

Belmont Advisory Committee
November 1977
Redwood City Tribune

Dirty linen is hung out in Belmont

By OTTO TALLENT

Belmont's city family "hung out its dirty linen" and council members were accused of "playing politics" in two explosive controversies at last night's Belmont City Council meeting which lasted more than five hours.

City Clerk James W. McLaughlin charged that City Atty. Kenneth M. Dickerson was in error in rulings at the previous council meeting regarding signing of Bel Arbor and Chateau condominium final maps. McLaughlin also said that City Manager James P. DeChaine misrepresented the official seal of the city to bring about recording of the condominium subdivision maps with the county recorder.

Mrs. Eve Sterry, a former councilwoman declared it was a serious matter that the seal had been used by someone other than the city clerk and "I think this matter should be looked into."

Councilwoman Pamela Ketcham declared that "I think it is important to follow through." She said it should be "at the state level."

DeChaine denied any violation on his part, declaring that "everything was done with the legal opinion of the city attorney" and action taken was "the expressed desire of the city council."

Councilmen William H. Hardwick and John J. McInerney declared all legal requirements had been checked by the city attorney.

The city attorney had left last night's meeting before the matter cropped up. Vice Mayor Walter Worthge recommended that Dickerson respond not only to McLaughlin's charges but to allegations of others that he erred in his interpretations.

The action which precipitated McLaughlin's charges was the approval at 1:10 a.m. on Nov. 15 of a final map and resolutions that would allow the 200-plus Bel Arbor apartment complex to convert to condominium, as requested by Theodore Blumberg.

McLaughlin was on vacation at that time and he had instructed his deputy not to sign the final maps on the grounds they were incomplete. Acting Mayor Worthge appointed Hardwick as city clerk pro tem, and the two of them signed the documents. McLaughlin contends the law states no one other than himself or his deputy is authorized to sign the documents.

In another volatile episode, Floyd Sampson, president of the Skymont-Plateau Homeowners Association, declared "I'm damned unhappy" about a proposal to eliminate presidents of homeowners associations from appointment to the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and for delays by the council in taking final action. He had been recommended by his association as a representative on the CAC.

After considerable argument, Hardwick moved and McInerney seconded the motion that the council prohibit presidents of homeowners associations from serving on the CAC, but that the policy not be implemented until Oct. 1, 1978. This would have allowed Sampson to serve in both capacities. The motion was voted down, 3 to 2.

A motion that the policy would be that no president of homeowners associations be allowed to serve on the CAC, to take effect immediately, was passed 3 to 2, with Worthge, Ketcham and Gonsalves voting in favor. Sampson had declared that those were the ones who had advocated in their election campaigns opposition to "petty politics." Sampson was an unsuccessful council candidate in that election.

The council by a 4 to 0 vote passed an urgency ordinance establishing criteria to provide permits for sewer connections not to exceed six in any one calendar month in the San Juan sewer moratorium area in the northwestern section of Belmont. The city engineer was authorized to provide backup pumper trucks for emergency service.

*Citizens Advisory Committee
Redwood City Tribune
August 1976 - Oct 1978*

Belmont plans to publicly query committee hopefuls

AUG 11 1976
Interviews of applicants for appointments to city commissions and boards will be open to the public, the Belmont City Council decreed Monday night.

The Citizens Advisory Committee had proposed interviews by a subcommittee of three members so as not to constitute a quorum. Fearing that approach would circumvent the Brown Act governing open meetings, the council decided to ask the 15-member committee to meet as a whole, but with three persons doing the interviewing.

A motion by Councilman Robert A. Jones that the advisory committee be required to give names and background of all candidates, including a ranking of the first five for consideration, was voted down 2 to 3, with the newest members of the council opposed.

Jones said council members would be improperly delegating our authority if we receive only one name" from the committee.

Vice Mayor Frank Gonsalves, who spearheaded appointment of the citizens committee, and Council members Walter Worthge and Pamela Ketcham backed the committee's proposal to present only

one recommendation to the council for a particular appointment "to keep it out of politics."

The council stipulated, however, that it receive copies of all applications.

The council also introduced an ordinance to provide a Design Control District, which includes the downtown area on Ralston Avenue from Twin Pines to Hiller Street and on El Camino Real from the San Mateo to the San Carlos city limits.

Planner Neal Martin said the Early California theme which earlier had been in the proposed design ordinance was eliminated because "people have had a problem determining what Early California is."

