

Belmont makes clarification to construction ordinance

Hours, days and holidays are spelled out in revision of the ordinance

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Hoping to alleviate confusion about a recently enacted ordinance, the Belmont City Council voted 4-1 last week to make changes to clarify a city law which restricts the hours and days of the week in which construction activity may be carried out in the city.

Under the Construction Activities Ordinance — adopted Aug. 25 with the aim of cutting

down on neighborhood noise — construction requiring a city building permit was forbidden before 8 a.m. and after 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and before 10 a.m. and after 5 p.m. Saturday. Under the original ordinance, construction requiring a permit was prohibited on Sundays and holidays.

But according to Vice Mayor Coralin Feierbach, who asked the ordinance be brought again before the City Council, its origi-

nal wording was confusing, partly because it didn't specify which holidays were included in the construction prohibition.

"We're one of a few (cities) that didn't have a noise ordinance," said Feierbach, adding that she thought the law was much-needed. Feierbach said, though, that she had heard of a recent scuffle between a resident and a contractor due to construction work carried out on Columbus Day.

Under the newly revised ordinance, however, New Year's Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day,

Thanksgiving and Christmas are the only holidays on which construction is prohibited.

Another area of confusion,

"We're one of a few (cities) that didn't have a noise ordinance,"

Coralin Feierbach
Vice Mayor of Belmont

added Feierbach, was whether crews or contractor could visit a construction site during off hours to do estimates and assessments.

"That's not noise-related," said Council Member Adele Della Santina, adding that the ordinance was not created to curtail construction, only to cut down on noise that disturbs neighbors of construction projects.

According to the ordinance, work that falls under the restrictions "includes hammering, drilling, sawing or similar noise-producing construction activity conducted outside of a completely enclosed building."

In addition to construction

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Belmont City Council
The Smokependent
Nov 4, 1998

CONSTRUCTION: Ordinance clarified

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requiring a permit, the ordinance prohibits noise from "gasoline-powered maintenance equipment" — leaf blowers, lawnmowers, rototillers, trimmers and similar gas-powered equipment — outside of 8 a.m. to sunset Monday through Friday and outside of 10 a.m. to sunset on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.

Violators of the ordinance receive a written warning for their first violation. After that they can be

fined \$100 for the first violation, \$200 for their second violation within one year and \$500 for a third violation within one year.

But Belmont Mayor Pam Rianda, who voted against the revised ordinance, said it could hamper people who want to do weekend work around their homes.

"I don't think we should restrict our residents," Rianda said, adding that many people can only find time to do home maintenance projects on the weekends.

"There are a lot of people who can't afford repairmen to come in during the week."

But Feierbach said the new law should not be a problem for homeowners who want to do simple repair on Sundays, like mending a fence.

"I think this is good for the community," she said, adding that many residents consider their weekends "sacred" for rest and relaxation.

"At least let's give them one day when they can sleep in," she said.

Belmont City Council
The Independent
Dec 1, 1998

Belmont City Council appoints

New mayor and vice mayor named at Nov. 24 meeting

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

The Belmont City Council ushered in previous Vice Mayor Coralin Feierbach as the city's new mayor and Council Member Terri Cook as vice mayor last week, before an audience brimming with Belmont residents, local mayors, and other local and Bay Area dignitaries.

Nominated by Cook, Feierbach was sworn in as the city's new mayor after a 4-1 vote, with Council Member Adele Della

Santina opposing. Cook was unanimously approved as vice mayor after being nominated by Council Member Eleanore Hahn.

In her acceptance speech, Feierbach said that among her goals as head of the City Council will be to enhance neighborhoods by continuing with code enforcement, giving residents more say about housing additions in their neighborhoods and maintaining communication with neighborhood associations. She added that she would also ensure that the city's future business developments meet certain aesthetic standards.

"Every development from now on should be picture-postcard perfect," Feierbach said, addressing

an audience that included her husband, cousins and daughter.

Also high on the new mayor's list of other concerns are the outcome of efforts to halt development in the San Juan Canyon, 171 acres she said would be an asset to future generations if preserved as open space.

Feierbach stressed that City Council should find new ways to combat the Belmont's swelling traffic situation — specifically, that new ways should be sought to discourage commuters from using Ralston Avenue as a pipeline from U.S. Highway 101 and Interstate Highway 280.

Feierbach expressed gratitude to the city staff and recognized out

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new civic leaders



DAYNA ALPINE

Residents congratulate the new mayor of Belmont, Coralin Feierbach, at the council's reorganization meeting on Nov. 24.

MAYOR: Changing of the guard

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going Mayor Pam Rianda for her devotion as Belmont's mayor.

"Thank you Pam," she said, "You've made the future steps easy for me to follow."

Describing the past year to a renaissance, Rianda delivered her last address in her term as mayor.

She detailed the achievements of the past year, highlighting major projects including the completed development agreement and planning approvals for the Oracle expansion project, and progress on the grade separation project. Rianda lauded the city's new, more detailed budget; the intro-

duction of the Belmont Arts Commission; the Belmont library task force; and the city's new tree and noise ordinances.

Reading off her list, Rianda joked, "I'm almost running out of breath here."

"We're really proud of the things we accomplished this year," Rianda said.

"The key instrument of change over the past year has been this City Council," she added.

Rianda also took an opportunity to blast critics she said have accused the City Council of not being a collaboration of all five members.

"I know we've been called 'the big two,'" she said, "But I'm calling us the full five."

While Feierbach said her appointment as mayor followed what she understands is the traditional reorganization cycle of Belmont's City Council — whereby the vice mayor moves into position as mayor — Della Santina said she was dissatisfied with Feierbach's appointment.

"By the performance I've seen," Della Santina wrote in a note to the Independent following in the appointment of the mayor and vice mayor, "I cannot support (Coralin Feierbach) in a leadership role."

Belmont City Council
San Mateo Co Times
Dec 11, 1998

FRIDAY, December 11, 1998

SAN MATEO COUNTY TIMES

Councilwoman loses visitor's bureau seat

By Jessica M. Scully
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — The City Council ousted City Councilwoman Adele Della Santina from a post on the San Mateo County Convention and Visitor's Bureau this week, a decision Della Santina believes is retaliation for some of her council votes.

The City Council decided this week to replace Della Santina as the city's representative to the visitor's bureau in favor of Councilwoman Eleanore Hahn, previously Della Santina's alternate on the board. Della Santina is now Hahn's alternate.

Della Santina is often at odds with the majority on a council marked by bitter and sometimes personal disputes.

"When a council member has devoted so much time, to take them off without asking,

'Are you tired (of the position)?' " is wrong," said Della Santina.

Della Santina, who had been a member and officer of the bureau's board during the past six years, said she feels the switch was motivated by two instances when she voted against the majority.

Della Santina voted at a Dec. 1 meeting against a special election to buy property in San Juan Canyon and keep it as open space. Because the vote had to be unanimous, Della Santina's decision prevented a March election on a bond measure to raise funds for the purchase.

Della Santina said council members were also upset with her decision not to support a lawsuit against the Belmont-Redwood Shores School District over a playground at Fox Elementary School. The district wanted

to raze the playground to make space for parking, while the city contended it should stay. Both parties eventually agreed to move it 25 yards away.

Mayor Coralin Feierbach said council members chose Hahn because they believed it was time for someone else to have a turn on the board. The council also felt Hahn had a better attitude for the job, Feierbach added.

Hahn said she asked for the job because she wanted to move up from being the alternate.

Marcia Chapdelaine, president and chief executive officer of the bureau, said many people were shocked that Della Santina wasn't reappointed. She said Della Santina had a long and exemplary history of service on the board.

Belmont ponders county-wide

City considering developing its own plan to deal with yard waste

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Saying that more time is needed to review other options, the Belmont City Council took no action last week on a resolution that would require Belmont households to purchase new recycling containers to take part in a mandatory yard waste recycling program.

Spearheaded by the South

Bayside Transfer Station Authority — whose member cities are Atherton, Belmont, Burlingame, East Palo Alto, Foster City, San Carlos, Menlo Park, Redwood City, Hillsborough, San Mateo and the unincorporated area of the county — the program aims to help cities in its jurisdiction meet California's AB 439 mandate, which requires that all cities in the state recycle 50 percent of the waste they create. Cities that don't meet the recycling requirement by the year 2000 can face fines of up to \$10,000 per day.

"We're looking for the most cost effective way to increase recycling in the City of Belmont," said Kathleen Gallagher, recycling

manager for SBTSA, who spoke at the Belmont city council meeting on Nov. 10.

The California Integrated Waste Management Board found in 1991 that Belmont residents were recycling 40.76 percent of their recyclable trash. Gallagher stressed that refining the yard waste program would be an expensive way for the city to meet the California requirement.

Since 1997, when SBTSA began the yard waste recycling drive that now requires participants to furnish their own containers, 25.7 percent of residents in the member cities have taken part in the program. And while 18,000 tons of yard waste was recycled in the

recycling ordinance

SBTSA cities in 1997, the group estimates as much as 70,200 tons could potentially be recycled with the new program.

