

Belmont  
Times Trib. 4/10/79  
(Mayor)

## Belmont breaks tradition in picking its newest mayor

By Terry Robertson  
Times Tribune Staff

BELMONT — The City Council broke with tradition Monday night by appointing City Councilman William Hardwick to a one-year term as mayor over Vice Mayor Pamela Ketcham.

Traditionally, the mayor's spot goes to the person serving as vice mayor, but recent in-fighting between Mrs. Ketcham and two members of the council and her public dislike for City Manager James DeChaine apparently swayed the majority of council members to push tradition aside.

The council voted 3-0 to install Hardwick as mayor and as director of the Belmont Fire District. Councilwoman Margaret Buckley abstained from voting in protest of the action, but later changed her vote in favor of Hardwick in the "interests of council unity."

She was later voted in as vice mayor.

Mrs. Ketcham stayed away from

the meeting after learning earlier in the day what the majority of the council intended to do.

"I decided I wouldn't give the men the satisfaction of not giving me the mayorship," she told the Times Tribune this morning in reference to the three council members who voted for Hardwick. "I foresaw it coming, but that's life. It's not the end-all-be-all of life."

"But it's sad in a way," she added. "I think I could have done as good a job (as mayor)."

This is the third time that Hardwick has been appointed mayor. He was served in 1972-1973 and 1975-1976.

He said this morning that there were three reasons for the council's decision to select him over the vice mayor.

"She has said in the past that she would not serve as mayor as long as DeChaine was city manager," Hardwick said, in explaining the council's vote. "It would be difficult to be mayor if you can't work with the city manager."



The City Council broke with tradition in electing William Hardwick mayor of Belmont over Vice Mayor Pamela Ketcham.

## Merged lot problems grow in Belmont

By JANET PARKER  
Times Staff Writer

There seems to be no end in sight to the confusion that has turned merged lots in Belmont into a permanent agenda item.

Just when the City Council thinks it has found the perfect compromise, yet another potential solution emerges.

The latest is that Councilman Walt Worthge wants to know why Belmont can't work with a state law that allows the council to decide which lots in the city should be merged, rather than an earlier law that forces the council to decide which of some 400 lots should be "un-merged" or separated.

It's a legal technicality that City Attorney Ken Dickerson has already ruled doesn't apply to Belmont. But Worthge suggested at a public hearing Wednesday night that it's an option that hasn't been adequately pursued.

The council hearing was scheduled to record about 100 lots recently identified by the city as merged. The council, however, decided not to record those mergers until Worthge's concern is studied.

Worthge said he didn't want to give any of the property owners involved "false hopes" but it appears that the question about the state law is yet another potential solution to the problem.

"I don't think we should vote to record anything until after we clear this up," Worthge related.

The question came up when City Planner Neal Martin said that San Mateo County planners apparently

are using the more permissive law — deciding what lots to join — in the Emerald Lake area. If the county is using it, it seems that Belmont could, too, Worthge contended.

The merging lot confusion dates back to January 1977 when a state law required merging of contiguous lots in the same ownership where at least one of those lots was substandard or meeting less than the minimum requirements for development.

The law was an obvious attempt to control growth.

However, later that year, the Legislature decided the first law was wrong and implemented a second law that "permitted" cities — rather than requiring them — to merge substandard lots.

Belmont chose to work under the provisions of the original law. The result was about 200 angry property owners who say they have lost thousands of dollars in property values and the ability to construct on their own land.

Owners again asked Wednesday night why Belmont is facing this problem and no other city in San Mateo County seems to be caught up in the merger confusion.

Opponents of the merger procedure say other cities have simply ignored the law while proponents say other cities didn't need the law because they already had laws on the books to control development of substandard parcels.

Angry property owners lined up before the council during the hearing and pleaded in emotional tones to keep their properties out of the merger procedure.

Angelo Fogliani pounded his fist on the podium and scolded the council for "fighting like a bunch of little kids."

