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Critics of Fair Board give members a month-old cake

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COSTA MESA A nearly month-old cake was delivered to the OC Fair Board Thursday by residents criticizing board members for sitting on a decision to speak out against the sale of the fairgrounds.

"They've abdicated their responsibility as stewards of the fairground and as such they need to step down," said Brian Lochrie, a spokesman for the Orange County Fairgrounds Preservation Society.

The sheet cake, with the words "Let 'em Eat Cake" written in black icing, was meant to be delivered to the board at its Feb. 2 meeting, which was cancelled. A rescheduled meeting Feb. 9 was cancelled due to a lack of quorum.

On Thursday, board members asked staffers to put together a strategic plan concerning the sale of the site that will be brought back early March.

Members of the society, who are behind the "Derail the Sale" movement, asked board members to decry the sale of the site. The residents criticized the board for instigating the sale of the fairgrounds, which was put up for sale by the state and received a high bid of \$56.5 million last month.

Chairwoman Kristina Dodge read from a prepared statement: "The Fair Board's commitment is and always will be the preservation of the OC Fair and the improvement of fair governance through local control. The board's first desire is absolutely for it to remain at its current location. If the realities of the economy or other factors make that impractical, the board remains committed to the continuation of the OC Fair."

Board member David Padilla, who has previously endorsed the efforts to halt the sale, said the board's governance policies have attributed to weakening accountability and transparency, and ultimately led to the predicament the Fair Board faces.

Joyce Tucker, also a board member, said the board's goal to privatize the fairgrounds backfired.

"I think we regret it, and we have to do something about it," she said.

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