

**Angwin development opponents submit initiative signatures**

June 11, 2012 8:30 pm  •  [PETER JENSEN](http://napavalleyregister.com/search/?l=50&sd=desc&s=start_time&f=html&byline=PETER%20JENSEN)

A potential ballot initiative that aims to limit growth in Angwin by changing the area’s General Plan designations has gathered enough signatures to qualify for the November election.

But a lawyer for Pacific Union College, which owns the land, argues that the initiative would have far broader impacts, and would adversely affect the Napa County Airport and Napa State Hospital.

In anticipation of the initiative qualifying to make the ballot, the Napa County Board of Supervisors last week directed staff to analyze the potential impact it could have on the county’s General Plan, as well as legal and fiscal effects.

The report is expected to be completed before the election would be called on Aug. 7.

Napa County conservationist Volker Eisele said supporters gathered 6,500 signatures to support a petition to get the initiative on the November ballot, exceeding the 4,600 signatures required. Registrar of Voters John Tuteur and elections staff will review the signatures before certifying them.

The initiative, if approved by voters, would change the county’s General Plan designation of three areas in Angwin and restrict their development potential.

It would change the designation of a strip of land on Howell Mountain Road south of Angwin’s commercial center from urban residential to agricultural.

It would also affect another area of land adjacent to the campus core and west of Angwin’s airport, which has an urban residential designation. The initiative would change that to public-institutional and prevent it from being subdivided for housing units.

It would not affect land Napa County has approved for 191 housing units in Angwin, or the designation of the 8-acre commercial center.

Eisele has said that the goal of the initiative is to keep a developer from buying the Howell Mountain Road properties, moving the commercial center farther south, and freeing up land to pursue more housing units. One of the sites approved for housing is next to the commercial center.

Changing the other property to public-institutional would let the college use it consistent with the rest of its campus, but wouldn’t allow housing subdivisions, Eisele said.

But Kristina Lawson, a lawyer representing the college, argues that the initiative would also impact the Napa County Airport and Napa State Hospital, which have the public-institutional designation.

Lawson wrote in a letter to the supervisors that the initiative would prevent those institutions from subdividing their parcels, in conflict with the General Plan’s intentions for those areas.

Rachel Sater, a lawyer working for the initiative’s proponents, disagreed with Lawson’s analysis and argued that the initiative wouldn’t affect any airport property in the county.

Lawson’s letter asked that the county’s report analyze if the initiative would prevent the college from expanding or upgrading its wastewater treatment plant. The initiative intends to redesignate the plant’s property agricultural watershed, which subjects it to the voter-approval provisions of Measure P. Lawson asked that staff analyze whether the upgrades would be a violation of the measure.

Sater’s letter states that the initiative, if approved by voters, would permit the upgrades to the facility.

Lawson’s letter argues that the initiative would directly impact the county’s ability to provide affordable housing, while Sater contends it would have no effect. Lawson also asked staff to analyze whether the initiative would affect the college’s land-use entitlement and if the county would owe compensation to the college because of the changes to those rights.

Given the disparity in opinions, Supervisor Diane Dillon said county analysis was clearly warranted.

“There’s real basic differences of opinions from these two law firms about what this initiative says,” Dillon said.

Eisele said it took supporters less than a month to gather the signatures by standing on street corners and in front of grocery stores in St. Helena, Napa and American Canyon.

Notice of the intent to gather signatures was printed in the Napa Valley Register the first week of May, and Eisele said the signatures were submitted three weeks ago.

“People don’t want development in Angwin — period,” Eisele said of the short time needed to gather signatures.