

that they were considering a planning document rather than regulation during the hearing, emphasizing that the water master plan contains goals and policies that are intended to guide decisions by the BOCC and Planning Commission in the future and that these must be able to be applied to the broad spectrum of land use applications.

Mark Gebhart, deputy director, Planning and Community Development Department, who managed the project, gave an overview of the steps taken in preparing the draft plan. He outlined the role of the steering committee, the public participation program, which had included an open house, and a water providers' survey. He stated that a draft was put out for public comment ahead of the presentation to the BOCC in November.

Will Koger of the county's consultants Forsgren Associates provided a detailed overview of his firm's work on the project and detailed the public feedback received. The afternoon session saw the county staff talk the commissioners through the goals and policies of the plan. The commissioners examined the information and suggested potential modifications. Comments by Commissioner Kevin Curry saw the wording of the county's position on any future discussion of the 300-year rule substantially modified. He said the original wording implied a strong preference to change the rule when he felt there were good reasons for it and that, while changes might be appropriate in certain, narrow circumstances, he wanted to see the discussion cut back and the tone more balanced.

At the second hearing on Dec. 18, Gebhardt provided the commissioners with additional information and clarification arising from the first hearing. They then worked again through the policies and goals to ensure that all modifications were included to their satisfaction.

There were two opportunities for public comments during the Dec. 4 hearing. Judy von Ahlefeldt, a longtime resident of the Black Forest who also spoke at the BOCC presentation, said that she had given the draft careful review and, while acknowledging all the work that had gone into it, said, "I don't feel it to be a master plan ... I think it's a great start but I don't think it's the finished product." She continued, "I think there are some problems with the process in terms of involving the public and getting the word out. I think there needs to be much more public participation."

Responding, Commissioner Joan Lucia-Treese said, "You cannot compel the public to respond. It's not their [the majority of the population's] burning personal issue. As long as they can turn on their tap and the water comes out, that's all they care about."

Von Ahlefeldt spoke again at the Dec. 18 hearing, questioning the thoroughness of the public review period and urging the commissioners to hold off on the plan's adoption until the new county commissioners take their seats and to allow for further discussion. Terry Stokka, chairman of the Black Forest land use committee, also addressed the commissioners stat-

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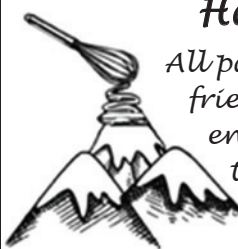
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