"I can get the stupidest lawyer coming out of the state bar today and he'll beat you guys on this," Fogliani said.

He and others threatened to file lawsuits aimed at forcing the city to reimburse property owners for the loss of merged lots.

"You're not going to take my property away from me," he insisted. He claimed his vacant merged lot was worth about \$50,000.

Francis Guido, representing Albert and Myrtle Genochio, protested an ordinance being considered by the council that would separate about 85 lots on Sept. 11, providing that planner Martin find an environmental impact report necessary.

Guido said it's wrong to tie up these properties for four more months, making it impossible for owners to sell them or build on them.

Several property owners were assured that because of technicalities, their properties are not merged as the city originally claimed.

San Mateo Times  
April 23, 1979  
4-23-79

## Bribery charge probed in Belmont

By JANET PARKER  
Times Staff Writer

The San Mateo County District Attorney's office is conducting a "preliminary investigation" into allegations that Belmont Councilwoman Pam Ketchum attempted to "bribe" a fellow council member in an effort to oust the city manager.

San Mateo County District Attorney Keith Sorenson said today that the matter was brought to his office three weeks ago and the investigation probably will continue for several more weeks.

Sorenson refused to say who

brought the allegation to his office. Bribery, he pointed out is a felony.

Mrs. Ketchum said today that she was aware of the investigation and had been contacted by an investigator from Sorenson's office.

The bribery allegation first arose at a City Council meeting on Feb. 13. At that meeting, Councilman Frank Gonsalves asked Mrs. Ketchum to disqualify herself from a vote concerning his property because, he alleged, she "sold her vote" in trying to get him to vote

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## Bribery

(Continued from Page 1)

against City Manager James DeChaine.

He claimed that the councilwoman said she would vote to separate two lots owned by Gonsalves if he would be the third council vote to fire DeChaine.

Mrs. Ketchum is a long-time political foe of the city manager. It is believed that she and Mrs. Buckley form a minority bloc to oust the manager and that closed door executive session attempts to muster the third vote have failed.

However, at that same Feb. 13 meeting, Mrs. Ketchum also claimed that Gonsalves had phoned her to find out how she would vote on his property. That, she claimed, amounted to vote-tampering.

Mrs. Ketchum said today she had decided to set the issue aside and not pursue what she said she believes might be an illegal action on Gonsalves' part.

"At this point, I'm thinking it's probably best to pursue it," she said.

April 24, 1979

## Ketchum

(Continued from Page 1)

from tradition and elected senior council member William Hardwick to serve as mayor until next April. Attempts by Councilwoman Meg Buckley to nominate Vice-Mayor Mrs. Ketchum to that position — following the traditional rotational method — failed for lack of a second.

Hardwick was elected mayor and president of the fire district board of directors on two 3-0 votes, with Mrs. Buckley abstaining and Mrs. Ketchum absent.

Although the issue is not on the agenda of tonight's meeting, the first meeting after Hardwick's election as mayor, Mrs. Ketchum's supporters hope they will be able to make their plea.

Hardwick said this morning that if a council member does desire to have the issue discussed, it will be permitted. In addition, he said he will ask Mrs. Ketchum if she wants the council to respond to the main question of her supporters — namely, why wasn't she allowed to serve as mayor?

Hardwick said he will have a written response prepared if that public discussion does occur.

While some of Mrs. Ketchum's supporters have said that she was the highest vote-getter in the 1976 election, supporters of other council members have since pointed out she was not.

The results of that election were Frank Gonsalves, 1,822 votes; Walt Worthge, 1,808 votes; and Pam Ketchum, 1,711 votes.

Gonsalves served as mayor in 1977-78 and Worthge served in 1978-79.

Hardwick, the senior member of the council, has served as mayor twice before.

A letter to the City Council signed by nine residents claimed that reconsideration is in "the best interest of the this community."

"The council's recent action, while not unlawful, was absolutely contrary to the spirit of the democratic process and should never have happened," the letter contended. It was signed by Mike and Mary Harrington, Hal and Kathy Shepard, Grant and Angie Larson, Sal and Barbara San Filippo and Pat Rianda.

