

Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment,

The recent election resulted in the approval of Measure "Z", the county wide one half percent sales taxes. I see, by the local news media, that the County Board of Supervisors is now contemplating the make-up of the Advisory or Oversight committee, called for in the Measure, which will recommend how the Board should allocate revenue generated by the new tax. The Board of Supervisors was able to reach a partial consensus, agreeing the new group should consist of nine members, five of which would be appointed by the County Board of Supervisors, each representing a County district. There was discussion but no agreement as to the representation of the other four advisory positions. My question is "Why wasn't the number of advisory committee positions and their representation settled and included in the original drafting of Measure "Z"? The only information that the voter had, on the ballot, was that an advisory committee would be necessary. Putting the cart before the horse has resulted in excessive time and discussion used to formulate a committee when they should now be contemplating the appointments to the positions. The five positions, to be appointed by the Board, make sense but they had better be exceptionally careful with the representation and appointments of the other four committee positions. Another question that I have is the terms of the committee members. Will each of the nine positions start and end on the same dates? This is what happened to the oversight committee for the Eureka City School bonds in two thousand two. If the terms of the positions are not staggered, there will be no continuity over the years. I am hoping that the newly passed Eureka City Schools Measure 'S' will also have staggered terms for its members. I don't know whether or not the Oversight Committee terms for the College of the Redwoods bond is staggered but I recently read that C.R. was advertising for applicants to fill four vacant positions for their Oversight Committee. I wonder why? Advisory boards or oversight committees (call them what you will) are only as good as the governing board wants them to be. I served on one for four years and became very frustrated. The committee has no vested authority to do anything and can be rendered useless by those who do have the power. A committee member is only there to make suggestions and give advice. If something is awry, you can speak up and hope to be heard. Oversight committees for school bonds are mandatory in the state of California. I don't believe that they are mandatory in the instance of the County Board of Supervisors. Hopefully the present county board members will pay heed to an advisory committee, supplying them with necessary information and listening to the ideas and suggestions that will be directed to them.

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