



Earlier today the Formentera Council held its plenary meeting for the month of September. To start, participants were given an account of a government commission's report, drafted Friday 18 September, which addresses the approval granted by the Govern Balear office —Direcció General de Sostenibilitat de Costa i del Mar del Ministeri d'Agricultura, Alimentació i Medi Ambient— to a provisional redrawing of public coastal lines in Formentera. The commission's report, as explained the CiF's town and country planning councillor, «calls for changes to be made to bring [the Direcció General's redrawn coastal boundaries] in line with the agreement reached in 2006 by the political groups and local population of Formentera; namely, that landowners be returned their property but that that action not affect territorial protections in place». Indeed, the councillor went on to indicate that, «under the newly revised coastal demarcations, a protection of coastlines is not upheld». Alejandra Ferrer expressed her concern over the fact the Direcció General's plan «omits the dune protection in place up to this time and that, furthermore, many public parking lots and wooden promenades are reclassified as private land». Still more public facilities would be lost or left unprotected by the changes, she said.

In related action, plenary attendants —minus representatives of the Partido Popular (PP)— passed a motion to urge the Direcció General to make the changes necessary to put the redrawn coastlines in line with the Formentera government commission's report. That report asks for the document agreed upon in 2006 —entitled «a fair division for Formentera»— to be used as the basis for the current redrafting.

Another vote called for the Consell d'Entitats —a committee of local industry representatives—to convene before the next scheduled period of public commentaries and objections to the coastline redraft. The still to-be-convened meeting will provide Consell members the opportunity to be informed of the various reports issued on the matter as well as the Council's own stance and, thus, obtain input regarding future action. In turn, agreements reached by Consell members will be passed on to the responsible authorities so that «Formenterers once again assume control of the coastline», said Ferrer, who remained firm in her belief that coastal protections could be reconciled with a return of property to its original owners. Councillor Ferrer highlighted the strong spirit of consensus captured in the previous 2006 agreement, and bemoaned the Partido Popular's departure from those terms — «a unilateral break from the accord pacted with residents and political spheres of the island».

Report from councillor of environment

Environmental councillor Daisee Aguilera, at the request of the Partido Popular, came before members of the plenary to speak about activities overseen by her department in the councillor's first months of office. Aguilera reported on island-wide cleaning services and described her office's projects for months to come, including a push to regulate anchorage on the Formentera coastline and rezoning across Estany des Peix. From the opposition, the PSOE (Spanish Socialist Worker's Party) commended the department's work while the PP decried what it called less-than-ideal cleaning services.

Council Proclamation

Unanimous approval was accorded to a motion —put forth by two groups: Socialistes de Formentera and Gent per Formentera— to issue an official declaration concerning providing shelter to refugees. Proponents have aimed to encourage Madrid to take action to alleviate the current humanitarian crisis, urging the Spanish government to accept refugees sent by the European Commission and push for funding increases for the asylum granting process. As CiF councillor of social welfare Vanessa Parellada pointed out, the Council's proclamation also advocates for the creation of projects to raise awareness among the Spanish people.

Plenary resolutions

Plenary attendants put their stamp of approval on two different motions: preliminary ratification of a modified fiscal ordinance that regulates the school of music and dance tax and the proposed modification of a fiscal ordinance regulating a free wifi service that —explained councillor of infrastructure and transport Rafael González— «would create free Internet access points in public areas». Those two resolutions received the backing of every political group except the PP. Then, a resolution that had the support of all parties: nominations to the Consell d'Entitats. Finally —despite the opposition of groups outside of the governing party— the plenary brought approval for a resolution to nominate members of the Formentera Council to other branches of the public administration.

Propositions

A proposition extended by the socialist party to video record the plenary meetings of the Formentera Council received unanimous endorsement. Other propositions advanced by the socialists and given the go-ahead included a motion to draft and implement an administration-wide comprehensive plan for equality (in Catalan: Pla Integral d'Igualtat) and another to create and promote a programme to combat domestic abuse. Councillor Parellada brought up that both issues would be central to her department's work this legislative sitting and added that in some cases work was already being done.

Another motion by the PSOE —this time a proposal to create a special commission charged

with policies, plans and measures to extend the tourist season— was rejected 12 to 3. CiF tourism councillor Alejandra Ferrer indicated that such work was precisely the mission of the local tourism advisory board, el Patronat Municipal de Turisme.

Also dismissed thanks to “no” votes from the governing party was a proposition from PP Formentera to create special work areas for each of the local political parties. On that subject, Bartomeu Escandell, councillor of the presidential cabinet, indicated this was due to problems of available space in administration facilities. Asserting many of the Council's own departments already share office space, he asked the different political groups to «do their best to consolidate their working areas». Another PP proposition —calling for an investigation into the causes of an electrical failure and smoke discharged from the Es Ca Marí substation— received determining “no” votes from both the governing and socialist parties.

Plenary attendants gave their unanimous support to a Compromís amb Formentera measure to prune the trees at the entry of the la Mola public school, a move environmental councillor Daisee Aguilera indicated had already been planned for the coming days. And, with “no” votes from the governing party, the plenary saw the shelving of the PP's suggestion to draft an improvement and conservation plan for the “Ses Platgetes” beach in Es Caló. Members of the governing party stated that, though certain improvements were indeed necessary, they disagreed with the group's presentation of the plan.

In a move that received the green light of all representatives at the plenary, the governing party put forth a proposal —based on a modification of a measure previously advanced by the PP— to oversee improvements to the countryside thoroughfare Camí des torrent de s'alga. According to Formentera's councillor of infrastructure, work will begin at summer's end and, though crews will forgo the use of asphalt, the work is designed to guarantee absolute longevity.

Another measure —drafted by the governing party as a modification upon an earlier proposal by the PP— was put forth to retool bus stops to include computerised updates, time table updates and remodels that make possible the addition of new stops. As transport councillor Rafael González explained, the unanimously-endorsed measure establishes a timeline conceived at reducing rider wait times and hence travel times overall.

Finally, plenary members endorsed a measure calling for a permanent relocation of a children's park in the town of Sant Ferran. As Councillor González explained, the Formentera Council is searching for an adequate location for the park, which has been temporarily relocated to the

town's public school, thus creating space for the currently under-construction low-cost public housing. Until construction of the housing units is completed, the interim park on the school grounds will be open Monday through Friday from 4:30 to 8 pm and weekends from 10 am to 8 pm.