It is uncertain if this is the first time that a vice-mayor in Belmont has been denied an opportunity to serve as mayor. Councilwoman Eve Sterry declined the vice-mayor position when a motion and second was made in her behalf in the early 1970s.

## Ketchum supporters picket

Supporters of Belmont Councilwoman Pam Ketchum gathered in front of City Hall this morning and quietly picketed in protest of the City Council's failure to elect her as mayor.

Promising to bring their grievance to the council at its meeting at 7:30 p.m. today, they carried signs saying "We voted for a unified council, not a polarized one" and "Why won't the council listen to the people who put them in office?"

The pickets said their appearance today was a vote of confidence for Mrs. Ketchum.

"We would like to convince the council to reconsider its election," said Lida Paetzke. However, she conceded that the chances of that happening are "probably pretty slim."

Lillian Curreri said Mrs. Ketchum deserved the position because she is a fulltime council member "who is very available to all points of view."

City Clerk James McLaughlin has received a petition signed by 17 residents, a letter signed by nine residents and another letter from Mrs. Paetzke seeking reconsideration of the mayor election.

On April 9, the council broke away

(See Page 6, Column 3)

San Mateo Times  
April 24, 1979



PICKETS AT CITY HALL IN BELMONT

(Times Photo by Mike Spinelli)

## Belmont council

By JANET PARKER  
Times Staff Writer

4/24/79  
Belmont Councilwoman Pam Ketchum was denied a turn as mayor because she couldn't be trusted to represent the city in a "fair and honest manner."

That was the rebuttal of Mayor William Hardwick Monday night to Mrs. Ketchum's supporters, who picketed City Hall all day and then filled the City Council chambers hoping for a chance to air their complaint.

They didn't get that chance, but they did get a public explanation of why three councilmen decided to overlook Mrs. Ketchum in selecting a mayor April 9 and instead hand the job to Hardwick, who has served as mayor twice.

Hardwick attacked Mrs. Ketchum, who was seated at his immediate left, for allegedly disrupting staff morale at City Hall, for disclosing publicly the confidential subject matters of executive sessions, and "using another person's misfortune to her own benefit."

The latter was a direct reference to the plight of Councilman Frank

Gonsalves, who is caught up in a controversy over construction on his own Lyndhurst Court property.

"This type of irresponsible action for a person in a position of public trust or private endeavor is reprehensible to me," Hardwick contended.

"Had I voted for her as mayor, I would have been condoning her actions, in fact, rewarding the person who took them," he said.

Mrs. Ketchum's supporters had paraded in front of City Hall from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, carrying signs denouncing the recent mayor-selection process.

About 60 persons appeared at the council meeting wearing yellow tags with "Pam" written on them. Councilwoman Meg Buckley was among the supporters wearing a placard.

Mrs. Ketchum, a councilwoman since 1976, served as vice mayor last year and was next in line to serve as mayor. But Mrs. Buckley's motion to nominate her to that position in the annual council reorganization failed for lack of a second.

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Belmont  
(Mayor)  
SM Times 4/17/79

## Belmont mayor's selection upset some

A delegation of Belmont residents, upset with the recent selection of a new mayor outside of the traditional rotational method, is planning to take its complaint to the City Council Monday night.

According to Mary Miller, who is leading the protest, Belmont voters upset with the recent mayor election are planning to pack the council chambers in City Hall at 7:30 p.m.

"We are upset with the procedure of breaking the tradition for the first time in Belmont history," Mrs. Miller said. "We are very unhappy about it."

She said they are concerned that Councilwoman Pam Ketchum — whose turn it was to become mayor in accordance with the typical rotational method — is being discriminated against on the basis of a personality difference with three councilmen.

The council on April 2 broke away from tradition and elected senior council member William Hardwick

to serve as mayor until next April.

Attempts by Councilwoman Meg Buckley to nominate Mrs. Ketchum to that position failed for lack of a second.

