

Lane Resigns Council Seat, Accepts High-Profile Bay Area Job

By George Lurie, staff writer

The Valley Voice, Thurs., May 19, 2011

Visalia - Visalia City Councilman Michael Lane dropped a bombshell during a closed session of the Visalia City Council Monday night, announcing that he is resigning his seat in order to accept a top job with a Bay Area-based nonprofit.

Lane, a management analyst with Self-Help Enterprises, was elected to the Visalia City Council in November 2009 and served as a member of the Visalia Unified School District's Board of Trustees from 2001 to 2009.

He issued a short press release Tuesday morning announcing the decision. "I have accepted the position of Policy Director with the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California based in San Francisco," he said. "While it was a difficult decision, this represents an amazing career opportunity that I couldn't decline."

Lane went on to state that he was "very grateful for having had the privilege to serve Visalia for the past ten years on the school board and city council...In order to pursue this new work, I must resign my seat on the Visalia City Council at the end of May. I appreciate the support and understanding of the community."

In the release, Lane also acknowledged former Visalia Mayor and long-time Self-Help CEO Peter Carey, who he called "an outstanding mentor to me."

Lane's new employer, the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH) is a leader in promoting affordable housing throughout Northern California. According to information on their Web site, the organization "develops and advocates policy, builds support through alliances and partnerships, and provides housing advocates with training to increase their effectiveness. Our work changes lives and builds communities."

Lane's new position will put him second in command at NPH.

Fellow City Council member Warren Gubler, who came on to the council together with Lane and Steve Nelsen, said Tuesday: "Mike did a great job. He was always well prepared and well versed on the details, the nitty gritty. His departure will be a loss to the council and community. But we'll move forward."

In a press release issued Tuesday, Mayor Bob Link said: "We're sorry to be losing Mike. He has been a real advocate for the business community, and committed to the betterment of Visalia."

Lane, 42, is a Visalia native and graduate of Mt Whitney High and California State University, San Francisco.

Although his resignation is effective May 31, Monday night's council meeting will be his last and he, his wife and teenage daughter will begin the relocation process to the Bay Area immediately.

His first day on the new job is June 6.

According to Assistant City Manager Leslie Caviglia, at their June 6 meeting, the City Council will consider options for filling Lane's unexpired term, which ends in November 2013.

"The Council has the option of appointing someone to fill the unexpired term, or calling a special election," stated Caviglia.

Power plant to pop up on edge of county

By Alex Breitler

Stockton Record, Thursday, May 19, 2011

TRACY - State regulators on Wednesday approved a 200-megawatt natural gas power plant in far northeastern Alameda County, about seven miles from Tracy.

Supporters have said the Mariposa Energy Project will burn cleanly and stimulate the economy.

Critics say the plant - one of several that have been proposed just outside of San Joaquin County - will funnel tax dollars to Alameda County while San Joaquin gets whatever comes out of the smokestack.

"We're tired of getting the pollution and not getting the money," said Tracy shoe store owner and clean-air advocate Bob Sarvey.

Nearby, Mountain House residents have also expressed concern about property values.

California Energy Commission Chairman Robert Weisenmiller said the Mariposa plant - along with a larger plant approved in Oakley - will help meet California's growing energy needs.

The reliability of natural gas plants helps facilitate solar and wind projects elsewhere, he said. Indeed, the Mariposa "peaker" plant will kick in when demand in California is especially high.

Barring delay, construction would begin this year, and the plant would be operational by the middle of 2012.

State officials found the project would have no significant impact on the environment.

That analysis includes consideration of a nearly \$650,000 payment to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and emissions reduction credits to be purchased from a facility in Santa Clara - far from the smoggy Valley.

The Tesla Power Project and the East Altamont Energy Center, two much larger power plants that also would have been built just outside San Joaquin County in recent years, are no longer being considered.

Contact reporter Alex Breitler at (209) 546-8295 or abreitler@recordnet.com. Visit his blog at recordnet.com/breitlerblog.