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## San Jacinto City Council moves closer to annexation



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By GAIL WESSON  
The Press-Enterprise

SAN JACINTO - The San Jacinto City Council took one small step Thursday toward possible annexations to square off the northern city limits but assured residents they would have opportunities at hearings to weigh in on the idea before a final decision is made.

In describing what he called a "slow and cautious" process, Mayor Jim Ayres said, "The people who live in that area will ultimately decide if they want to be a part" of the city.

The council unanimously approved pre-annexation zoning intended to mirror zoning in place in two targeted unincorporated areas, with a mix of residential, agriculture and some open space.

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The two areas are a 203-acre parcel that includes Country Lake, a mobile home park east of State Street and adjacent vacant land north to the San Jacinto River; and about 305 acres east of San Jacinto Avenue on both sides of the Ramona Expressway north to the San Jacinto River, said Tim Hults, assistant city manager.

Thirty-four-year resident Donna Weber said she is concerned about what would happen to her ability to keep her beloved donkeys and county-permitted dog kennel.

"It's just more of a relaxed atmosphere," Weber said.

Council members suggested her uses could be grandfathered in.

Mary Engledow, the Country Lake manager, said an informational meeting held at the park last year, where public officials explained annexation, was "a very good tool" to educate residents.

"We have so many people who are for it now, instead of against it," Engledow said.

The park, for ages 55 and older, has about 700 residents.

The council postponed until Oct. 2 action on a resolution to apply for annexation of the land through Riverside County's Local Agency Formation Commission.

The resolution also includes a proposal to detach 480 acres from the city boundaries northeast of State Street and Soboba Road, including a former mining site.

From a law enforcement perspective, the property is isolated, like an island, and not connected to other city roads with stretches of unincorporated land on both ends, city staff say in a report.

Vice Mayor Chris Carlson wanted more information.

"I think the city is a better steward than the county. I worry about detachment," Carlson said, and suggested possibly retaining land-use control.

Hults said once the city applies for annexation, the processing and hearings could take about six months through the county formation commission, which suggested several years ago the city should eliminate islands of county territory and uneven boundaries.

A separate, approximately 500-acre dairy and agricultural area between State Street and Sanderson Avenue south of the river, referred to as the Tuls annexation, after a former dairy operator, faces a commission hearing Oct. 23.

All three annexation areas would be protected by a proposed levee project the city and county are pursuing.

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