pay the piper.**

Yucca Valley will pay its piper. We didn't want to join you in your first four attempts to incorporate, and we certainly don't want to join you now that **your government, not just this council, has created such a substantial set of problems to solve.**

Thank you. We love our Mesa.

Elizabeth Karman, Yucca Mesa.

When we decided to move to the high desert five years ago we looked at Yucca Valley and Yucca Mesa. We saw some nice homes and met some nice people but what we didn't like was the urbanization we saw here and since we have animals we really didn't appreciate all the rules and limitations you impose on your residents. So we bought property and built a home in Yucca Mesa.

In late 2008 we were startled to discover that an effort to extend a sphere of influence on to the unincorporated area next to us in the Mesa was already underway for over a year. We were offended that relatively few people knew about this and surprised that no one had acted. After a few minutes on the Internet we realized that there was very little effort to explain to the affected residents what a sphere of influence is and that annexation follows. We took action and here we are tonight.

In the process we collected 2400 petition signatures against the SOI and to more fully measure the community's position we conducted a survey which we are presenting to you, the Council, tonight. Several of us are going to speak on the results of the survey. I want to lead off by explaining that 99.5% of the residents do not want to be a part of the Town of Yucca Valley. Similar percentages do not want the Town to take over any of the services including the water company. We believe the town is overbuilt and we don't want to share its problems by being forced to help solve them.

But in particular I want to address two survey items, numbers 10 and 11. LAFCO is the agency responsible for planning and it states explicitly that an incorporated area such as the Town is responsible for clarifying and educating the residents of an intended SOI what is involved. What our survey revealed is that over half of Mesa residents first heard about the SOI from either our mailings, signs along roads, or word of mouth from each other after we became active. Less than half heard from the council, the newspaper or the radio. You say in your Mission statement that you provide a government that is responsive to your citizens. If how you have treated us in what is essentially your pre-sales approach to being our government is typical and we observe that it is, we will never want to be a part of you and we will always reject you as our government.

Finally, over 90% of our survey respondents gave the opinion you did not seek our opinion of your intention. We simply don't want to be part of you and request you withdraw your application for a Sphere of Influence. Thank you.

We love our Mesa!

Lary Callendar, Yucca Mesa.

First, I want to address Town plans for development along 247. We Mesa residents strongly oppose commercial and industrial development at the edge of our community. 80 to 85 percent don't want such development in their backyards. There is lots of room along 62 to build such things. Plan it there in your own community, not ours.

Referring to survey item number 21, we don't want an amphitheatre blasting out music into our homes. Reviewing the recreational plans the county and town have co-developed, we note an assessment fee planned for parcels within 4 miles of such planned facilities. We don't want the facilities and we certainly don't want to pay for them. Most of us moved here in part for the quiet. Would you want such a facility near your house? If you do, then plan that for your backyard, not ours.

There is also a serious traffic control problem at the location you plan the amphitheatre and horse rink. Coming south on 247 there is a blind spot coming up the hill just before Aberdeen. We think it's a safety risk.

Moreover, the idea of a dog park makes perfect sense for those town residents who live in small homes with small backyards. They need room for their dogs to run and exercise. We don't need them for our dogs and most don't need a horse rink. We exercise our horses on our own properties. That's part of why we live in a rural area.

We don't want to be your recreation area. If you've run out of room, that speaks to your lack of foresight and long-term planning. We don't want facilities and activities in our community that bring outsiders and crime to our area. In a spread out rural community, there is little for the bad guys to get into. That's why your Municipal Service Review cites half the calls per resident from our area compared to the Town. We don't want to become like you and have your issues. You made your bed, lie in it.

Thank you.

Marilyn Poillon, Yucca Valley.

The community survey indicates that Mesa residents are satisfied with the services rendered by the county. We are satisfied with our law enforcement coverage, building services, code enforcement, and water delivery. We do not believe that any special districts are needed and in particular, we don't want to pay for additional services.

The survey results also indicate that 98% of Mesa residents believe the Town of Yucca Valley has a long history of poor planning and that it should solve its own problems and not create new ones for the Mesa.

That is a strong indictment of the Town. While 53 percent of Mesa residents favored being part of the Town in 1993 that desire has dropped to virtually zero. Only one of 178 survey respondents wanted to be part of the Town. A review of the LAFCO Resolution 2406 referenced earlier suggests why this is so. On Page 2 LAFCO writes:

The Town of Yucca Valley is working jointly with the County Transportation and Flood Control to draft a Master Storm Drain and Flood Control Plan. The Town's staff is also preparing a capital improvement plan and development pavement management plan.

It appears that the Town still doesn't have an adequate plan and gets flooded when rains are intense. Its streets don't look very good. You refuse to have adequate developer fees despite what your consultants advise you.

And you want to take over the Mesa too? And your staff missed the fact that such intense development eventually requires such things as sewage systems so that outside agencies are now pressing you for solutions?

And you think we would want to be governed by you and have you deliver our services? In our opinion the statement I read in the newspaper that you want a sphere now but won't have the \$600,000 per year to pay for annexation for 20 years is not a plan. It's a wish. We want to stay the way we are and let you wish whatever you want within your current boundaries.

Thank you. We love our Mesa.

Peter Poillon, Yucca Mesa

Community development differs from place to place and so does attitude about what kind of government a community desires. If you have followed activities around Santa Clarita near Los Angeles at all, you will see adjoining areas clamoring to be annexed. People there want city amenities. They apparently are missing out on what they are used to, what they grew up to expect. Not so on the Mesa. Whether you are talking about old-timers, people who have lived here all their lives or most of their lives or newcomers like my wife and me, we chose to live in a rural community, with all the positives and challenges that includes.

When you look at the survey you find 100% or nearly 100% of us wanting to remain rural and unincorporated, to maintain our own roads, to avoid spending more on services, and so forth. No matter how you might divide up those who completed the survey, long term residents or newcomers, older or younger, the results are consistent: we are on one page about why we moved here and why we stay, why we chose the Mesa versus the town, and why we want things to stay the same. There is no trend that we can find that people who live here, in particular recently, expect city amenities at the cost of what we have.

We realize that government planners find that hard to understand, because they plan for a living and think others should want what they think we should want. But as soon as you become a town or a city there are state requirements for housing and so forth that we don't want imposed on us. We love our lifestyle and have no intent of fulfilling other people's views of how we should live. We agree that the Town needs to solve its own problems. We refuse to be part of your solution.

We love our Mesa and ask you to please withdraw the SOI application tonight.