Providing the new containers for households in all of the SBTSA areas, she added, would be inexpensive and would make it easier for residents to recycle their yard clippings. All households would be charged \$55 for the required 96-gallon, wheeled recycling containers and, beginning in May 1999, 60 cents a month for 10 years to help pay for the program.

However, Belmont Mayor Pam Rianda contended that making households purchase the new containers is unfair to residents who have already bought their own

trash cans for the program.

"We're only (9.24 percent) away from our goal. I feel this is very rigorous and very negative to folks in Belmont who have already done their share.

"In my neighborhood alone just about everyone recycles their greens," Rianda said. "We went out and got our Rubbermaids."

Council Member Adele Della Santina said she was concerned that the containers would take up additional space in people's yards and that she was unsure how the city would be credited for households that hire gardeners to do their yard work. Della Santina added that many gardeners haul

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RECYCLING: Options weighed

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away clippings for their clients and take them to be recycled themselves.

But Gallagher said that under the proposed program, even if the gardeners didn't dispose of the clippings in the recycling containers and instead chose to bring them into a recycling center themselves, the city would be credited because the yard waste wouldn't be counted with the regular trash.

Gallagher said that SBTSA had hoped that its member cities

would make a decision by Nov. 19 so that the group could begin its promotional campaign in December. The containers, which would bear labels with tips for recycling yard waste, would be delivered to participating SBTSA cities starting in January of next year.

However, Rianda said that the timing was too rushed and that the council would need to revisit the issue at its next meeting.

"You've given us no time to come back and talk about this," she said.

City Council
The Independent
Dec 16, 1999

Belmont seeks to tighten design review standards

Proposal would effect new residences and additions

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Saying that all future homes built in the city should meet new standards, the Belmont City Council voted last week to amend a proposed zoning ordinance that would have required design review only for new residences and some residential additions constructed on steep lots.

At a meeting Dec. 16, the City Council voted 4-1 to send the ordinance back to the city staff for rewording. Under the original wording of the ordinance, new single-family homes and house additions of 500 square feet or more planned on lots of 30 percent slope or greater would be subject to the new design review standards and fees.

A majority of the City Council, however, agreed that the ordinance should apply to all new houses and all additions to homes that are greater than 500 square feet, regardless of the slope of the lot.

"Many cities have design reviews for home additions. We would not be out in the forefront," said Mayor Coralin Feierbach. "Let's try it for a year — six months — to see how it's going to do."

But Council Member Adele Della Santina voted against broadening the proposed ordinance, saying that it didn't clearly spell out what the design review guidelines were. She said residents who wish to add to their homes shouldn't have to face additional delays and restrictions.

"If you have specific guidelines

and the applicant designs his house within those guidelines, he should not have to delay his project," Della Santina said, adding that she had served on a design review committee in the past. "We can't deprive a property owner of adding on to his house."

Among the new standards in the design review ordinance are that the new houses and additions in Belmont must minimize disruption to neighbors' views, that efforts must be made to preserve natural vegetation and drainage ways and to avoid erosion, and that homes must be terraced to follow the natural contours of surrounding hillsides.

The ordinance also requires that the exterior of new houses blend with the surrounding neighborhood and environment, and that developers use stained or painted wood, or natural stone and rocks on at least a quarter of the exterior walls on new homes.

Design review fees for new homes would be \$1,602 and additions would be \$712, in order to cover staff costs.

Originally proposed by the Belmont Planning Commission, the design review ordinance was fueled by instances in which houses were built that met existing city codes but that neighbors had complained threatened the integrity of the neighborhood with their design and cheapened the value of other homes. For example, there have been instances in Belmont in which a developer has built a two-story house in a neighborhood of

DESIGN: Tougher standards

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one-story houses, said Belmont's Director of Planning and Community Development, Dan Vanderpriem.

"The Planning Commission is really limited in the scope of things it can look at," he said.

Vanderpriem added that he thinks the new design review standards aren't particularly stringent. If the ordinance is adopted, he said, Belmont would be joining communities like Glendale in Southern California and Hillsborough, which have design review boards.

"We're not trying to deprive property owners from developing their land. We're merely having a design review so that the com-

to do with their land," said Belmont Planning Commissioner Dave Warden, who spoke at the recent meeting.

"We don't want to see two-story boxes."

If approved, the ordinance would likely add about 30 days to the review process of residential developments, Vanderpriem said, adding that it remains to be seen if any other changes will be made to the text of the ordinance.

Current plans are to hold a public hearing regarding the rewritten ordinance during the Jan. 12 City Council meeting. If the ordinance is approved by the City Council, it could be brought back for a second reading at a following meeting and would

take effect 30 days after it is adopted.

City Council
The Independent
Dec 23, 1998

City Council accusations fly in Belmont

Della Santina questions legality of certain council majority decisions

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Tempers flared at a Belmont City Council meeting recently, when Council Member Adele Della Santina questioned the legality of last month's selection of the city's new mayor and vice mayor, and the other council members blasted her accusations.

During the Dec. 8 meeting, Della Santina accused fellow council members of privately discussing who they would select as the new mayor, prior to a public meeting on the reorganization of the City Council — a move she said violates the Brown Act, California's open-meetings law.

At the reorganization meeting held Nov. 24, then-Vice Mayor Coralin Feierbach was sworn in as a mayor after a 4-1 vote in which Della Santina cast the sole opposing vote. Terri Cook was unanimously approved as vice mayor.

Della Santina said she had been told by members of the public that the outcome of the reorganization was predetermined. The Independent, however, was unable to verify her claims.

"I am talking of members of the public who came to me the night of the reorganization and told me, 'Adele you know you're not going to be mayor,'" Della Santina said at the meeting. "I assumed that there had been discussion, because how could a member of the public — several members of the public — be so sure?"

The other members of the council rebutted Della Santina's accusations, saying there had not been

a private discussion. "I don't have to talk to anybody," said Council Member Pam Rianda. "I know I would never vote to have someone who is so contemptuous of this council represent us as mayor."

Vice Mayor Terri Cook added that she was insulted by the accusations.

"I just want to say for the record that I resent any insinuation that there was somehow some collusion among members of this council with this reorganization," Cook said.

According to Feierbach, her appointment in November followed what she believed was a tradition — though not a city policy — whereby the vice mayor usually becomes mayor and the person who received the most votes in the most recent council election becomes vice mayor. Council members, she stressed, didn't have to collaborate privately.

"I never discussed anything with anyone," Feierbach said.

The cycle wasn't followed in 1996, according to Feierbach, when former Council Member Gary Harris was elected mayor and Della Santina was elected vice mayor. Feierbach said it would have been Pam Rianda's turn to be vice mayor, based on the cycle. Those appointments were made in a small room with a limited audience, which she said she could have been construed to be a private meeting.

Della Santina also asserted that she was kicked out of the rotation

COUNCIL: Tempers flare at meeting

Continued from 1A

in November of 1997 when Rianda was voted in as mayor, but Feierbach said that by rotation it was Rianda's turn.

Della Santina said she plans to submit the minutes of the Dec. 8 meeting to the district attorney.

Although he didn't attend the council meeting Dec. 8, Belmont resident Lon Warneke said it doesn't surprise him that such an argument occurred.

"They can't get along with each other," Warneke said, adding that he attended his first council meeting

on Dec. 2 to oppose the proposed special election for a bond issue to purchase land in San Juan Canyon.

Warneke said he was appalled by the council's "lack of professionalism" at the meeting he attended. "They don't understand the art of compromise," he said.

* City Council - Independence
Dec 26, 1995

Council ponders fate of Belmont House in Jan.

Options include reopening the facility or selling the building

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Come next year, the City of Belmont may determine the future of Belmont House, a former AIDS hospice that closed roughly five months ago after struggling with a plunge in funding.

At a meeting scheduled for Jan. 12, the Belmont City Council plans to explore several possibilities for the future of the facility, located at 730 El Camino Real, which include reopening the house primarily as an facility for homeless, elderly patients or putting the building up for sale.

"I would like to experiment with selling the house," said Mayor Coralin Feierbach at the Belmont Redevelopment Agency Meeting Dec. 8. "My main concern with preserving the house was for when it was a house for AIDS patients. All of them have moved away."

Opened in 1995 with an initially strong donation base, the hospice was run by the non-profit group Catholic Charities, of the San Francisco archdiocese of the Roman Catholic Church. The six-bed facility provided nursing care and services to low-income residents of San Mateo County dying of AIDS and patients living with HIV.

Last summer the Belmont Redevelopment Agency forged an agreement the San Mateo County to help support and operate Belmont House.

Initially, the county had anticipated that it would staff the facility with employees made available

through the consolidation of two of its facilities. However, the anticipated staff positions were eliminated, so the county has been interviewing community-based agencies to serve as subcontractors to operate Belmont House.

"Instead of operating it with county staff people, they will contract with an operator that has experience in the field and pay those people instead," said Belmont Planning Director Dan Vanderpriem

If the Redevelopment Agency chooses to reopen the facility as an elder care facility in cooperation with the county, a subcontractor will have to be selected. The list of possibilities has been narrowed down to three agencies.

