



Colusa approves redevelopment plan

[Susan Meeker / Colusa County Sun-Herald](#)

2011-04-21 08:38:57

Colusa officials finalized its redevelopment plans Tuesday amid a scurry of protest, mostly by people fearing the city will use eminent domain to take over their property, shift money from local services or spend money they will never recover.

If the protest took the City Council off guard, it was only because it came more than two years after city officials formally adopted a Redevelopment Agency, announced their intentions, spent more than \$250,000 on its formation and promised another \$239,000 to an economic advisor to help spruce up the town.

"We're at the tail end of the project," said Colusa Mayor Tom Reische, acting as the Redevelopment Agency board chairman, before voting to certify the environmental documents and adopt a five-year implementation plan.

But love it or loath it, scrutiny of redevelopment has intensified since Gov. Jerry Brown proposed abolishing 425 agencies statewide to help balance the state budget.

It was a proposal that had virtually no Republican support in the Legislature despite the party's nearly decade-long campaign against government use of eminent domain to benefit private and public interests. Colusa officials insist eminent domain is not an issue.

"In fact, the city's plan specifically prohibits it," said City Manager Jan McClintock, who emphasized the city wants to use tax increment revenue to replace the city's aging water system, not to buy and sell residential property.

"It's not our goal to subsidize developers," she said.

But eminent domain aside, private property rights advocate Ashley Indrieri, of the Family Water Alliance, still says redevelopment is a growing drain on public resources, with little public awareness and oversight.

"It can be created without a vote of the citizens affected," she said. "And unlike other governments, it can incur bond indebtedness without voter approval."

Residents say they fear the city is racking up debt, especially on consultants, while banking on revue that may never actually materialize.

"So far, we've paddled our own canoe," said Wayne Hoblit. "We should keep on doing so."

Others say they would rather their taxes be spent on schools or necessary public services, such as police and fire protection.

But officials say not moving forward now would cripple their efforts to create jobs and revitalize the city during a struggling economy.

"Redevelopment has been great for small cities," argued Councilwoman Kay Hosmer, a member of the Redevelopment Agency board. "Look at Windsor, in Sonoma County. It was like Grimes. Now it is just

beautiful.”

According to Windsor’s website, since 670 acres of the town was designated as the project area, redevelopment has changed its face by enhancing or expanding local businesses, encouraging new businesses to locate in Windsor, increasing the affordable housing stock or by developing public infrastructure.

Colusa has similar goals, Hosmer said.

Dan Vanderpriem, a Burns & Watry consultant hired by the city to complete the redevelopment agency plan and environmental documents, tried to appease the public’s concern by saying that redevelopment is a tool for cities to overcome blight, fund code enforcement and crime prevention programs and help schools to leverage capital improvement funding.

City officials approved the redevelopment plan by a vote of 4-0. Councilman Pat Landreth was absent.

The board postponed adopting the Colusa Redevelopment Agency budget until May 5.

© Copyright 2011 Freedom Communications. All Rights Reserved.
[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Site Map](#)