

SO MUCH FOR TRANSPARENCY

Don't believe it when politicians say they want more citizen participation or make promises to we citizens.

When property owners in Sutter and Butte counties were asked to pass assessments on their properties, the Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency (SBFCA) promised it would establish a citizens' advisory committee to provide financial oversight to SBFCA and be an interface with the public. A committee was established in September 2010 with each of the 13 SBFCA board members appointing one public member to the Citizens Assessment District Advisory Committee (CADAC).

Recently, however, it has become apparent that SBFCA staff would like to reduce CADAC's ability to obtain information concerning SBFCA actions. SBFCA staff falsified information on CADAC's activities in order to have two CADAC members removed and replaced. Then an illegal vote was held on April 11 to elect a new chairman who had not attended a CADAC meeting in eight months, a violation of CADAC bylaws, and at a meeting that was not properly noticed under the Brown Act.

The next meeting on June 1 was also not properly noticed. Despite a challenge to the improper notice, another illegal vote was taken and Jon Munger was given the chair. Munger immediately stated he wanted to change the meetings from **monthly to quarterly**.

Because of Munger's close relationships with his father, Larry Munger, chairman of the Sutter County Board of Supervisors and who serves on the SBFCA Board, and his employer, Al Montna, who serves on the Levee District 1 Board and previously served on the SBFCA board, the Sutter County Taxpayers Association believes Jon Munger has an **association conflict of interest** and cannot honestly represent the property owners who will be paying the assessment for 30 plus years.

On June 30, I sent an email to all SBFCA and CADAC members expressing our concern re this conflict. At the July 13 SBFCA meeting, the SBFCA attorney said there was "no financial conflict." Obviously, that was not our concern – it was Munger's **relationship conflict** that was of concern. How can the son of a SBFCA Board member and the employee of a LD 1 board member be unbiased and not subject to influence?

I spoke at the meeting disagreeing with the attorney's opinion, explained again our concerns and told the board that it was their responsibility to ensure that CADAC continued and that CADAC members should be selected to represent the citizens with honesty and transparency. Several members of the SBFCA board reacted negatively.

After I sat down, one dismissed our concerns saying we should be investigating other issues. Supervisor Larry Munger stated “SCTA wants to control everything.”

No action was taken by the SBFCA Board.

All SCTA wants of SBFCA is the transparency and genuine oversight function it promised to SCTA in return for its strong support of the bond issue that made this project possible. That oversight function has been functionally undermined and threatened with extinction.

This grievous miscarriage of the public trust needs fixing now!

Pat Miller, President
Sutter County Taxpayers Association

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