The facility could then be used to house and care for frail, elderly patients who are homeless or for various reason hard to place with other care services. Operational costs would be covered by the county.

Up to one-third of the patients served by Belmont House could potentially be AIDS patients, said Vanderpriem. He added that City Council members will also look at the option of using the building for other housing purposes.

If Belmont House is sold and not used for low-income residence, however, by state law the city would have to create six other units in the very low income category somewhere else in the city to make up for those lost with sale of the building.

BELMONT HOUSE

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"If the house is no longer used for residential purposes, the (Redevelopment) Agency would be obligated to replace six very low income units in the city. This is the facility that satisfies our requirement for very low income right now," Vanderpriem said.

Replacing the low-income unit would be a "difficult" task, he added. A very low income status for family of two, for example, would be one earning about \$27,000 a year.

Dec 30 1998

And the winner is...



ROBERT PAUL

Members of the Belmont City Council recently acted as judges for a holiday house decoration contest in the city. Above, Vice Mayor Terri Cook, Mayor Coralin Feierbach, Council member Eleanore Hahn, Council member Adele Della Santina and Planning Commission member Gloria Purcell.

COUNCILORS ABSENT: None

Staff Present: City Manager Westman, Public Works Director Curtis, Community Development Director Vanderprieem, Parks and Recreation Director Mittelstadt, Management Analyst Williams, Acting Fire Chief Belville, Police Chief Goulart, Finance Director Fil, City Attorney Savaree, City Clerk Kern.

Others Present: City Treasurer Mason

SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE DAY/PRESENTATIONS

Mayor's presentation to the Belmont Historical Society.

Mayor Rianda presented the original Belmont Incorporation papers to Tom Seivert, President of the Belmont Historical Society. She explained that she had been given these papers by Rick Silver, the outgoing Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Seivert, President, Belmont Historical Society thanked the Mayor for these papers and invited everyone to come and see the new display room. He gave a brief history of the early beginning of the society and said this was a city-wide commitment. Mr. Seivert said they were working with the schools and this room gave them enough space to use as a classroom for presentations for school children when they were given a presentation on Belmont history.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Councilmember Della Santina made a statement regarding recent reportings regarding the Fire District closed session held in December. She stated that the financial issues raised in that meeting propelled her to ask for validation from other sources. C. Della Santina stated she thought her inquiries would be confidential and it was not her intention to expose these issues, nor was it her intention to cause uneasiness with other Councilmembers because of the disclosure of this material. She pledged that she was committed to work effectively with the newly constituted Council as a cohesive team to accomplish the City's business. C. Della Santina said she would like to assure the public that this fire district funding issue was being investigated by the staff and that this clarification had been requested by the Interim City Manager B. Zaner. She stated that she had every confidence that the matter was being handled appropriately and a report would be forth-coming in the near future.

Mayor Rianda expressed her concerns regarding recent inaccurate reporting of local issues in the local newspaper. She clarified that the meeting that was held in December was a fully noticed Closed Session, not a secret meeting as had been reported. She said she called this meeting before her son had presented her with an early Christmas present, a ticket to the 49er game. She said she had sent a memo to the City Council expressing her concerns about the discussion item. C. Rianda stated that this newspaper appeared to want to keep a feud going, but that the Council would move forward in a positive manner. She said she felt an apology was appropriate, but she doubted one would be received.

W. Simon, 3302 Bay Court, stated his concerns with the increase of airplane traffic over his home. He said the airplane traffic and noise increased on Sunday evenings after 10:00 P.M., and noted anywhere from seven to seventeen frequencies. He said his rough estimate was about 170 occurrences over the canyon in a one week period.



City Council Special Meeting Minutes - January 10, 1998
Belmont City Hall, 1070 Sixth Avenue, Suite 300A, Belmont

Special Meeting - Closed Session - 9:00 A.M.

A. Conference with Labor Negotiator, Susan Westman, pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6.

This Closed Session was attended by Councilmembers Della Santina, Feierbach, Hahn, Cook and Rianda. Acting Human Resources Director Brock-Cohn, City Manager Westman, IEDA Representative Craig Jory, and City Attorney Savaree. City Clerk Kern was excused from attending.

Adjournment at this time being 11:55 A.M. this meeting was adjourned. Mayor Rianda announced that direction was given but no action was taken.

Meeting not tape recorded

Kathy Kern
Belmont City Clerk

City Council Study Session - January 13, 1998
Council Chamber, 1223 Ralston Avenue, Belmont

Study Session - 7:15 P.M.

Councilmember Feierbach stated that she understood that the Redevelopment Agency Resolution for the part-time code officer could not focus the time spent on Old County Road, but she said she would like to be assured that this person would be spending time in the blighted areas.

City Manager Westman assured Councilmember Feierbach that this person would work primarily in this area and stated that this comment would be included for the record.

Adjournment at 7:25 P.M. to a Belmont Fire Protection District Meeting and to be followed by a Regular Redevelopment Agency Meeting at 7:30 P.M.

City Council Regular Meeting Minutes - January 13, 1998
Council Chamber, 1223 Ralston Avenue, Belmont

CALL TO ORDER - 9:10 P.M. following a Redevelopment Agency Meeting.

ROLL CALL

COUNCILORS PRESENT: Della Santina, Feierbach, Hahn, Cook, Rianda

Council lists priorities

BY AMY BELL
Staff Editor

The Belmont City Council held a budget discussion and priority review before its April 14 meeting, one in a series of budget discussions that will aid the city staff in formulating a draft budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

"This session was designed just to give a general direction to staff on what the City Council's priorities are for the budget," said Susan Westman, city manager. "Once we have a general idea of what the council views as its top priorities, then we can put together a draft budget and hold public hearings on that to get community input."

The City Council reviewed various programs within the city's departments, including police, public works, parks and recreation, community development, redevelopment, finance and administrative functions.

Because of time constraints, the council was not able to look at all city departments at the review session.

Some of the other subjects the council will examine are human resources, the city clerk's office, the city manager's office, the Belmont Fire Protection District and capital projects.

Some of the Police Department programs that council members rated among the top priorities included youth diversion programs, family abuse programs, the vehicle management program, and property and evidence disposition.

Programs that received high priority rating under the Public Works Department included flood damage cost recovery, grading permit inspections, street light maintenance and management of the grade separation project.

The Park and Recreation Department's top priorities were day care, school field maintenance, field scheduling, teen programs, sports field maintenance, median maintenance, property management of City Hall, a leaf blower ordinance, the installation of vertical banners for special events and senior programs.

The top priorities under community development were developing a newsrack ordinance, a general plan update, a revision of the floor area ratio/grading, establishing a design review board and a noise ordinance.

High on the redevelopment
See **COUNCIL**, page 10A

COUNCIL: Budget review process

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list were facade and sidewalk improvements to the downtown area.

Top Finance Department programs included a financial reporting improvement project and financial planning.

The City Council was not able to discuss community group funding programs and economic development funding programs in detail because the city staff is still waiting for proposals from all the groups.

But some council members

expressed their desire to focus on the local programs and groups that serve Belmont first and foremost.

"I just want to say that I will support the Chamber of Commerce but I will not support SAMCEDA or the Visitors and Convention Bureau," said Council Member Coralin Feierbach.

"I would rather put the remaining discretionary money into the Belmont Library. I want to support organizations that are Belmont-focused and directly help the people of Belmont."

Council Member Terri Cook also expressed a desire to focus mainly on Belmont organizations under economic development funding programs.

Representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, SAMCEDA and the Visitors and Convention Bureau, who were present at the review session, will have the opportunity to lobby for their causes at public hearings once the draft budget is set, according to Westman. Other groups will have the same opportunity.

*City of Belmont
Enterprise Bulletin
June 17, 1988*

Belmont proposes newsrack ordinance

BY AMY BELL
Staff Editor

The City of Belmont is proposing to implement a newsrack ordinance to regulate the placement and maintenance of newspaper display and vending stands within the city.

The proposed ordinance comes as a result of numerous complaints from residents about newsracks in the public right of way.

"We have received a number of complaints in the last eight months mostly from wheelchair users," said Dan Vanderprie, Belmont planning director. "The wheelchair users can't get through the already-narrow Belmont sidewalks with the newsracks the way they are now."

Vanderprie explained that the City of Belmont wanted to conform with other cities on the Peninsula in how they structured their newsrack ordinance.

"Basically, our newsrack ordinance is modeled after the San Mateo and San Carlos newsrack

ordinances," said Vanderprie. "All the provisions are the same."

According to the major provisions of the ordinance, no-charge permits are required for all newsracks located in the public right of way; the types of newsracks that may be used are specified; newsracks displaying sexually explicit materials are required to be equipped with blinder racks so the lower two-thirds of the display is not exposed; and newsracks that do not comply with placement and maintenance standards may be removed by the city after 10 days' notice — unless the newsrack poses a danger to pedestrians and vehicles, in which case prior notice is not required.

