

oratorion's end

ort in Alamo goes down in defeat



DOLPHS FOX CHARRELL

Jeanine Makely and another Measure A supporter roll up their signs at the Alamo Women's Club and call it a day after their weeks of efforts to convince people to vote to incorporate Alamo ended in defeat.

no teeth and always overruled is where I would want to go," she stated.

Opponents held no gatherings on election night, choosing instead to stay home and check ballot counts on their computers. This did not stop them from savoring their victory.

"This is a little guy's victory, a victory for the little guy," said opposition leader R. Jean Taylor. "'Pleased' isn't even the word I would use for how I'm feeling. It was a great, great victory."

Taylor, an at-times reluctant voice for the opposition, said she saw the way the incorporation movement was rolling ahead and decided she needed to take a hand in the future of Alamo. "It wasn't just me. I sowed the seeds, but the grass grew very big and very tall and choked out the incorporation movement's weeds," she said.

The lack of organization and the sense that incorporation was a "done deal" motivated Taylor to get involved. Her tipping point, she said, was the fundraising sign with the red thermometer erected by the Alamo Community Foundation at the shopping center on Stone Valley Road and the anger she felt at seeing incorporation moving forward with such strength. "The ACF thermometer ... I think my temperature rose with that."

Taylor threw time and money into stopping the incorporation movement: paying the fee to force a reconsideration by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO); using her Web site Alamospotlight.com to fight against incorporation; and even helping fund a study to contradict the conclusions drawn by the feasibility study used by LAFCO to make its decision to allow the vote on incorporation.

Ultimately, Taylor said, she doesn't think residents bought into the idea that financial plans drawn up two years ago would hold up during the current economic cli-

mate. "The fact is we're in a freefall. I don't think people were willing to vote due to the timing," she said.

Another charter member of the opposition, Tony Carnemolla, said the economy was one thing, but he felt some voted against Measure A simply because they feel the county is doing right by Alamo.

"I think the county's been doing a good job all the way down the line. Mary Piepho's done a great job," he said.

He acknowledged there have been times the county has not done everything that Alamo citizens would have wanted but he believes that the recent move toward incorporation has gotten their attention. "I think it will be a lot better than it has been," he said. "I think the county's ears are opened to the kinds of things we want."

Carnemolla congratulated the proponents on a hard fought campaign. "They did a really good job. They were well organized. They had a lot more signs out there than we did. But it was the will of the people. They won the battle of the signs, but we won the war for incorporation," he said.

Emotions ran very high during the campaign, with accusations of deception, underhanded dealings and sign stealing being tossed back and forth between the two groups. The question now is: Will the groups be able to bridge that gap?

"I don't know," said Kenber. "I think it can be healed but not for a long time. In elections like these, emotions run high and it's hard for people to get past that."

Despite the victory, Taylor echoed Kenber's comments. She said she doesn't see any healing coming soon either.

"Not by the people who called Cecily (Cecily Talbert-Barclay, a spokeswoman for the opposition) a liar, not by people who have personally attacked me and others against incorporation," she said. "It's going to be hard to get over that." ■

Timeline of Alamo Incorporation

Sept. 8, 2007: The petition drive to secure signatures needed to direct the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to begin a feasibility study on the proposed Town of Alamo gets under way at the Alamo Wine and Music Festival.

Sept. 27, 2007: A group of 30 incorporation opponents, led by Alamo resident Tony Carnemolla, holds an organizational meeting at the Alamo Women's Club.

Nov. 5, 2007: LAFCO receives a petition and application for the proposed incorporation of the Town of Alamo. The petition was signed by more than 25 percent of the registered voters in the area.

Nov. 14, 2007: Petition signatures are found to be sufficient by the Contra Costa County Elections office.

Aug. 7, 2008: Alamo Community Foundation hosts a community meeting at the Creekside Community Church in Alamo. LAFCO staff and its consultants present information and responded to questions.

Aug. 27, 2008: Opposition groups holds first meeting at home owned by R. Jean Taylor. Nearly 50 area residents attend organizational event.

Sept. 18, 2008: LAFCO conducts a public hearing on the proposed incorporation of Alamo. After a nearly five-hour hearing, LAFCO gives approval to the incorporation after Commissioner Martin McNair changes his vote.

Oct. 13, 2008: R. Jean Taylor pays \$2,500 to pay for a motion to reconsider the LAFCO approval of Alamo Incorporation.

Oct. 21, 2008: LAFCO conducts a public hearing to hear requests for reconsideration. After the hearing, commissioners deny the request.

Oct. 28, 2008: Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors adopts Resolution No. 2008/699 calling an election for March 3, 2009, to confirm the incorporation by a majority of the voters in Alamo. An election for five Town Council members is to be held in conjunction.

Nov. 12, 2008: LAFCO approves the Impartial Analysis to be placed on the March 3, 2009, ballot.

March 3, 2009: Voters in Alamo deny incorporation by a 66 percent to 34 percent. Voter turnout for the election was 59 percent.

The woman who would have been mayor

The March 3 special election in Alamo included 15 candidates for a town council in case Alamo incorporated, with each voter allowed to choose five.

The five candidates with the most votes would have served, with the top voter-getter being mayor.

Those results were as follows:

Grace Schmidt—10.45 percent (1,838)
Steve Mick—9.75 percent (1,715)
Vicki Koc—9.74 percent (1,713)
Randy Nahas—9.41 percent (1,655)
Bob Connelly—8.96 percent (1,576)
Karen McPherson—5.93 percent (1,043)
Vishwas More—5.77 percent (1,015)
Roger Smith—5.52 percent (971)
Diane Barley—5.41 percent (951)
Brad Waite—5.32 percent (936)
Dennis Johnson—4.58 percent (806)
Joe Rubay—4.55 percent (800)
John Morrow—3.99 percent (702)
Kevin Morrow—3.45 percent (606)
Karl Niyati—2.7 percent (474)
Write-In—1.46 percent (256)



Grace Schmidt

Candidate Brad Stribling, who had dropped out of the race, received 527 votes, or 3 percent.

The total number of votes cast for candidates was 17,584, by the 6,173 residents who voted for or against incorporation.