Hardwick was elected mayor and president of the fire district board of directors on two 3-0 votes, with Mrs. Buckley abstaining and Mrs. Ketchum not in attendance.

"There's probably nothing we can do about it now, but we have to let them know we will have it in mind at the next election," Mrs. Miller said.

She pointed out that Mrs. Ketchum received the most votes, topping Councilmen Walt Worthge and Frank Gonsalves, in the 1978 council election.

Mrs. Ketchum was elected vice-mayor by the council last year and was expected to be elected mayor this year.

The Belmont residents who voted for Mrs. Ketchum in 1978 are going to defend their choice for representation, Mrs. Miller added.

# Belmont council rejects Ketchum's bid

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Times Staff Writer

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The councilwoman's supporters had hoped the council would reconsi-

der its selection, but that did not occur and Hardwick remained as mayor.

Hardwick said he had hoped to "avoid embarrassment or censure of a fellow council member, since this often serves to divide the community."

He acknowledged that Mrs. Ketchum has been a full-time council member, devoting many long hours to the city. But, he said, it is necessary to look beyond the hours served.

"She has disrupted most (city) departments, demanding their time and attention. I have had complaints about her methods and the feelings of harassment of the employees," he said.

Hardwick claimed that staff morale has dropped because workers often thought her comments represented the entire council. He said he has talked to most of the employees who have left the city in recent years and, "in almost all cases, they indicated she was a factor in their decision to leave."

He contended that the council has often been unable to discuss sensi-

tive issues in closed-door executive sessions for fear that they would become public knowledge.

He continued to blast Mrs. Ketchum for her actions concerning Gonsalves' two lots, merged as the result of a 1977 state law. He repeated claims made two months ago that Mrs. Ketchum offered her vote to separate Gonsalves' lots if he would resign from the council and, on another occasion, if he would vote to fire the city manager.

"I am totally convinced that she acted in an illegal and unethical manner," he added, referring to a Jan. 24 lunch with Mrs. Ketchum. There, Hardwick claimed, Mrs. Ketchum called her own activity "dirty politics," but told him, "I leave it up to you to work it out."

Councilman Walt Worthge said he doesn't believe Mrs. Ketchum is capable of communicating with all factions within the city, a task he claimed is necessary for the mayor.

He denied that it is "tradition" to automatically elect a vice mayor to the position of mayor, and further claimed that Mrs. Ketchum has

(See Page 12, Column 1)

SM Jones 4-27-79

James - Tribune  
April 24, 1979

# Dissenters lose fight on mayor

By Terry Robertson  
Times Tribune Staff

BELMONT — Nearly 100 Belmont residents crowded City Council Chambers Monday night in an effort to force the City Council to overturn their tradition-breaking mayoral selection two weeks ago of Councilman William Hardwick and to replace him with Councilwoman Pamela Ketcham.

But the dissenters, all of whom wore large yellow "Pam" badges, never had a chance. Mayor Hardwick prohibited members of the audience from addressing the council and, instead, noting public pressure on themselves to explain the reasons for his selection, opened the discussion only to council members.

Councilwoman Ketcham then gave a tearful recounting of the agonizing days of self-doubt as a council member and as a human being following the April 9 council action in which her turn to act as mayor was passed over by Council members Hardwick, Frank Gonsalves and Walter Worthge in favor of Hardwick.

She spoke of her near-resignation from the council and of her gratitude for the many supporters who turned out in the Council Chambers and in picket lines in front of City Hall earlier in the day in protest of the mayoral selection.

On the other hand, Hardwick presented a prepared, dispassionate three-page dissertation on his reasons for choosing himself as mayor instead of Mrs. Ketcham.

He said Mrs. Ketcham harassed and disrupted the city's various government departments and that morale in those departments has plummeted as a result.

He related his "grave concern" for Mrs. Ketcham's belief that executive sessions are not privileged or confidential, which, he said, has resulted in the council frequently "being unable to discuss sensitive issues because of the uncertainty of their becoming public knowledge."

