



# NEWS



## News Headlines 3/23/2017

- Fire tears through vacant San Bernardino house
- Here's the next steps in dissolving Upland Fire Department

## Fire tears through vacant San Bernardino house

Beatriz Valenzuela, SB Sun

Posted: March 22, 2017, 4:33 PM



**San Bernardino County Firefighters** mop up the scene of a fire at a vacant house at the 800 block of N Mt. View Avenue on Wednesday, March 22, 2017 in San Bernardino, Ca. No injuries were reported. The house was slated to be demolished in the next few weeks according to Battalion Chief Dan Filter. (Micah Escamilla, The Sun/SCNG)

SAN BERNARDINO >> A fire gutted a vacant building Wednesday morning in San Bernardino, and fire officials are working to determine the cause.

The fire was reported before 9:30 a.m. in the 900 block of Mountain View Avenue, according to fire dispatch reports.

Smoke and flames could be seen coming out of the empty house as crews battled back the blaze. No injuries were reported.

The house is slated to be demolished in the next few weeks, according to San Bernardino Battalion Chief Dan Filter.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170322/fire-tears-through-vacant-san-bernardino-house>

---

## Here's the next steps in dissolving Upland Fire Department

Liset Márquez, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Posted: March 22, 2017, 11:03 PM

SAN BERNARDINO >> When the Local Agency Formation Commission meets Thursday afternoon, it will not only consider annexing 3 Comments to **San Bernardino County Fire's** service area but whether or not to include San Antonio Heights in the proposal.

In December, Upland and San Bernardino County Fire adopted resolutions which specifically requested that LAFCO — the agency that oversees annexations — begin the transfer process. This proposal would transfer fire station properties, employees, assets, obligations, as well as liabilities into County Fire and its Valley Service Zone.

But in January, LAFCO staff recommended an amendment to expand the proposed annexation to include the unincorporated community of San Antonio Heights.

That would mean property owners in San Antonio Heights — along with Upland landowners — would have to pay an annual \$150 parcel tax, which may increase 3 percent annually.

It's "a question of equity," LAFCO Executive Director Kathleen Rollings-McDonald said by phone Tuesday afternoon.

Currently, Station 12 in San Antonio Heights is staffed by a two-man crew from San Bernardino County Fire, while the amended proposal would allow for three firefighters at the station, she said.

The city has four fire stations with 12 firefighters, but because Upland Station 162 is only 1 1/2 miles away from Station 12, 162 would close, Upland Deputy City Manager Jeannette Vagnozzi said. The property at Station 162, 2046 N. San Antonio Ave., would remain with the city and could be repurposed.

The end result of LAFCO's plans would be four fire stations and 15 firefighters serving both Upland and San Antonio Heights.

Staff at the agency presented the modified proposal to both Upland and the county in January, Rollings-McDonald said.

"No one submitted objections on behalf of either the city or the county," she said. "We don't have a position from either side."

Upland city officials formally began the annexation process in November as a cost-cutting measure for the financially strapped city.

"We look at the finances to make sure this is sustainable. Everyone is aware of the financial distress the city of Upland is currently in," Rollings-McDonald said. "Providing fire suppression is an important aspect of what public service is. To maintain that is of paramount concern to the commission and the staff."

At Thursday's hearing, both the city and the county will get five minutes each to state its case for annexation, Vagnozzi said.

"This is a step forward toward financial stability, but it's not the complete answer for us," she said.

As a small agency, it will be more cost-effective for Upland to be part of the county. For example, the county's projected ongoing costs in 2020 is still less than what the city proposed this year, Vagnozzi said.

Upland resident and retired Los Angeles County firefighter Steve Bierbaum said he plans on attending the hearing.

His biggest concern, "is to make sure that all of the pertinent information regarding the potential annexation is public."

Barring any setbacks, the annexation is expected to be completed by July 22, she said.

Vagnozzi warned that if opposition derailed the measure, then Upland residents could expect their service level to be compromised.

"We would have to start planning a reduction in service levels citywide. We would have to close a fire station and layoff nine firefighters," she said.

The annexation process is about 65 percent complete, and neither the city nor the county can withdraw at this time, Rollings-McDonald said.

Once the commission makes its recommendation Thursday, LAFCO will mail a form to registered voters and parcel owners, which will allow them to protest the annexation. This will begin what is known as a 30-day process of reconsideration.

Anything above 50 percent protest from of the number of registered voters or parcel owners can terminate the process, while anything between 25-49 percent would trigger an election.

If registered protests come in from fewer than 25 percent, Rollings-McDonald said the proposal would be approved.

There are a little over 21,900 parcels in the modified proposal and 42,000 registered voters. For the election to occur, LAFCO would need to get opposition letters from roughly 12,000 voters.

During this protest period, a hearing will be held at Upland City Hall.

Thursday's hearing will begin at 1 p.m., Norton Regional Event Center, 1601 E. Third St. No. 1000, San Bernardino.

<http://www.dailybulletin.com/government-and-politics/20170322/heres-the-next-steps-in-dissolving-upland-fire-department>