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Antioch, county look for common ground on annexation

By Paul Bugarino
Contra Costa Times
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ANTIOCH -- City and county leaders are trying to clear several hurdles that could stall annexation of a potentially lucrative waterfront area.

Antioch wants to annex 481 acres of land to the northeast where GenOn Energy Inc., formerly Mirant Corp., is building a 760-megawatt power plant.

But before any annexation is considered, Antioch and Contra Costa County must reach a deal that spells out how money from future development in the area will be shared.

Talks between the two sides over that point have stalled, said Victor Carniglia, a city planning consultant.

In hopes of reaching an agreement, Antioch leaders approved a plan Jan. 14 for city and county staff members to work on resolving the revenue-sharing issue, and address issues such as sewer and water extensions in the area and possible residential opposition to development.

Further, Antioch may have to annex an additional 197 acres to satisfy county land-planning requirements. That additional parcel includes a neighborhood off Viera Avenue that drew international attention in 2009 because of the Jaycee Dugard kidnapping case.

Development of the industrial land may include the formation of a redevelopment district to remove blighted buildings and add utilities, as well as a port authority to utilize the area's deep water channel and railroad access.

Council members Gary Agopian and Mary Rocha will sit on a subcommittee to oversee the joint effort.

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underutilized area has tremendous potential for development, which could bring much-needed tax revenue to Antioch for years to come, Agopian said.

"There are a few hurdles we need to get past, but we shouldn't let them be barriers to what it can be," he said.

The plan approved Jan. 14 is an opportunity for the two sides to focus on the best ways to stimulate economic development, said county Supervisor Federal Glover, whose district includes Antioch and the county land sought for annexation.

PG&E and GenOn, both of which need the annexation to proceed with the power plant plans, will pay costs associated with staff time and consultants, Carniglia said.

The county's Local Agency Formation Commission, which is responsible for boundary changes, will consider a request by Antioch next

month to provide water and sewer service to GenOn so that it can continue construction.

Without the agreement, construction of the \$800 million power plant could be jeopardized.

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