The proposed ordinance also states that any confiscated newsracks will be taken to the city corporation yard, where they may be claimed by owners within 30 days of their removal. Any newsracks that do not comply with the new regulations will be removed or brought in conformance within

six months of the effective date of the ordinance.

The ordinance not only deals with the placement of the newsracks but also the design and look of the newsracks. According to the draft proposal, each newsrack must be a certain style and one of two shades of brown.

No more than five non-modular newsracks may be at one location, or modular newsracks will be required instead.

The newsracks should not be more than four feet high, including the pedestal, and not more than two feet deep and 30 inches wide.

"The City Council is expected to look at the newsrack ordinance proposal at its June 23 meeting," said Vanderprie. "The ordinance will need council approval before it can be implemented."

About half of the cities in San Mateo County have implemented newsrack ordinances to deal with the increasing number of newsracks on city streets.

Parking regulations to change on

BELMONT

Changes in response to complaints

BY AMY BELL
Staff Editor

The Belmont City Council has authorized several amendments to the parking regulations along Ralston, Villa and Academy avenues, and Kimmie Court, in response to the competing parking demands of residents and businesses.

The changes include adding two new 10-minute parking spaces in

the vicinity of the corner of Ralston and Villa avenues; dropping the requirement for valet parking in the two spaces in front of Vivace restaurant; upgrading the existing parking lot at the Barrett Community Center on Belburn Drive with signs, additional lighting, new striping and improved entrances and exits for use by employees and business patrons; implementing four-hour parking limits from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays along residences of Academy, Villa and Kimmie Court; and increasing parking enforcement.

The council voted 4-1 for the rule revisions at its meeting of June 9.

The one dissenting vote came from Council Member Adele Della

Santina, who was in favor of amended parking regulations in that area but wanted to see fewer 10-minute parking spaces.

The changes are in response to concerns from residents about customer and employee parking from nearby businesses, such as the Carlmont Shopping Center, Vivace Restaurant, video stores and numerous other businesses in the area of the 1900 block of Ralston Avenue.

"A meeting was held with the public to address the parking concerns," said Kevin DeRoer, engineering technician in the Public Works Department.

"Currently, residents on Villa, Academy and Kimmie Court have employees of the businesses parking all day on their streets and

eliminating street parking for the residents. The goal of this plan is for restaurant patrons and business employees to have a place to park, and not park in these residential areas."

The meeting of residents, business owners and city officials was held Jan. 22 to discuss concerns and possible solutions to the growing parking problem there.

Some of the concerns raised at that meeting included all-day parking in front of houses on Villa Avenue and Kimmie Court, enforcement of current parking limits, employees from area businesses parking in the neighborhood, 10-minute parking areas not being enforced, parking tickets perceived as having a low priority,

Ralston

and the perception of that the city is not addressing parking issues when allowing new businesses to move in.

"I am in favor of the four-hour parking limit on Kimmie Court," said Don Torre, a resident of the street. "Our street looks like a parking lot. I am embarrassed by the situation."

Some of the ideas that came out of that meeting were the same as the changes the council approved, and included placing four-hour parking limit signs on both sides of Villa Avenue; having a lighted parking lot at the Barrett School for public parking; improving enforcement of existing time limits; having a public parking lot at

See **PARKING**, page 12A

PARKING: Downtown changes

Continued from 4A

the Barrett alley; allotting more 10-minute parking spaces to accommodate the needs of businesses requiring high-volume turnover all day; and having the city consider the creation of sufficient parking as a higher priority, to alleviate effects of traffic, litter, parking and loitering from increased business.

"We are willing to put up with the four-hour limit if it is enforced, or this whole thing will be to no avail," said Lucille Cohn, a resident of Kimmie Court.

Harbor Blvd. reopening shows value of teamwork

SPECIAL TO THE EB

The Harbor Boulevard at-grade crossing is reopened. This came about because many people worked very hard for this common goal.

It began when the business community identified the need to reopen the crossing. Businesses located nearby, both in Belmont and in the Harbor Industrial area, were significantly impacted economically by the closure, which has now been in effect for 18 months.

The city of Belmont requested last February that the San Mateo Transportation Authority increase the project budget to include the cost of reopening Harbor Boulevard, and their Board concurred.

June 1 was the target opening date. The Caltrain staff supported the project by arranging for

the signal design, fabrication and installation — all by June 1.

The Phase B contractor, Kiewit Pacific, was given an early go-ahead on the roadwork at Harbor and they too, completed their part of the project by June 1.

The city of Belmont, residents and businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, the railroad, the Transportation Authority and the contractor worked through some overwhelming odds to accomplish this goal.

It is the beginning of the remaining phase of the Grade Separation Project, which is slated to build bridges at Ralston, Harbor and Holly, elevate sections for the permanent tracks, construct the station platforms in each city and remodel the Ralston/El Camino Real intersection.

Also included in this work is the

construction of pedestrian undercrossings of the tracks at F Street and Arroyo Street.

The contractor, Kiewit Pacific, is part of the largest transportation facility contractor in America. They won the bid for this work over seven other general contractors. Their work will begin on or about June 8 on Phase B and they expect to finish all the work in about 22 months, which would be more than three months ahead of schedule.

The project is sponsored by the cities of Belmont and San Carlos and is funded by the San Mateo Transportation Authority and the state of California through several transportation related funds.

When complete, trains will operate on elevated tracks over main roads from San Mateo south through San Carlos.

*Belmont City Council
Engineer Bulletin
June - 1998*

Belmont determines next year's priorities

\$52 million budget proposal unveiled

By **Lisa Fernandez**
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — Upgrading roads, fixing storm drains and getting new police cars are some of Belmont's top priorities next year, as outlined in the city's \$52 million budget proposal expected to be adopted Tuesday.

The public is invited to comment before the City Council vote.

While Belmont's annual budget usually hovers in the high \$20 million range, this year's proposed budget is some \$30 million richer. Part of that increase is because of the region's economic boom, which helped plump city coffers with property and sales tax money, City Manager Susan Westman said.

But nearly \$17 million in next year's budget comes directly from a state construction program to pay for raising the Caltrain tracks above the street in the center of town. That money is simply funneled through the city, Westman said.

Now, cars have to sit in traffic as trains run through the middle of the city along El Camino Real.

The project is expected to be completed by late 1999.

Westman said she expects the council to approve the budget, which includes spending \$2 million on projects such as repaving Notre Dame Avenue and Chula Vista Drive and fixing storm drains there.

All around town, asphalt is cracked and underground pipes are broken, she said.

"We have a major push next year to do infrastructure improvements," Westman said.

The City Council also is expected to approve spending nearly \$1.5 million to begin replacing the city's old police cars, tractors and other vehicles with a new fleet over the next five years.

Some of that money is also slated to revamp the city's computer system.

In addition to special capital improvement projects and doing away with the city's old cars, Belmont officials hope to maintain other key city functions:

- > \$5 million on police services;
- > \$3.5 million on the fire department ;
- > \$549,000 on Kollage Community Arts School;
- > \$184,000 on the senior center;
- > \$125,000 on park improvements.

Parking regulations to change on Ralston

BELMONT

Changes in response to complaints

BY AMY BELL
Staff Editor

The Belmont City Council has authorized several amendments to the parking regulations along Ralston, Villa and Academy avenues, and Kimmie Court, in response to the competing parking demands of residents and businesses.

The changes include adding two new 10-minute parking spaces in

the vicinity of the corner of Ralston and Villa avenues; dropping the requirement for valet parking in the two spaces in front of Vivace restaurant; upgrading the existing parking lot at the Barrett Community Center on Belburn Drive with signs, additional lighting, new striping and improved entrances and exits for use by employees and business patrons; implementing four-hour parking limits from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays along residences of Academy, Villa and Kimmie Court; and increasing parking enforcement.

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Santina, who was in favor of amended parking regulations in that area but wanted to see fewer 10-minute parking spaces.

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See **PARKING**, page 12A

PARKING: Downtown changes

Continued from 1A

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*Belmont City Council
Engineer Bulletin
June 17, 1998*

*City Council - Budget
San Mateo Co. Times
June 22, 1998*

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Belmont City Council
Engineer Bulletin
July 4-5 1998

Belmont proposes

PHONE: (650) 367-9834

fiscal budget

GOVERNMENT

Kollage Art School topic of discussion

BY AMY BELL WALLACE
Staff Editor

The Belmont City Council looked at the proposed city budget for the fiscal year 1998-1999 at its meeting of June 23, when Kollage Art School was the lead topic of discussion.

The proposed draft budget had been briefly delayed because, for the first time in recent years, the budget included highly detailed information on every city account.

According to City Manager Susan Westman, the city staff has taken this approach because of concerns that it has been difficult to track all funds within the budget. This approach will help ensure that all information is provided for public review.

The proposed budget estimates the city's projected revenue at \$44.3 million, combined with an existing fund balance of \$11.5 million to total \$55.8 million for the coming fiscal year.

The projected expenditures are estimated at \$51.9 million, giving the city approximately \$4 million in assets. Combined with money already set aside for the grade separation project at Holly Street, Ralston Avenue and Harbor Boulevard, that gives the city estimated total net assets of \$7 million.