James - Irish  
April 24, 1979

## FIGHT

Continued from Page A-1

Hardwick also expressed concern for Mrs. Ketcham's "unethical" conduct earlier this year in offering to trade council votes with other council members to suit her own needs.

(It was reported Monday that the San Mateo County District Attorneys Office is conducting a "preliminary investigation" into alleged vote bribe charges. Mrs. Ketcham has been charged by Hardwick with having offered her vote to unmerge Councilman Gonsalves' lots during a lunch last February if he would vote to fire City Manager James DeChaine.)

Other council members also gave their opinions of the vote, which, for the first time in recent Belmont history, resulted in a vice mayor (Mrs. Ketcham)

being passed over by a City Council for another council member.

In the end, Hardwick was still mayor and Mrs. Ketcham was still a member of the council.

On her part, Mrs. Ketcham said criticism of her actions have caused "me to question my self-worth as a council member and as a human being."

"I also seriously considered my resignation from the council," she said tearfully. "I came to the council not to be controversial. I don't know what my problem is, but I'm certainly controversial."

She then told her supporters that their protests would not be heard "because the men are not responsive to the community. But I want to say to each of you with those cute name tags, I love you and I appreciate you coming down here. I love you. Thank you."

# rejects Ketchum's bid

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Apr 24-1979

## Council

(Continued from Page 1)

repeatedly said in recent months that she didn't even want to be mayor.

Gonsalves said only that his vote on the mayorship was not based on Mrs. Ketchum's past voting record but "on other items; I don't wish to go into detail."

Mrs. Ketchum sat quietly through the explanations by the three councilmen. But before they made their statements, she noted that she has very seriously considered resigning in the past year.

She said Hardwick's "slander" about her luncheon discussion with him has "hurt me more than anything." After learning three days before the April 9 council meeting that there were three votes against her becoming mayor, she decided to stay away from that meeting and "save embarrassment for myself."

She expressed gratitude toward her supporters and contended that she is not alone in her struggles on the council.

"I want to say to those of you with those cute little yellow nametags on you, I love you and I appreciate your coming down here," she said.

Mrs. Buckley noted that the councilmen reached out and offered friendship during the year when her own personal problems arose. That same "human quality" should have been extended to Mrs. Ketchum in this matter, she said.

"We're letting it all hang out now, and I suppose that's what makes Belmont one of the most honest cities on the Peninsula. All our squabbles are in public," she said.



Belmont  
SM Times 4/30/77  
(Council)

## **DA declines to file charges in Belmont case**

District Attorney Keith Sorenson announced today he will not file charges based on allegations that Belmont Councilwoman Pam Ketcham attempted to bribe a council colleague in an effort to oust the city manager.

"There is insufficient evidence to warrant a successful prosecution," Sorenson said at a press conference today.

The decision, Sorenson said, was based on a month-long investigation which included interviews with Mrs. Ketcham and other council members.

Although acknowledging that those interviewed were not "completely cooperative," the district attorney stressed that the delay in making the allegations was the main reason the charges could not be substantiated.

"There was a long delay in reports being made to law enforcement authorities on the alleged vio-

lation," Sorenson said. "An earlier report would have made a complete investigation possible."

It was alleged four weeks ago that Mrs. Ketcham told Councilman Frank Gonsalves that she would vote to separate two of his lots if he would be the third council vote to fire City Manager James DeChaine.

That offer, reportedly was made last December.

Sorenson has refused to say who brought the bribe charge to the attention of his office.

Public airing of the allegation came at a council meeting last February when Gonsalves asked Mrs. Ketcham to disqualify herself from a vote concerning his property because "she sold her vote," in trying to get him to fire DeChaine.