The council turned down federal funds made available through the state to conduct a traffic safety analysis in Belmont. The city was offered \$15,000 to hire a consultant, and the firm of Tammen, Johnson, Kenzel and Mimiaga of Walnut Creek submitted the low bid of \$7,000.

Jones' motion to turn down the federal funds

was approved 4 to 1, with Mayor William Hardwick voting no.

A resolution approving an agreement with the San Mateo County Arts Council for joint use of Twin Pines Manor Building was approved 5-0.

The council also approved in concept the submission of application for funds for storm drainage improvements in Sterling Downs.

Brouhaha brewing in Belmont

By TERRY ROBERTSON

OCT 4 1978
3
Six Belmont Citizen Advisory Committee members are furious with the appointment of a city planning commissioner and have charged the city council with circumventing the committee's role.

The 13-member committee was established to advise council members on board and commission appointments.

It is composed of two representatives from each of the city's homeowner associations and one member-at-large.

At least six members are outraged over the appointment of Joe Green to the planning commission without the committee's approval. Green is a former Belmont Heights Homeowners Association president.

Mayor Walter Worthge and Councilmen Frank Gonsalves and William Hardwick voted to appoint Green at the Council's Sept. 27 meeting. Councilwomen Pamela Ketcham and Margaret Buckley were not present.

Most CAC members agree with the

(Please Turn to Pg. 2, Col. 4)

Committee turning red over Green selection

OCT 4 1978
(Continued from Page 1)

belief of Committee Vice Chairman Mark Reeves that the council's action spells the end of the committee which was formed two years ago "to take the politics out of council appointments" by advising on appointments and other issues.

"The council's actions have made the CAC an ineffective body," Reeves said. "It's clear the days of the CAC are numbered."

Green, committee members contend, should not have been appointed since he applied for the position on Sept. 9, four days after the deadline the council had set, and since the committee already had recommended three others to fill four commission seats.

Other committee members refused comment on the issue, but will meet with members in a closed meeting tomorrow night to decide what actions to take. Seven of the members' terms have expired since Green's appointment, but they still are officially considered members until they are reappointed or successors are chosen.

Worthge and Councilman Hardwick argue that an interview with Green wasn't necessary since he had interviewed with the committee for a position on the commission a year ago and his application was still active.

Green said he was under the same impression.

"I was told a year ago that my application would remain active and that I wouldn't be required to interview again," he said. "I'm not in a position to question the council's action. They apparently saw fit to appoint me."

CAC members point out that only four of the current members had ever heard Green's original inter-

view.

Possibly the strongest argument in favor of the Council's action, was noted by Worthge.

"The CAC is an advisory body," he pointed out emphatically. "They do not make decisions. The council makes the final decisions and appointments."

He also said as far as he is concerned the issue is dead.

"It's over and I don't want to redo history," he said.

The issue isn't dead, however. Councilwoman Buckley, who walked out of the Sept. 27 council meeting in protest because Worthge refused to take the appointments off the agenda until Councilwoman Ketcham returned from vacation, says she will put an item on next Tuesday night's council agenda to discuss the appointments review process.

"I have nothing against Mr. Green," she said, "but if (Worthge) takes it off the agenda there is going to be fireworks."

The controversy began when the CAC received a letter from Mayor Worthge on Sept. 18 advising it that Green had applied for the position and that it was "up to your committee whether you desire to include Mr. Green in your list of applicants for recommendation to the council."

After what Committee Chairman Michael Allen termed "serious consideration" at the Sept. 20 meeting, the Citizens Advisory Committee unanimously rejected Green's application essentially because he hadn't interviewed with them within the time limit — a violation of the policy the city council had adopted when the council was formed.

The committee had just recommended Richard Clinton, and two incumbents, Steve Vartan and William Moore, to fill the seats.

*Clifford Robinson com mellee
Redwood City Tribune
Oct 1978*

Controversial selection

Belmont is seething over

Commission appointment

OCT 19 1978

By **TERRY ROBERTSON**

Some unresolved questions were brought to light last week by a member of Belmont's Citizen Advisory Committee in regard to the city council's controversial appointment of Joe Green to the city's planning commission three weeks ago.

The council created a stir by appointing Green to the commission without going through the formal interview process of the Citizen's Advisory Committee, a committee the council had set up to implement a philosophy of greater citizen participation and to take the politics out of council appointments.

Mayor Walter Worthge and Councilman Frank Gonsalves, two of the three council members who voted for Green, defend the council's actions by saying that Green's application was still active from the first time he applied to the commission a year ago. They also stress that the CAC is merely an advisory committee formed by the council and that the council refuses to be led around by the CAC.