"This budget discussion includes revisions from the June 17 City Council meeting," said Thomas Fil, finance director of Belmont.

Among the many items discussed in the budget was the Kollage Art School program, which some of the council members would like to see as an independent program.

Kollage Art School is operated jointly by Belmont and San Carlos as a way of providing art opportunities to the children of the two communities. Belmont's proposed contribution to Kollage for the coming fiscal year is approximately \$41,000.

This program is unusual in that it not only receives money from fees charged to the participants to cover the direct cost of the program, but also has obtained grant funding for the program to cover fringe costs. The current fee structure does not cover the indirect costs associated with operating the program, according to the Belmont staff report.

Under the agreement which established the joint operation of the program by Belmont and San

See **BUDGET**, page 7A

BUDGET: Art school discussed

Continued from 1A

Carlos, all revenue and expenses are shared equally by the two cities.

"I would like to see this program stand on its own," said Mayor Pam Rianda. "Possibly have the city fund the program for the next year at 50 percent."

Vice Mayor Coralin Feierbach agreed that she would like to also see the program become independent and funded on its own.

One of the concerns about the program was that it has grown beyond just serving Belmont and San Carlos students and now also serves students from Redwood City.

"The outreach program allows Kollage to serve other cities like Redwood City," said Lynn Klawin-ferty, recreation director for

the city. "Kollage is a community school for the arts.

"There are five such schools in the Bay Area, including one in Palo Alto that is a city organization but serves outside the city. We're not setting a precedent here."

But some of the council members would like the program — if the city continues to help fund it — to serve only local residents.

"There is no desire to take art out of the schools," said Rianda. "Without the program there would be no art. But I also have a responsibility to manage the funds of the taxpayers.

"We are not in the business of supporting a countywide arts program."

The program is operated by the directors of both Belmont and San Carlos park and recreation depart-

ments.

"I would request that the council give us eight months to come up with an agreement that could include possibly having outside cities that use the program, such as Redwood City, be part of the joint powers agreement with Belmont and San Carlos," said Karl Mittelstadt, director of the Belmont Park and Recreation Department. "We will also include an independent alternative for the council to review, but we would request that the city still fund the project for this year."

The council agreed to fund the project for this year until more information and ideas are gathered.

The council also continued the public hearing on the proposed budget until its July 14 meeting.

City Council Joint Powers Board
Engineer Bulletin
July 8, 1998

Schmidt replaces Della Santina on JPB

BY REBECCA ROSEN LUM
Independent Newspapers

Menlo Park Mayor Steve Schmidt has won election to the three-county Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board, replacing Belmont Council Member Adele Della Santina.

"He got the votes lined up to take her out like he took (San Carlos Mayor) Mike King out on the SamTrans board," said Supervisor Mike Nevin, who chairs the JPB. "It's dangerous when the cities don't pay attention."

Schmidt, who has been critical of BART, will represent the countywide collective of municipalities known as the Council of Cities.

The JPB, which functions as the policy-making parent of Caltrain, oversees a budget of \$48 million a year — largely fed by fares on the San Francisco-Gilroy commuter line.

The board includes three representatives each from San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

The San Mateo County triumvirate includes Nevin, representing the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, and transportation expert Art Lloyd representing SamTrans.

Della Santina, a BART supporter, was expected to win a second three-year term. But she received only seven votes to Schmidt's 11 at Friday evening's Council of Cities meeting.

"Obviously, it's not him alone," Della Santina said. "There's a group out to stop transit."

"I said to him, 'Steve, what do you think you are going to do better than me?' And he said, 'I like Caltrain.'"

"I thought, 'Oh, my God. That's not enough.'"

Even Belmont Mayor Pam Rianda and Council Member Coralin Feierbach failed to support Della Santina.

"I support people I believe in," Feierbach said. "Steve is a very astute person."

"San Mateo County is at holding capacity. We need to make the best choices we can for transit now."

Schmidt did not return telephone calls by press time.

But Feierbach said he would take Caltrain from "a maintenance mode to a growth mode — electrification, new trains, a new look, a new name."

Della Santina said she has been unfairly cast as a voting partner of Supervisor Tom Huening, a strong advocate of BART.

She said she has advocated a

See JPB, page 7A

JPB: Positions change on county board

Continued from 1A

third, high-speed rail line for Caltrain, reopened the Harbor Boulevard grade separation and convened a conference in April to look at options in land use planning.

"It was way cool," she said. "I respect Tom, but I hardly rubber stamp him."

The low-key Schmidt managed with equal stealth to wrest the SamTrans Board's South County

seat from San Carlos Mayor Mike King earlier this year, surprising many.

Schmidt and King had locked horns over Supervisor Tom Huening's proposal to use sales tax funds meant for traffic mitigation efforts on the Bay Trail, a recreational cycling route.

San Mateo County Transportation Authority voted to sink \$750,000 into the Bay Trail, tying up the agency's traf-

fic mitigation funding pot for three years.

King, a trustee, had supported Huening. But Schmidt called the move "improper, and contrary to the intent of Measure A."

Critics including Nevin and Della Santina complained that Woodside, Menlo Park and Portola Valley — all small, semi-rural towns — carry as many votes on the Council of Cities as Daly City, with a population that

exceeds 100,000, or Redwood City, with roughly 70,000 residents.

The county's transportation agencies recently came in for a shellacking by the San Mateo County civil grand jury.

A scathing report berated the county, whose 10 transportation boards, shared members and fuzzy mandates are a source of confusion to the public and an embarrassment in governmental circles.

City Council
Engineer Bulletin
July 15, 1998

Former council members

BELMONT

San Juan Canyon, City Manager raise cited

BY JENNIFER CHRISTGAU
Correspondent

Two former Belmont City Council members have decided to mix it up with current members, in letters that criticize the council's decisions.

The two letters — one from former Council Member Nancy Levitt addressed to the council and another from former Mayor Gary Harris addressed to the Enquirer-



Gary Harris



Nancy Levitt

Bulletin's letters section — attack several of the council's recent actions.

In his letter, Harris encourages residents to "stay tuned" to the council's actions, and alleges that they "have made Belmont a laughingstock among most of the other cities in the county."

"It's about time that the citizens

of Belmont wake up and realize what our City Council is up to," he wrote.

Levitt and Harris are mostly concerned with what they characterize as the council's poor management decisions and strong anti-growth stance. As demonstrations, they point to the recent effort to buy San Juan Canyon and preserve open space, and City Manager Susan Westman's pay raise, which some believe to be inadequate.

"There are a couple of members who are strongly anti-growth. Everything they do has a hidden agenda for no growth," Harris said.

Using San Juan Canyon as an example, both Levitt and Harris said it is an unnecessary purchase

blast successors

because several years ago the council enacted an open space trust for the canyon that limited development to two houses a year.

"San Juan Canyon is not in danger. It has been building at one and a half to two houses a year for decades. Why spend the money on something that isn't going to be developed by anyone? Where are the developers?" Levitt said.

In his letter, Harris wrote, "Our council is ready to put a ballot measure together to buy all of the undeveloped property in the San Juan Canyon for more than (\$10 million). This land is in the immediate neighborhood of two of the council members.

"The estimated (\$12 million) ballot measure for overdue street

repairs, which has been on the council's agenda for more than two years, is being delayed so that the council can buy itself a park."

However, Deputy Mayor Coralin Feierbach maintains that purchasing San Juan Canyon is necessary in order to preserve open space in Belmont.

"Developers call me all the time. It is the last piece of land. Of course they want to buy it," she said.

It isn't just the council's ideas about development that have provoked criticism from Levitt and Harris. The council's recent decision to give City Manager Susan Westman a 5.5 percent pay raise — an amount both Levitt and Harris

See **LETTERS**, page 12A

LETTERS: Council criticized by former members

Continued from 1A

claim is lower than the amount agreed upon when she was hired — has also raised some ire.

"In spite of several favorable comments by council members regarding the city manager's performance during her review period, the council humiliated the city manager in front of her staff and the public by giving her a raise so low that several

members of her staff now make more money than the city manager," Harris wrote.

Levitt's letter focuses on Westman's pay raise and calls the council's actions "not honorable."

"Why would someone want to work for the city with all the stress, when they could work in the private realm with less stress and more money? It's a poor time for them to be messing with the

salary of someone where everything says 'good,'" Levitt said.

Feierbach, though, pointed out that Westman's raise brings her salary up to \$105,000 a year — a fair figure compared to San Carlos City Manager Mike Garvey, who makes \$124,000 and has more experience.

"Garvey has 10 years of track record. We don't have a complete track record yet," she said.

"(A higher raise) isn't in the contract. It ain't there. A (5.5) percent pay increase after six months is pretty good."

"(Harris and Levitt) are two people making a case out of it," Feierbach added. "They lost the election. If they want to make a hay day, go ahead."

Harris laughed at the accusation and said, "I have no political interest."