It is believed that Mrs. Ketcham and Councilwoman Meg Buckley form a minority block to oust DeChaine and that attempts to muster another vote at private executive sessions have failed.

eaupost

*Times Tribune May 5, 1979*

## Collusion in Belmont

Belmont Mayor Bill Hardwick recently attacked Councilwoman Pam Ketcham for allegedly trying to bargain with him, allegedly offering her vote on one issue in exchange for a vote from him or Councilman Gonsalves on another. I was surprised he chose this subject for his attack, because Hardwick, himself, appears to have frequent agreements with Councilmen Gonsalves and Worthge. Furthermore, these three often bring city employees into their collusions.

They get assistance from a city employee, who raises a legal or administrative issue, when they wish to vote contrary to strong public opinion but want to appear that they are helpless to do otherwise. The issue raised by the employee is usually not a problem at all, but is a "red herring" phrased in confusing rhetoric in an attempt to confuse the audience.

A typical example of this collusion was seen at the April 23 meeting. A petition proposing a new ordinance was presented to the council. This petition had 2,640 signatures, approximately 20% of the registered voters. Signatures and voter registration had been verified, and the petition was certified by the proper official. The State Election Code requires that the council immediately either introduce the ordinance for adoption or order a special election on the ordinance. Hardwick, Gonsalves and Worthge did not want either of these alternatives, so City Attorney Ken Dickerson helped them out by giving a verbal legal opinion that they should not act, quoting a rule that applies when petition signatures total between 90% and 110% of the required number. However, this rule was clearly irrelevant, because the petition had 131% of the required signatures.

Nevertheless, the three councilmen ignored the official facts, even though they had been presented to them both verbally and in writing. Hardwick and Worthge made helpless gestures and

stated repeatedly that they did not see how they could vote contrary to the attorney's opinion. Finally, to placate the exceptionally large and vocal audience, they did vote for a special election.

I hope we can return to a more democratic process, in which council members work on solutions publicly, rather than manipulating the hearing beforehand.

**Ellinor Wheeler**

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San Mateo Times  
May 15, 1979

# Land merger chaos

The Belmont City Council stumbled over merged lots again Monday night, leaving a cloud of dust over several privately owned properties and over Councilman Frank Gonsalves' role in city government for months to come.

The latest four-hour round of complicated arguments, maneuvers and proposals aimed at finding a "fair and reasonable" solution to the merger chaos left the door open for still more debate.

When the dust had settled Tuesday at about 1 a.m., the council had:

- Told four owners of merged lots that they could submit a \$3,000 promissory note to obtain a "certificate of unmerger." The note would be forfeited to the city for the purchase of open space if the property owners refused to, or couldn't, meet certain criteria or conditions

placed upon their properties later this year.

- Left Councilman Frank Gonsalves — one of those four property owners — in a position that would make him ineligible to vote on upcoming major land-use issues, including the general plan update, the growth management study and the unmerging, or separation, of some 85 lots through the city.

- Caused Councilman Walt Worthge to accuse two councilwomen of breaking a "trust and compromise" over unmergers reached at a meeting last month.

Worthge, at one point in the exhausting deliberations, threatened to renew a proposal made weeks ago to remove Gonsalves' property from the confusion — at the councilman's request — and allow him to vote on the merger issues. That would break

the deadlock in favor of the land owners.

And it would leave Gonsalves to sue the city for loss of property value or to seek resubdivision of his merged lots, making the new house being built on one of them legal.

At the end of Monday's meeting, it was uncertain if Worthge would or even could still pursue that option.

The Belmont City Council has been dealing with the merger of lots since early 1977 when a state law merged or joined adjacent lots in common ownership where one or more of the lots was substandard or meeting less than minimum requirements for building.

Property owners hit by the law protested that they had been robbed of property values and that the action took away their rights to sell or construct on their land.

Tuesday, May 15, 1979 THE TIMES ★★★ San Mateo—27

## plagues Belmont

In recent months, the council decided to separate or "unmerge" some 85 lots in September contingent upon the results of an environmental impact report being prepared by City Planner Neal Martin. However, the fate of the remaining 300 merged lots was uncertain.

The lots being considered this week are in a special dilemma because building permits have been obtained and construction has begun or has been completed. Owners claimed that they were not aware that their lots had been merged.