In an open letter addressed to Mayor Walter Worthge and Councilmen William Hardwick and Frank Gonsalves, CAC member Robert LaFranchi pointed out that when Green applied to the council last year, he was neither recommended by the CAC nor approved by the City Council. However, he did receive his only vote from Worthge.

LaFranchi also charged that the mayor has admitted soliciting Green's appointment after the deadline because "the mayor wanted a person in favor of growth in Belmont on the Planning Commission."

(This has been confirmed by two CAC members who claim Worthge told them this.)

After asking the mayor if the facts, as LaFranchi knows them are true, he asks possibly the most pointed question: "If the application of Mr. Green was still 'alive,' why was it necessary to solicit a letter from him, and for you to forward the letter to the CAC?"

(On the night it was going to make endorsements, the CAC received a letter from Worthge stating that Green had applied. He said it was up to the committee whether to include Green's name of its list of recommendations.)

LaFranchi then asks Councilmen Gonsalves and Hardwick if they were aware of his version of the facts and, if not, would they have affected their votes?

LaFranchi goes on to chide the council for wasting his time--about five evenings of interviews by his count--and asks why the council couldn't have at least given him the courtesy of telling him that Green's appointment was pre-arranged, if in fact it was.

In appointing Green to the planning commission, the council has created widespread fear among members of the Citizens Advisory Committee and Councilwomen Margaret Buckley and Pamela Ketcham, who were absent from the meeting in which Green's appointment was made. They fear that the future of the CAC and open government

in Belmont are in jeopardy.

Green's appointment, an apparent circumvention of the CAC's role, was an interesting action for Mayor Worthge and Councilman Gonsalves to take, they point out, since each campaigned for his seat two-and-a-half years ago on the platform of open city government and greater participation by the citizens of Belmont.

The answers to these charges will not be quick to come. Both Mayor Worthge and Councilman Gonsalves refused to comment on

them until the item comes up for discussion at Belmont's City Council meeting on Oct. 23, opting for the public forum of the City Council Chambers over the public forum provided by the newspaper.

Until last Tuesday night's City Council meeting in which the CAC and Councilwomen Buckley and Ketcham made it quite clear that they were not going to take the issue quietly, Mayor Worthge remained adamant that the issue was over.

However, it should be clear to him now that LaFranchi's and other's questions need answers.

Another thing is clear. That Oct. 23 Belmont City Council meeting should be interesting.

... more opinion

After 2 1/2 hours, Belmont to wait

By TERRY ROBERTSON

OCT 24 1970

It took nearly 2 1/2 hours for the Belmont City Council and a handful of Belmont citizens to air their views on the future role of the Citizens Advisory Committee in Belmont last night.

When the discussion finally had ended, the city council decided to wait until it could meet with the complete CAC sometime next week before determining the future of the committee.

Fifteen citizens spoke and many more came to listen last night in City Hall in reaction to a controversial city council appointment to the planning commission three weeks ago which many

believed was a circumvention of the CAC's role.

The controversy stemmed from the appointment of Joe Green to the commission after the deadline had passed for applications and interviews by the CAC to the position. The action, in the minds of most members of the CAC, made uncertain the role and future of the CAC.

The committee had been organized by the council more than two years ago to interview and make recommendations to city boards and commissions. The expressed purpose was to allow for greater citizen participation.

Mayor Walter Worthge and Council-

men Frank Gonsalves and William Hardwick spent much of the time last night defending their vote for Green, but also admonished members of the CAC for expressing their frustrations to the newspapers rather than first coming to the city council.

CAC members told the council that their argument was not with the appointment of Joe Green specifically, but with the circumvention of the appointments process which many termed "a great experiment in democracy and open government."

Others accused the CAC of playing politics and called for the city council to disband the committee.

Mayor Worthge defended himself from an open letter written by CAC member Robert LaFranchi accusing the mayor of soliciting Green's appointment in order to balance the planning commission with someone with a growth philosophy.

Worthge denied soliciting Green's appointment and called Green "the best and most qualified of all the applicants."

Councilman Hardwick called for the disbanding of the CAC because it "adds to the proliferation of committees and

builds a beauracracy which seperates the people from their elected officials."

Councilman Gonsalves said he was disturbed that CAC members would air their frustrations in the newspapers rather than with the City Council.

In other action, the council, reacting to rumors that the developer may build condominiums on the site, denied an appeal for a use permit for a 171-bed senior citizens residential care facility planned for the Twin Pines area of downtown Belmont.