

Council takes anti-quarry stance

Julissa McKinnon, Riverside Press-Enterprise, 4-6-11

Political sparks flew Tuesday night when Menifee Mayor Wallace Edgerton asked his council colleagues to take a stand supporting the Temecula City Council's opposition of a proposed granite quarry outside Temecula.

The council voted 3-1 to back Temecula's position, with Councilwoman Darcy Kuenzi abstaining. Councilman John Denver cast the opposing vote.

Kuenzi and Denver took issue with Edgerton's proposal, saying they felt it would be unnecessary meddling in another city's business. The mayor countered that he felt it would affect Menifee residents because of traffic and possibly health concerns.

About 10 people urged the Menifee council to oppose the granite quarry dozens of miles away. Gary Johnson, president of Granite Construction, asked the city to consider a recently approved environmental study that states the quarry would have minimal impacts on the environment or public health.

Denver told the mayor, "We should not be imposing ourselves in the business of other cities."

"I think this has very little to do with Menifee other than the truck traffic that won't be coming to our area. In terms of particulate matter, it won't affect the city of Menifee in any way," Denver said. "If you have a personal issue and you wish to send a letter in your own behalf, that's fine, but don't drag us into this political mishmash."

Edgerton said he believed it would affect Menifee residents.

"When I went to an event at your home, a gentleman there that introduced himself as the president of Liberty Quarry was also there because he knew that the quarry concerns the city of Menifee," Edgerton said.

Denver said he frequently hosts people at his house who recognize that the city of Menifee is important in regional matters.

"It's improper for you to try and smear me when you're trying to do political shenanigans," Denver told Edgerton.

Edgerton replied: "At least I'm not paid for my shenanigans."

Afterward several Temecula residents went to the podium, raising questions about the quarry.

"This quarry would spread microscopic dust particles into an east-blowing wind tunnel that would impact Menifee," Temecula resident Betsy Lowry said.

Johnson, whose company is proposing the quarry, cited an environmental study filed with Riverside County that he stated "found (the quarry) will not be seen, felt or heard by residents of Temecula."

"This project would reduce trucks on your roads carrying aggregate and the associated air emissions," Johnson said, adding that currently trucks carry granite around Riverside County from mines in Indio, Palm Springs and Corona.

"We need more local supplies. Cheaper construction costs make our tax dollars go further. This quarry would have no impact to residents in Temecula and certainly not in Menifee. It would not result in adverse impacts to somebody's health," Johnson said.