

LOCAL NEWS

Marin City eyes incorporation to become independent city



By **MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL** and **MARK PRADO** |

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The ironically named Marin City is the only community in Marin that calls itself a city — though it's not a city at all. Now, Marin City officials are considering changing that.

Officials will discuss this week whether to form a committee to investigate the pros and cons of incorporating the community as a true city. As it stands, Marin City is an unincorporated area of the county that relies on the county of

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Officials want to see whether establishing the community as an independent city would work financially and make political sense for the diverse community of 3,500 people.



"We are looking to explore it," said Johnathan Logan, director of the community services district, adding that the idea has never been fully vetted. "No one has ever put the legwork into it to see if it is feasible. But it is still very early in the process."

When the Marin City Community Services District board meets on Thursday it will decide whether to establish a committee to study the feasibility of becoming a city.

If Marin City established itself as an incorporated city, it would be the 12th city in Marin and would have its own city council and mayor and would have to set up police and fire protection. The stand-alone city plan would go before voters in the community before being finalized, Logan said.

"This is coming about because Marin City residents are looking at ways to have more local control over services here," he said.

The new city could be funded by sales tax from the Gateway Shopping Center in the community as well as possible redevelopment revenue. The most

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Marin City was born almost overnight in 1942 at the height of World War II as housing for workers fabricating Liberty ships. A marsh was filled to create the new town to provide housing for 6,000 workers at Marinship in Sausalito, where the Liberty ships were built. Housing was constructed by the government in six months on 356 acres.

After the war ended white workers were free to migrate and live where they pleased in Marin, but covenants kept blacks from moving to other parts of the county.

Until the 1970s Marin City's population was predominantly black, but as townhomes were added on hillsides and in the lower bowl area the community diversified ethnically. Whites and blacks each claim 38 percent of the population, Latinos 14 percent and Asians 11 percent, according to the 2010 census.

Marin City community activist Royce McLemore hopes to sit on the incorporation committee if it is formed.

"I think it has two sides; it would be nice to have that independence," said McLemore, who has also served on the community services district board. "But you really have to look at the costs. Do you have the money to run a city by yourself? Now the county can help the community if need be. Once you are a city you are on your own."

Peter Banning, who heads the Marin Local Agency Formation Commission, or LAFCO, which oversees government boundaries and whose approval is needed for incorporation, said the process is not easy.

"It is the most complex type of local reorganization that can be undertaken in California," he said.

That's because those petitioning for the change need to develop complex and costly studies to show that incorporation would work and be a benefit to the community.

"LAFCO has to make sure it can fly," Banning said. "There is the benefit of local

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The Marin City Community Services District Board of Directors will meet at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at the Marguerita C. Johnson Senior Center to consider establishing a committee to look at Marin City incorporation. The center is at 640 Drake Ave. in Marin City.

MARIN CITY AT A GLANCE

- Marin City took shape in 1942. A marsh was filled to create a new town to provide housing for Marinship workers to build liberty ships during World War II.
- In 1958 Marin City's bowl area was bulldozed and over the next several years 300 public housing units were built along with 104 co-op apartments and 82 single-family homes.
- The Board of Supervisors approved plans in 1992 for Marin City USA, a \$110 million mixed-use project that included 340 housing units, a 186,000-square-foot shopping center, parks, ballfields, a library and recreation facility, as well as other improvements.
- The population today is 3,500; once predominately black, the population today is diverse. Whites and blacks each account for 38 percent of the population, Latinos 14 percent and Asians 11 percent, according to the 2010 census.

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Monday, September 14



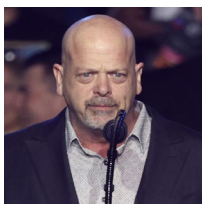
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