

**Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors
February 13, 2007
Agenda Item#D1 – Chumash Expansion**

(The following picks up at the introductory remarks by Chairman Armenta.)

Chairman Armenta: Thank you, Chairman Firestone and members of the board.

First of all, I believe this whole – I don't think it's a hearing – although sometimes it feels as if it is. But this whole meeting could have been avoided with a simple phone call. One phone call. That phone call was never received.

On August 3rd of 2006, I sent a letter to Supervisor Firestone's office. Along with that letter was attached a resolution asking for the county's support and informing the county we were going to start informal conversations with the Governor. We never received a response.

I'm not too sure why and I'm not too sure that the rest of the supervisors are aware of this. That was before we went to speak with the Governor's office.

We had one meeting with the Governor's office. We belong to a consortium of tribes who were meeting with the Governor's office in regards to renegotiations. All those tribes asked for similar things to see what the governor's office would say. Every tribe asked for 5,000 or more machines as did ours. Although those machines were not able to be put into one facility, and as the new compacts are ratified, I believe county counsel will be able to look them up on the internet and verify that.

The negotiations between the tribe and the State of California and few people in here have acknowledged it today are between a tribal sovereign government and the government of the State of California.

When we went into those negotiations, I made it very clear to the staff at the governor's office - and this could have been cleared up in a phone call – that we wanted written participation from the county in our new compact.

The Governor's office will not release the conversations to the public, what we have, but I have no fear of doing so. I have said it year and year and year again. It's time we work together and not apart.

I thought those days were coming. Several days ago I sent a letter to Supervisor Firestone and Mr. Brown acknowledged receiving the letter. Well before I actually found out about the meeting. I actually found out about this meeting from POLO. Not the county. From POLO on a web blast that they sent to their membership.

Should there not be mutual respect? I believe there should be. Although we have had those conversations with the governor's office our conversations have halted. We had one formal meeting with his staff. No meeting with the governor.

We are no longer part of that group - and it wasn't five tribes it was actually seven tribes - we are no longer negotiating with those tribes. Although I did make it very clear that we would support the other six tribes and their efforts to negotiate and we will continue to do so.

But as we, in the future, go into our negotiations, we will notify the county. We will have the opportunity to meet with the county in regards to the document itself. Once an agreement has come upon the State and our tribe.

There's tremendous amount of rumors based on taking just sections of a document, if you would, and individuals are screaming, "The sky is falling." Yet, they don't know the facts behind the meetings. They don't know the facts behind the document. Nor will they have the privilege to have those facts.

As I said, the conversations are with the tribe and the governor and the tribe will include the county when that time comes.

We'll continue to talk about negotiations. It's in the best interest of our tribe to talk about negotiations. We will through time and time again have conversations about expansion and we're going to continue to do it as a tribal government because that's our right - and we're going to do it.

Tribes throughout the United States are doing it and having these conversations with their elected officials from their State on a daily basis. They are having them with their membership on a daily basis. We'll continue to have those and if something fruitful comes out of those conversations, I will contact the county not through somebody's web blast. But I will do it personally.

I don't have an issue with that. I thought that's the relationship we were actually working towards.

I don't know if the county or board members have any questions for me, but I would certainly be happy to answer questions, but as I said - a simple phone call would have made this so easy and quite honestly not wasted the time of the supervisors or staff.

Supervisor Firestone: Well, if I may, we're trying to find that first letter because I do not remember receiving it and it would be something that I think I would have noted.

And regarding your negotiations - the second letter we talked about it, we did not actually receive it. Apparently there was a discrepancy between when you wrote it and when it was actually sent but we now have it and I think we can acknowledge it.

Thirdly, regarding this hearing, I don't know what or when you heard from POLO, they don't know, when, as soon as it was determined definitively that we were going to talk about this today, your office was immediately notified. I talked to Mr. Cohen, and I believe Mr. Stark did, also, so that was the first time we were absolutely certain that the, that the, what POLO said I can't be responsible for, so I just want to clear that up.