The council had introduced ordinances to unmerge lots owned by Gonsalves, W. and K. Budde Inc., Baffico Construction Co., and Walter Sorensen last month and was expected to easily adopt those ordinances Monday night.

But Councilwoman Meg Buckley

again presented a plan that would hold those substandard lots in abeyance — through certificates of unmerger — until the council can come up with "mitigating" circumstances property owners would have to meet for separation to take effect.

She had asked for the opinion of the city attorney on her proposal but he had not responded and wasn't at the meeting. Worthge insisted that the attorney found that concept illegal three weeks ago.

"To me, it's the only fair, equitable thing," Mrs. Buckley said. It would be unfair, she contended, to allow property owners who have managed to obtain illegal building permits for construction on their merged lands to go ahead with their plans while other property owners

can't do a thing with their merged lots.

Councilwoman Pam Ketcham — who had voted for the introduction of the ordinances three weeks ago — joined Mrs. Buckley.

Property owners and their representatives claimed that Mrs. Buckley's proposal cast a cloud over their land. Eventually, motions to separate the properties involved failed on 2-2 votes, with Gonsalves seated in the audience.

The promissory note idea originally was proposed by a reluctant Mayor William Hardwick.

The promissory note concept was approved 3-1, with Worthge objecting.

Times Gazette June 20, 1979

## Gonzalves' plan rebuffed

By Terry Robertson  
Times Gazette Staff

BELMONT — An attempt by City Councilman Frank Gonzalves to bring one of his two adjacent controversial lots into conformance with zoning laws by taking 2,000 square feet from his lot next door and tacking it on to the substandard parcel was temporarily rebuffed by the Planning Commission Monday night.

Concerned that Gonzalves's plan to subdivide the two Lyndhurst Court lots was a matter more of expediency than practicality, the commission voted 3 to 3 on the councilman's application and promised to reconsider the issue at their July 2 commission meeting.

Gonzalves's Lyndhurst Court lots have been the center of controversy for some time, since it was discovered that the two lots had been merged by a state law into one and that he was building a new home there illegally. He has maintained that, like most other Belmont

property owners who were affected by the merger law, he was taken by surprise.

The law which took effect in January 1977 merged all adjacent lots under one ownership in which one or more of the lots was undeveloped and substandard.

Gonzalves, along with several other property owners in the same situation, was granted a chance to unmerge his lots two months ago by putting up a promissory note or money in lieu of any serious environmental impacts created from development.

Gonzalves, however, chose to subdivide the lots to bring both into conformity with the 9,600 square foot zoning limit for the area.

Commissioners Steven Vartan, Robert Hoffman and Robert Change, though, could not see the connection between a 1,500-square-foot stem of land moved from the larger lot to the smaller lot which are situated a different elevations.

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## Gonzalves' plan rebuffed, for now at least, in Belmont

By Terry Robertson  
Times Tribune Staff

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# Belmont planners split on councilman's construction plan

Belmont Councilman Frank Gonsalves faced yet another in a series of stumbling blocks this week involving construction on his property on Lyndhurst Court.

The Planning Commission split 3-3, with Commissioner Joe Green absent, over a proposal by Gonsalves to subdivide his property —

consisting of two merged lots — into two new lots.

Voting in favor of the subdivision were commissioners Donald Heiman and William Moore and Chairman Alex Fletcher.

The subdivision, according to City Planner Neal Martin, would have provided Gonsalves with two lots

sufficient in area to meet zoning classifications.

Gonsalves has been fighting the city since November for the right to build on his property.

Late last year, it was discovered that two lots owned by Gonsalves had been merged by state law in 1977, although the councilman claimed he was unaware his lots were affected by the law.

The problem was that Gonsalves had already begun building a house on the previously vacant lot which stands next to the house he lives in with his family. In essence, it resulted in two homes on a single lot, a clearly illegal situation.