Belmont City Council
Engineer Bulletin
July 15, 1998

Council dumps SAMCEDA

BY JENNIFER CHRISTGAU
Correspondent

Decrying "pro-growth lobbying techniques," the Belmont City Council recently raised some eyebrows in the county when it backed out of a partnership with the San Mateo County Economic Development Association.

In a 4-1 vote, the council decided against spending \$5,000 to be a part of SAMCEDA's economic vitality partnership, which helps member cities in the county attract new business, encourage development and provide adequate housing.

"In my case I believe SAMCEDA is a pro-growth lobby group. We don't need a lobbying group telling us what to do," Deputy Mayor Coralin Feierbach said.

"They were telling us how many houses should be in Belmont. Taxpayers' money shouldn't pay for this. Businesses should pay for it if they want their services."

According to Council Member Eleanor Hahn, the council instead decided to boost its annual contribution to the city's Chamber of Commerce from \$15,000 to \$20,000. Council members are considering putting the \$5,000 not given to SAMCEDA in a holding fund for the city's public library.

"If we had thought it was an important place for money to go, we would have put it there," she said. "We need to focus on groups that are doing stuff in our community, like the Chamber of Commerce. That is why we gave them more money."

However, SAMCEDA Chief Executive Officer Denise deVille argued that the group saves cities time and money by addressing housing needs, helping businesses find land and looking at how to improve transportation more effectively — services on which cities should not turn its back.

"(Belmont) has critical issues to deal with. There isn't enough revenue to provide services.

"Housing has been identified as a critical issue in Belmont. The amount of housing there is less than the amount of jobs they have," she said.

Council Member Adele Della Santina, who cast the sole vote in support of the group, agreed.

"SAMCEDA does what the city can't do. It promotes business regionally.

See SAMCEDA, page 9A

SAMCEDA: Belmont exits partnership

Continued from 1A

"A new business needs a certain amount of space. SAMCEDA knows where the available land is," she said.

Former Mayor Gary Harris also opposed the council's decision, and warned the county's economy could suffer if other communities

follow suit.

"Business will go somewhere else if other cities take the same stance and the whole area will suffer, because people will leave and those escalating housing prices we've been enjoying will drop," he said.

But Tom Diridon, president of

Belmont's Chamber of Commerce, feels SAMCEDA's absence won't have a big impact.

"I don't know that Belmont will have any problems. The chamber can lobby for our businesses," said Diridon, who also serves on several SAMCEDA committees.

City Council
San Mateo Co. Times
July 22, 1998

SAN MATEO COUNTY TIMES 7-22-98

Belmont residents ask: Who's behind recall?

By Lisa Fernandez
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — Residents awoke Tuesday morning to discover on their lawns and driveways flying disks demanding the recall of Mayor Pam Rianda and Vice Mayor Coralin Feierbach.

An unknown number of white saucers with blue script, likely delivered overnight, read: "No More Lies! ReCall Feierbach (sic) & Rianda. Belmont Deserves Better."

Nothing on the disks indicated who had paid for and distributed them.

The city clerk's office reported that no one has filed recall papers.

Feierbach, who was elected in 1995, said she is at odds with four known people in town: Councilwoman Adele Della Santina, former Councilman Gary Harris, former Councilwoman Nancy Levitt and Enquirer-Bulletin columnist Jerry Fuchs.

But fearful of being sued, Feierbach, would not accuse those people of handing out the faux-Frisbees.

She mused aloud, however, that she can think of no one else who would want her to step down from her post.

"These people are just embarrassed that we are doing a

good job," Feierbach said. "The city is not going to hell like they thought it would. This is a real cowardly way of doing it."

All four of Feierbach's antagonists denied being involved.

"She's nuts," said Fuchs, who received a disk on his lawn. "If she thinks I have nothing better to do than to throw Frisbees on people's lawns then she's from another planet."

Feierbach said she had been on the fence about running for re-election, but the political trick convinced her she should run again next year.

Plus, Feierbach said, she's mad that the anonymous plastic disk misspelled her name.

Della Santina said she had no clue who delivered the white disks, some of which were found in the neighborhoods of Hallmark Drive, San Juan Boulevard, Wakefield Drive, and other places around town.

"I would be upset if my name were on it," she said. "I'm typically a sensitive person."

Della Santina often opposes Feierbach and Rianda on city issues.

Della Santina supports business interests and Feierbach and Rianda support limited growth.

Belmont City Council
Engineer Bulletin
July 22, 1998

Residents demand landslide repairs

BY JENNIFER CHRISTGAU
Correspondent

After months of trying to get the city's attention, Belcrest Garden residents hammered the Belmont City Council at a recent meeting and insisted the city put in street drains and curbs, and repair landslides.

Their mass and persistence got the City Council to sit up and take notice. Both Mayor Pam Rianda and Deputy Mayor Coralin Feierbach promised to meet with residents on Lassen Drive to look at the slides, and directed city staff to investigate repair costs.

"We will meet with them. We will look at what their complaints are and assess the need to fix it. Health and safety comes first," Rianda said.

Getting the city's attention hasn't been easy for this neighborhood. Jay Thompson said he called the city several times to come and fix the slides, but they didn't respond until he discovered the rain water shooting out a pipe on Lake Street was raw sewage.

"The city was unresponsive. It was like they were so busy that they couldn't deal with Lake Street. We called several times and then we finally said, 'Just drop off the plastic and we'll take care of the rest,'" he said.

Thompson and 21 Belcrest Garden residents finally sent a letter in March urging the city to fix Lake Street and put in curbs and a drainage system on lower Lassen Drive. But as with their phone calls, residents said, they never received a response from the city.

"We decided, 'Let's just write a letter and see what happens.' We never heard anything from the city.

"We were kind of ignored and felt like it was being swept under the carpet. What really disappointed us was that we had not even received a, 'Thank you, we got your letter and we'll look into it,'" Thompson said.

Rianda said that the city staff generally takes care of petitions first, and she was told it had been taken care of.

Residents hope the city will consider their drain and street repairs worthy of funds, because they are nervous that next rainy season it won't be just the road below them that slips.

"(The repairs) aren't ones
See **LANDSLIDE**, page 11A

LANDSLIDE: City to assess damage

Continued from 1A

(the council) can wait on. If they don't fix this, then the losses could be monumental," said Belmont Heights Civic Improvement Association President Michelle Speert.

"We just want to nip this in the bud, before something worse happens. It's better to put a little bit of money in now so we won't have to pay a lot later," resident Jeff Schroeder said.

Worried that their street would not get fixed, Belcrest Garden residents organized to demand the city set aside money to repair the damage in this year's budget.

Their decision came at the same time many residents received a letter attacking the City Council for not putting more money aside for storm repairs, alleging that the city was going bankrupt and encouraging residents to attend the next council meeting.

The letter read, "Don't wait until your home is gone. Get down to the next City Council meeting to make sure that the council includes our road in this year's budget."

While most speakers at the council meeting had received the letter, they said the decision to come before the council was

made before they read it.

Jay Thompson, who lives on Lassen Drive, told the council about several parts of Lake Street where 70- to 100-foot-wide slides occurred this past winter, taking large chunks out of the road. The slides sliced away major portions of the road, making it too narrow for fire trucks and emergency vehicles.

In addition to concerns over Lake Street, Thompson said that since no drains or curbs exist on lower Lassen Drive, water runs off the street and underneath homes, eroding the earth around foundations and posing another slide hazard.

City Council Bulletin
Englewood Bulletin
July 29, 1998

Secret critic blasts council members

BELMONT

Rianda, Feierbach denounce anonymous cry for recall campaign

BY JENNIFER CHRISTGAU
Correspondent

This summer, Belmont residents might trade in throwing footballs and baseballs for tossing flying disks demanding a recall of Mayor Pam Rianda and Council Member Coralin Feierbach.

In the early hours of July 21, an anonymous person or people tossed white flying disks bearing blue writing that said, "No More Lies! ReCall Feierbach (sic) & Rianda, Belmont Deserves Better," onto front lawns throughout Belmont.

The midnight throwers have left residents baffled about the identities of the people behind the incident and wondering if a recall effort is in motion.

City Clerk Kathy Kern, who administrates recalls, said no one has filed papers with her.

"I haven't heard a thing about a recall," she said.

Mayor Pam Rianda has not caught wind of a recall movement, but said she supports the democratic right to do it.

"All I can say is that anyone that doesn't sign their names is a real coward.

"I think everyone has a democratic right to recall a City Council member. But if you are trying to upset the neighborhood with a frisbee, I don't see the point," she said.

The flying disks' language



SUSAN GARRISON/EB

Anonymous attack: Flying disks denouncing Feierbach and Rianda were left on residents' front lawns last week.

reminded Rianda of a campaign against her second run for the City Council.

"I remember that language from my second election. There were signs posted in about five different places in Belmont that said, 'Stop the lies. Belmont deserves better,'" she said.

The culprits are camouflaging themselves fairly well, because no one knows or is revealing their identity.

"I have no idea who could have done it. But there are a lot of people out there mad enough to," resident Nancy Levitt said.

