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### SaveBAREC Says Defeat of Measures A&B Will Launch New Discussion of BAREC Future

By Larry Sacks

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If Measures A & B pass (namely, if the "Yes on A & B" side prevails), then the land will be developed with 110 single-family homes and 162 senior units). If however, Measures A & B fail (namely, if the "No on A & B" side prevails), then what happens with the property is a bit more nebulous. In an effort to get a more solid feeling on this particular question, the *Santa Clara Weekly* posed the following questions to BAREC Spokesperson Kirk Vartan – some pointed, some somewhat vague about the possible outcomes.

#### FEATURES

- Milestones
- No Guarantees
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**WEEKLY:** Let's assume Measures A & B are defeated and the public is allowed to start a dialog on the property, who determines who can be part of that discussion?

**VARTAN:** In general everyone.

#### LOCAL LINKS

- Around Santa Clara Blog Spot
- City of Santa Clara
- Lottery
- Office of Education
- Parks & Recreation
- Santa Clara Library
- Santa Clara Police
- School Districts
- Triton Museum of Art

**WEEKLY:** Santa Clara residents, San Jose residents

**VARTAN:** Yes.

**WEEKLY:** Would any groups be excluded – would the discussion group be limited to only people in the immediate neighborhood, only people who worked on the petition drive?

**VARTAN:** No. The public in general, not one specific group.

**WEEKLY:** Only people the "Save BAREC" group designate?

**VARTAN:** Absolutely not.

**WEEKLY:** How will there be a limit to the number of ideas that can be discussed?

**VARTAN:** Why should there be a limit? The goal is to discuss potential and opportunities for the property. The more the better. Like the Legislative Summit (held on June 16) group suggested: a task force that would evaluate options and present ideas. That is what is needed. A complete review. Real groups that specialize in this. Projecting 7-10 generations out and determining a ROI (Return on Investment) based on the real future, not a political future.

#### ELECTED

#### OFFICIALS

Your elected officials

**WEEKLY:** Who will decide what ideas are worthwhile and which ones aren't?

**VARTAN:** Again, I would suggest a task force of some kind. It should be made up of experts, community members, and some form of government agency.

#### SPORTS

- 49'ers
- Oakland Raiders
- San Francisco Giants
- San Jose Sabercats
- San Jose Sharks
- Santa Clara University
- Santa Clara High School
- Wilcox High School

**WEEKLY:** Once the previous question is answered, what ideas would be allowed in the discussion?

**VARTAN:** I think I mentioned this above, but I will comment on the items below.

**WEEKLY:** For example, what if the different ideas proposed included:

- Using the land for dirt-bike trails
- Building a community swimming pool there
- Put some Senior Housing there now and keep the rest as open space?
- Make it all Senior Housing
- Make it of it senior housing and add single-story, single family homes with about 5,000 - 6,000 square foot lots (or whatever the standard for that neighborhood is)

**VARTAN:** These are all things that need to be looked at with eyes not from a developer. Once a real steering committee or task force is created, they would be responsible for outlining the ideas, the feasibility of them, the economic return on ideas, and a general economic study. Again, this is my idea and understand[ing] of what we all want to see.

**WEEKLY:** Would deciding which idea should be used go to a public vote?

**VARTAN:** I think a public vote would be the best final result since the public felt abandoned to begin with. Either way, the public will be involved with the public process.

**WEEKLY:** Assuming a plan is accepted – how long would you wait until funding is available? What if after a year, no groups have stepped forward to purchase the land from the state or groups have expressed interest, but can't raise the needed funds?

**VARTAN:** While not suggesting which option would be more appropriate, I think the most appropriate use of a public asset is to keep it serving the public....nothing new. This is a concern that needs to be looked at, but I think a year is actually a bit short. It may sound like a long time, but in the big picture, a year is not long (look at how long the BAREC issue has taken).

For argument's sake, let's say if after five years, that not "all" of the funds have been raised. I assume at least 6 acres will be available since the City of Santa Clara has already earmarked that money and I can't see why they would suddenly take it away. But that leaves the other 11 acres as Pat Kolstad said: "\$1,000,000 - \$1,250,000 per acre." If the \$15,000,000 - \$17,000,000 cannot be raised, then whatever is not paid for could be looked at as surplus and directed through some official process. It is pretty remote, but if only partial amounts can be raised, then the task force can suggest a secondary plan.

**WEEKLY:** Would you keep waiting until a group steps forward?

**VARTAN:** As I said above, I think five years is a good timeline. Not indefinite, although there is no reason why it can't be frozen until purchased.

**WEEKLY:** How long would you wait?

**VARTAN:** I indicated five years, but it could be longer.

**WEEKLY:** Would there be a time when, after waiting for some amount of time – say two years - when the decision makers would relent and say, "Well, we can't raise the money at all".

**VARTAN:** I don't think so.

**WEEKLY:** What happens then?

**VARTAN:** When there is a will, there is a way. I am sure tax credits, government grants, foundations, etc. can find a way to raise the money. I know, you are saying what if they cannot. I am saying if the State says this land is meant to be protected based on citizen input, then they can even give a "conservation easement to a qualified non-profit" to take control. This would require \$0 to do and would cost the non-profit nothing. The UC system was paying the equivalent of \$10,000/acre. Not much. Why can this not happen again? Short-term profits that cannot be reversed? A financial decision now takes all future options away. What a shame that would be.