After months of bitter bickering at the City Council level, the council agreed to "unmerge" or separate the two lots if he would post a \$3,000 promissory note. The note would be forfeited to the city for purchase of open space if Gonsalves — and several other property owners in the

same position — couldn't meet certain criteria or conditions placed upon their properties.

So far, Gonsalves has not chosen to post such a note. Instead, he is attempting to legalize his construction through a subdivision.

Martin wrote in his staff report that removal of the house under construction "would not be appropriate even though this action would remedy the legal question of having two houses on one lot."

The application for a subdivision was necessary, Martin said, because neither of the two parcels involved fronts a public road. It meant that Gonsalves needed commission approval for an exception to the subdivision rules.

Commissioners voting in favor of the subdivision, Martin said, found it was the only logical solution to obtaining the necessary square footage for two homes.

Those against the application, he

said, were concerned about the unusual configuration of the lot.

After the deadlocked vote, the item was continued to the next meeting so that Green can presumably break the tie.

The commission also continued until its first meeting in August an application for a subdivision map for a 54-unit condominium project at 1040 Continentals Way.

At first, the commission voted 2-4, with only Heiman and Fletcher favoring the subdivision. The major concern, Martin said, was a special election on July 17 involving growth control issues. One of the items in that election, Measure A, proposes a maximum of 56 new dwelling units per year and this particular project represents nearly that entire allotment.

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June 26, 1979

# Belmont computer

An attempt to reprogram Belmont's troubled computer — the focal point of numerous City Council debates and a taxpayers' lawsuit — has fallen three months behind schedule although work only began in March.

In a written report to the City Council, Assistant City Manager John Bramble explained that delays have been created by both the city and by Michael Perry & Associates of Las Vegas, who have offered their services to the city for a sum of \$1.

Bramble said that the city still has little it can identify as a pro-

gram but "the project has not been totally stagnated either."

"Most assuredly, the next few months will be critical to the development of the computer programs," Bramble stated.

So far, the city officials said, the Finance Commission has established a subcommittee consisting of Lee Price, Bob LeDoux and Doug DeYoung to oversee the developments on the computer programming contract. That subcommittee has met three times, most recently reviewing material provided to the

city by Perry and critiquing the data for accuracy.

Several suggestions were returned to Perry for inclusion in developing a system for programming the city's payroll, a crucial part of the task.

In addition, some training of Finance Department personnel in operation of the computer has begun, Bramble said. There also have been visits to other locations where Digital Equipment Company Systems are in use to gain ideas for programming in Belmont.

The agreement with Perry indicated the payroll system would be

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## project falls behind

completed in July. Bramble said that target date has been pushed back to September or October.

Bramble said his own involvement in the fire amalgamation with San Carlos and with the 1979-80 municipal budget has limited progress with the computer.

In addition, Perry & Associates has had several other contract commitments that have delayed progress in Belmont.

Perry offered his services to Belmont virtually free, saying that it would allow him to develop a mar-

ketable program he could compete in the municipal field.

However, he made it clear that it would take him about 18 months to complete the task at no fee, or about 12 months for a fee of \$25,000.

The schedule set a target date of July 1977 for completion of the entire program system.

The City Council was scheduled to discuss the report Monday evening but ran out of time on an agenda that ran past midnight. The item, along with a revenue-sharing allocation hearing and several other matters, was continued to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday.

In other business, the council:

- Delayed consideration of a slope density formula for judging new development until a public hearing can be held. Resident Eve Sterry contended that a public hearing before the Planning Commission

and City Council is required by law.

- Heard a request from Fern Bianchi on behalf of Kainos Home and Training Center for the Developmentally Disabled, based in Redwood City, for \$1,500 in revenue-sharing funds. The goal is establishing a permanent residence for the developmentally disabled.

- Tied 2-2, with Councilwomen Pam Ketcham and Meg Buckley objecting, on an addendum to the joint powers agreement with the city of San Carlos for consolidation of fire services. The addendum, aimed at clarifying items involving employees, is not crucial to the July 1 implementation and was continued to the next council meeting.