"I haven't heard a thing about a recall. I don't know who would do

See **RECALL**, page 14A

RECALL: Disks tossed to homes

Continued from 1A

a thing like this, either," resident Dick Green said.

Feierbach said she has an idea, but won't reveal her theories.

"I think I know who they are. But I don't want to say.

"These people are massive cowards. If they've got a problem, stand up and be counted," she said.

Both Rianda and Feierbach take the attack in stride, and point to negotiations with Oracle, a \$2 million ending balance in this year's budget and the San Juan Canyon project as evidence of their hard work.

"We are spending six hours a day working for this city. We are making changes, and I think the people who lost in last year's election thought the city would go down in flames, but it didn't," Feierbach said.

"If you don't sign your name, then it really doesn't bother me," Rianda said.

Neither of them are certain why the flying disks were thrown. Green said people could be upset over the purchase of San Juan Canyon.

"(The flying disk throwers) are probably targeting Feierbach and Rianda because of the San Juan Canyon thing, and I think (a recall) is the wrong way to go about it.

"Don't recall people. That's awful. It doesn't do Belmont any good," he said.

Green remembered one effort in the early 1980s, when a group tried to recall four of the five City Council members.

"There were some people in Belmont who were politically motivated, who wanted four of the council members off. It was a long and nasty campaign and the recall lost," he said.

In order for Feierbach and Rianda to be recalled, a letter of intention must be delivered to both council members. Then the petitioner must draft a petition and get 20 percent of registered Belmont voters to sign it.

All this must take place by the first City Council meeting in August, in order for the recall to make it on the November ballot, said San Mateo County Elections Division Manager Bill Jackson.

While resident Dolores Callagy doesn't know who the flying disk author is, she said she would sign a recall petition if someone drafted it.

"I don't know who did this. If someone wants to start the papers, then I will sign them," she said.

Whether 20 percent of Belmont voters — which means roughly 2,800 signatures — agree is up in the air.

*Belmont City Council
San Mateo Co. Times
July 29, 1998*

Newspaper racks to lose individuality

Belmont orders single-style boxes for all publications

By Lisa Fernandez
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — Despite some grumbles from newspaper circulation directors throughout the Bay Area, the Belmont City Council on Tuesday voted unanimously to adopt an ordinance regulating sidewalk newsracks.

Brown, modular newsracks will replace the hodgepodge of colorful freestanding racks that now line public thoroughfares.

No publication is excluded but newspapers must obtain free permits to set up shop. Also, blinders must be installed to block sexually explicit materials in adult publications.

Newspapers must pay about \$450 for each new rack — a cost that soars to thousands of dollars for publications that sell their wares in multiple locations. Also, newspaper circulation directors — including those at the San Mateo County Times, the San Francisco Newspaper Agency and the San Jose Mercury News — said sales drop initially by at least 10 percent when newspapers are sold in homogeneous racks. Customers associate a newspaper with the color of the newsrack, they said.

City officials said the ordinance is necessary because newsracks in Belmont are cluttering sidewalks, making it hard for pedestrians and wheelchair-users to get by.

Millbrae may institute uniform news racks

By Diane Sussman
STAFF WRITER

MILLBRAE — The hard questions — whether to go with Orlando Blue, Zurich Silver or Safeway Tan — are already moot.

"It's either green or brown," said Ralph Petty, Millbrae's director of development. "That's the decision."

Whatever the ultimate color choice, Millbrae is planning to standardize the size, shape and color of all newspaper racks in the city. The City Council discussed the proposed ordinance at its Tuesday meeting and will vote after receiving a final recommendation from staff.

The city has been grappling with the issue for years, as racks of all shapes and sizes — selling everything from daily newspapers to softcore porn — have proliferated on city streets.

Newspaper companies don't like having their boxes regulated. They say customers come to know the colors they use on their boxes and seek out their papers that way. The companies don't like paying the cost of the city-mandated boxes.

But Petty said the cacophony of boxes is getting out of control.

"The clusters are huge," Petty said, with the area near Walgreen's topping the list for mismatched, oddly shaped and out of control racks. "You've got all the regulars

(newspapers) and all the pirates out there."

The post office, Hillcrest Market, Stephan's Deli, Fook Yen and Seafood Harbor restaurants also have a mass of racks in front of them.

The city is considering two options: city-owned, decorative green racks that match the city's "sidewalk furniture" or standard-issue, brown, modular units provided by newspaper distributors like the San Francisco Newspaper Agency.

City-owned green racks, which have anti-graffiti coating and no visible hardware, will cost about \$250 each, or about \$60,000 total. The money is currently in the Redevelopment Agency's budget.

The city also would have to maintain the racks.

The brown racks would be supplied and maintained by distributors, who already have supplied several Peninsula cities with standard six-paper racks, said Lou Sandrini, director of public works.

"It's really a question of how much money the city wants to spend and how much they want uniform, decorative racks," Petty said.

Either way, all newspapers, including tabloids and real estate publications, will have to go inside the racks.

"You can't just spring your little gizmo on us and chain it up to a tree any more," Petty said.

Miles Harrington, San Jose Mercury News single copy supervisor, said that companies don't always keep their newsracks from becoming rusted-out garbage cans for passers-by. But, Harrington said, ideally, he would prefer no restrictions at all.

"We're getting used to it," he said, adding that most Peninsula cities have adopted sim-

ilar ordinances. "We really try to cooperate with cities."

Single Copy Manager Mike Bryan at The Times was more blunt about the new restrictions.

"It stinks," he said recently.

Smaller publications suffer the most under the newsrack ordinance because of the expense of the modular racks. Usually, smaller newspapers

save money by using second-hand or plastic newsracks.

No one came to Tuesday's meeting to oppose the ordinance.

Newspapers have a free speech right to be sold on public rights of way. But city attorneys argue that cities have a right to maintain the safety and beauty of their towns.

Belmont City Council
San Mateo Co. Times
July 29, 1998



NOAH BERGER — Staff

Frustrated with the jumble of news racks lining the sidewalk, such as this one in front of Walgreens in Millbrae, city officials are forcing newspapers to use standard racks. Belmont officials passed an ordinance Tuesday and Millbrae officials are considering one.

Belmont residents full of civic activism

By Lisa Fernandez
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — Could it be something in the water? How about "haunting winds blowing through the canyon?"

What else could explain flying discs secretly delivered on homeowners' lawns demanding the recall of two councilwomen, an anonymous letter urging residents to storm City Hall about road repairs and a city lawsuit filed against the school district for tearing down a tattered playground?

Belmont is known for having one of the most colorful — and divisive — political scenes on the Peninsula. Insiders, former city leaders and current politicians say these passionate debates are nothing new. Stories of City Council arguments date back at least 30 years.

But as one woman-in-the-know recently put it: "It seems like we've taken a step back in maturity."

Some argue, however, that the passionate debates are key to good government. And therefore, these folks pride themselves on the city's cantankerous reputation.

Jim McLaughlin, who was the city clerk for 20 years until the late 1980s, said Belmont strives to have an open government, and its citizens care enough to voice their opinions.

"I can't recall a meeting without 30 or 40 people there and sometimes running until 3 a.m.," he said. "We have neighborhood group members taking turns going to City Council meetings to

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Independent
Sept. 8, 1998*

greatest issue

years ago — and continues today — over whether to add highrises or keep a quaint small-town feeling.

Also in the 1960s, residents split into camps over whether to allow development in the San Juan Canyon, a topic that is also before current city leaders.

Cries for the recall of council members is nothing new either. In the 1980s, the now-defunct "Citizens for Orderly Growth" unsuccessfully demanded the recall of four councilmen.

Passions were inflamed, in part, because residents feared getting assessed thousands of dollars to pay for new storm drains. Only some of them were later installed. The recall group also opposed Belmont Shores highrise offices — a possible foreshadowing of the recent opposition to seven-story Oracle buildings.

"You see?" said park commissioner King, who attends every council meeting. "The faces change but the politics don't."

So despite critical media attacks and casual jibes made at Belmont's government, King and others say they love their city and are proud of how their leaders do business.

"We'll be better off for things they're doing even if it's controversial," said former clerk McLaughlin.

Belmont: Development is single

Continued from NEWS-1

keep a watch on things. (Other cities, such as San Carlos, don't seem to have that. They're sleeping."

Like McLaughlin, Park and Recreation Commissioner Judy King said political discussions often reach frenzied levels because strong homeowners associations get on the horn to rally neighbors about local issues.

Like many cities on the Peninsula, the greatest issues in Belmont usually center around development and growth.

Though people recognize that passions run deep in Belmont, no one can answer why.

Perhaps 30-year-resident Denny Lawhern summarized his confusion about the city's political peculiarities best when he said that it must be "haunted winds blowing through the canyon."

"I've analyzed it and analyzed it and I just don't know why. But this is pretty much how Belmont always is," he said. "It's lively, active, opinionated and polarized."

This summer alone has seen its fair share of Belmont antics.

In late July, an unknown individual or covert group printed a several white plastic saucers demanding the recall of Mayor Pam Rianda and her

anti-growth colleague, Councilwoman Coralin Feierbach. No one claimed responsibility for the overnight delivery on residents' lawns.