Supervisor Wolf: I have a question. You talked about us receiving a second letter, I don't have a copy of that, so -

Supervisor Firestone: I don't believe it was to the Board, generally, uh, it was regarding, uh, uh the annexation if I re...

Chairman Armenta: Yes, the applications.

Supervisor Firestone: And wanting to talk with the County about that, and I don't think it was copied.

Supervisor Wolf: Well, I think in the future if we get letters, especially when we have this kind of hearing it would be important for all the Board Members to get the letters.

Chairman Armenta: And I'll be certain to direct our staff to copy every Supervisor on every letter from this point on.

Supervisor Wolf: Thank you.

Supervisor Carbajal: Mr. Chair, this does raise an interesting question and I think hearings are always helpful to engage the public. The public sometimes wants hearings, but I think Mr. Armenta raises a good point. I think we need to look at how we can also continue to have conversations instead of having a hearing, which I think is also a good avenue to discuss these issues, but I am not sure that we have exhausted all of our ability to continue to have the type of dialogue, continue to raise these issues with the tribe, in a way that could be more constructive and productive. I guess I just want to echo what Mr. Armenta is saying, that a phone call, a meeting, could have at least gotten better communication and understanding even if we had this hearing, but a better preemptive dialogue to have the conversation ahead of time would have been constructive.

Supervisor Wolf: I'd like to also say that its shocking to me that Mr. Armenta found out about this hearing via the internet, and that he was not notified, and I don't know what our policy is, but it seems that -

Supervisor Firestone: Supervisor, I should be clear about it, I don't know what he found out from the internet or what the internet thought, but as soon as it was determined that we were going to have a hearing, we immediately notified the tribe.

Supervisor Wolf: OK, thank you for that, for clearing that up.

Supervisor Firestone: I think what he heard about on the internet was anticipating something which may or may not occur.

Supervisor Wolf: OK.

Supervisor Carbajal: Mr. Firestone, I am just going to say how I think it feels. It feels like based on some concern by the public, we have paraded the tribe in front of us to tell us, what are you doing? That just seems so counter productive to me, it just doesn't feel right. It just doesn't feel right.

Supervisor Firestone: Supervisor, if I may answer that in as much as it is the third district, this entity is the largest employer in the County. It has a huge impact on the third district and the Santa Ynez Valley. I would submit to you that if this were in the first district, or the second district, that you would feel the same urgency.

Audience: Clapping

Supervisor Firestone: Let's get something clear here. We are going to have hearing, and it is going to be a very reasonable and informational hearing, and we will not have any expressions in this hearing. We cannot. That is not appropriate. Can I have that understanding? And if you feel like demonstrating, perhaps leave the room and do it outside somewhere. We will insist on that.

Supervisor Carbajal: Mr. Firestone, I guess just to respond to what you said, I've never said that I am not concerned about the impacts, and I have never said that I am not concerned about working with the tribe, to try to get to the point that we can have these mutual issues of interest to all of us addressed. So, it is just the procedure of what is occurring is what I am concerned about. So that, that's what I meant by that. It is not an issue of whether it is in my district or your district, or somebody else's district. It is just a matter of my own personal sentiments of how this proceeding feels.

Supervisor Firestone: Very well. Mr. Armenta. Are there any more questions for the Chairman? Do you have anything you wish to add? Thank you very much for coming here and being a part of this.

Chairman Armenta: Thank you very much.

(Armenta leaves the building)

Supervisor Gray: Mr. Chairman, I have a question as far as agenda, oh, not for you Chairman (Armenta), the other Chairman. We've got two Chairman here. I am surrounded by Chairman. (laughter). There are people here for other items, what is your guestimate of how long this is going to be?

Supervisor Firestone: We now have some 24, 26 speakers. I have pleaded with everyone not to use your full time. I think things will be repeated. But the points will be made.

Supervisor Gray: So, 72 minutes, roughly?

Supervisor Firestone: I hope not, but we can try and see how it goes. We have no ..

Supervisor Gray: Just so those who are here for other issues know.

Supervisor Firestone: It could be as much as an hour, yes.

Supervisor Firestone: The first speaker I have, and this was given to me, is Michelle Griffoul.