Days before the faux-Frisbee escapade, an anonymous letter circulated among homeowners in Belcrest Gardens warning residents that their homes were slipping after last winter's storms and they should tell the City Council to fix their roads and landscaping, or face possible legal action.

And within the last few weeks, the city of Belmont — egged on by an irate homeowners group — and the Belmont-Redwood Shores School District settled a drawn-out, acrimonious debate over tearing down a 30-year-old playground on school property and replacing it with a larger parking lot.

After several unsuccessful mediation sessions and a full day of help from a Superior Court judge, the two sides decided to share costs in moving the playground to the other side of the street and adding 11 spaces to the school's parking lot.

But these are certainly not the only controversial issues that have faced the upper middle-class city of 25,000.

City leaders are still hammering out the details for a revitalized downtown. The debate began 30

Belmont: Councilwoman suggests hiring outside help

Continued from NEWS-1

Call them facilitators, team builders or counselors. What these professionals do is help companies — and councils — communicate better and focus on the business at hand.

In some cases, such as in Belmont and Pacifica, facilitators were brought in to stop fighting that threatened to overshadow all matters. Facilitators can also be hired to improve efficiency, as in Redwood City where one runs the monthly meeting between the council and various city commissions.

"I think it allows the mayor and (commission) chair to fully participate in the discussion without having to moderate,"

Redwood City Councilman Ian Bain said.

The facilitator is also observing the Redwood City council meetings and will present suggestions late this fall on how council members can be more efficient, City Manager Ed Everett said.

Observe away, said Redwood City Councilman Dick Claire.

"I don't think any amount of facilitation will help (council meetings). Six of us get along great," Claire said. Unfortunately, there are seven members on the council.

He would like to see some changes, including having "open discussions without feelings getting hurt."

There can be a number of sources for hard feelings in the council chambers.

It is difficult working with someone who has just attacked you during the campaign season. And even among thick-skinned politicians, egos bruise when colleagues roll their eyes or giggle at another's comments.

It sounds like a first-grade etiquette lesson, but Belmont council members said their facilitator had to remind them it's unprofessional to laugh when someone's explaining their position. It got so bad that a council member from a different city remarked, "We used to pride ourselves on not being like

Belmont."

"I always need to be alert and awake and not be needled to respond unprofessionally," said Belmont Mayor Pam Rianda. "Sometimes I'm successful, sometimes I'm not."

Rianda was also on the council when a facilitator was needed. She said it failed because council members became sloppy about their behavior in "debriefing" sessions (a post-mortem discussion where council members critiqued the meeting) once the facilitator left.

She wouldn't hire one again.

"Ten thousand dollars not well spent at all. . . . You can't change people's deep-seated feelings when there's so much

water under the bridge," Rianda said.

For the record, she adds that Della Santina's request to correct the minutes wasn't seconded because the latter wanted to substantially change her previous comments, not just clarify them.

The city clerk is comparing the amended statement against a tape of the meeting.

Former Pacifica Councilwoman Vi Gotelli said she counts facilitation meetings in that city as wasted time and money. Actually the timing of those meetings in the early 1990s was bad on several levels.

Belmont council on a bumpy ride

By Kim Vo
STAFF WRITER

Belmont Councilwoman Adele Della Santina knew things had hit a low point when she tried to correct the records of a recent council meeting, but no one would even join her in changing the minutes.

It's time to bring in another team builder, she said this week, referring to the \$10,000 consultant Belmont hired in the mid-1990s to help council members focus on city business instead of their dislike of each other.

"The facilitator came in and we aired our pent-up angers. It was wonderful," Della Santina said. "We made decisions and moved on. . . . Now we're stagnant."

City Council
Adele Della Santina
Sept. 26, 1998

Belmont makes clarification to construction ordinance

Hours, days and holidays are spelled out in revision of the ordinance

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Hoping to alleviate confusion about a recently enacted ordinance, the Belmont City Council voted 4-1 last week to make changes to clarify a city law which restricts the hours and days of the week in which construction activity may be carried out in the city.

Under the Construction Activities Ordinance — adopted Aug. 25 with the aim of cutting

down on neighborhood noise — construction requiring a city building permit was forbidden before 8 a.m. and after 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and before 10 a.m. and after 5 p.m. Saturday. Under the original ordinance, construction requiring a permit was prohibited on Sundays and holidays.

But according to Vice Mayor Coralin Feierbach, who asked the ordinance be brought again before the City Council, its origi-

nal wording was confusing, partly because it didn't specify which holidays were included in the construction prohibition.

"We're one of a few (cities) that didn't have a noise ordinance," said Feierbach, adding that she thought the law was much-needed. Feierbach said, though, that she had heard of a recent scuffle between a resident and a contractor due to construction work carried out on Columbus Day.

Under the newly revised ordinance, however, New Year's Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day,

Thanksgiving and Christmas are the only holidays on which construction is prohibited.

Another area of confusion,

"We're one of a few (cities) that didn't have a noise ordinance,"

Coralin Feierbach
Vice Mayor of Belmont

added Feierbach, was whether crews or contractor could visit a construction site during off hours to do estimates and assessments.

"That's not noise-related," said Council Member Adele Della Santina, adding that the ordinance was not created to curtail construction, only to cut down on noise that disturbs neighbors of construction projects.

According to the ordinance, work that falls under the restrictions "includes hammering, drilling, sawing or similar noise-producing construction activity conducted outside of a completely enclosed building."

In addition to construction

CONSTRUCTION: page 2A

CONSTRUCTION: Ordinance clarified

Continued from 1A

requiring a permit, the ordinance prohibits noise from "gasoline-powered maintenance equipment" — leaf blowers, lawnmowers, rototillers, trimmers and similar gas-powered equipment — outside of 8 a.m. to sunset Monday through Friday and outside of 10 a.m. to sunset on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.

Violators of the ordinance receive a written warning for their first violation. After that they can be

fined \$100 for the first violation, \$200 for their second violation within one year and \$500 for a third violation within one year.

But Belmont Mayor Pam Rianda, who voted against the revised ordinance, said it could hamper people who want to do weekend work around their homes.

"I don't think we should restrict our residents," Rianda said, adding that many people can only find time to do home maintenance projects on the weekends.

"There are a lot of people who can't afford repairmen to come in during the week."

But Feierbach said the new law should not be a problem for homeowners who want to do simple repair on Sundays, like mending a fence.

"I think this is good for the community," she said, adding that many residents consider their weekends "sacred" for rest and relaxation.

"At least let's give them one day when they can sleep in," she said.

*Belmont City Council
The Independent
Nov 6, 1995*

City Council
The Independent
Oct 12, 1998

Belmont votes against county

Council feels it can use its own programs to prevent teen smoking

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Reasoning that Belmont should concentrate on its own programs to quash teen smoking, the Belmont City Council last week voted against adopting a county ordinance that would require local retailers to obtain a permit to sell tobacco.

Already in effect in the unincorporated areas of San Mateo County, the county ordinance stipulates that tobacco retailers' permits can be revoked if they sell tobacco products to minors. Last week, the

City Council of Redwood City unanimously voted to participate in the program, joining Millbrae, San Carlos and San Mateo and Colma, which have already elected to do so.

"I don't see how another layer adds any more support to our programs," said Council Member Eleanore Hahn at the Oct. 13 City Council meeting.

Hahn joined Mayor Pam Rianda and Council Member Terri Cook in voting against adopting the ordinance. Vice Mayor Coralin Feierbach voted for the ordinance, and

Council Member Adele Della Santina was absent from the meeting.

Representing the San Mateo County Department of Health Services at the meeting, Edith Cabuslay spoke of the ordinance as a way for the county to work hand in hand with cities to quell cigarette sales to teens.

"The county would be offering a partnership," she said, adding that county inspectors could check to see if tobacco sellers have permits when visiting local stores.

The ordinance requires that for a permit good for five years retailers pay \$25 — the cost of processing the retailer's permit application, said Cabuslay. The permit comes on top of existing state law, under

tobacco ordinance

which merchants can be fined \$200 for their first offense, \$500 for their second and \$1,000 for their third.

Advocates of the ordinance contend the permit would be an extra measure and shouldn't be a problem if stores are committed to not selling tobacco to underage patrons.

However, city law enforcement would shoulder most of the responsibility of seeing that the permit law was followed, Cabuslay said. Police in participating cities may conduct sting operations, arranging for underage decoys to go into stores and try to buy tobacco products.

"It's another tool that we could use," Jim Goulart, Belmont's chief

of the police, said at the meeting. "I think it would help us identify who is selling and who is not."

Goulart added that his concern was whether or not the county would cover some of the costs of enforcing the ordinance.

"The lion's share still falls on the city," said Mayor Rianda, who said that she thought that the program was a good one, but that it was unclear what kind of service the city would get from the county to help enforce the law.

She added, however, that she would like to look into the possibility of Belmont starting a localized version, similar to the retail permit.

But Cook said that tobacco per-

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