

Belmont Candidates Air City Problems at Public Forum

BY PAUL McCARTHY

Roads and recreation dominated the "Candidates Night" forum held in Belmont last night when four nominees for city council told their views to a standing room only crowd.

The program, sponsored by Belmont Home Owners Assn. was held in the parish hall of the Church of the Good Shepherd. Approximately 75 persons filled the hall during the two and a half hour session.

Featured speakers were the two incumbents, Donnell B. McCarthy and Lyle Jones, and their opponents, Robert L. Rousseau and Rene Laporte.

City Clerk Catherine A. Heartsner and Treasurer Rebecca Manning, each running without opposition, appeared briefly and requested votes of confidence.

First candidates introduced by Chmn. Robert Hunter was

Jones, an attorney in the anti-trust division of the U.S. Dept. of Justice.

Jones said he had been prompted to run because of his belief in democracy on the local level.

"I'm running for council," he declared, "because the people need someone who is willing to try to do a decent job for the city of Belmont, someone in whom they have confidence."

In standing on the record, Jones pointed out that the city's police force now has a higher morale than at any time in the past decade. Jones is chairman of the council's police committee.

The incumbent councilman said that taxpayers really are electing a board of directors to administer a \$100,000 corporation. Those named by the city's "stockholders" must have balance to spend the money wisely

and judgment enough to say no to pressure groups, Jones declared.

He asked voters to elect men with experience in making such decisions, not those guilty of "rather broad statements."

Laporte, a nine-year resident of Belmont now engaged as a sporting goods salesman, emphasized the need for better roads within the city.

He briefly traced the city's history, stating that the community's "dead slumber" from the time of William Ralston until the close of World War II is over.

Chief plank in the Laporte platform is the need for more efficient maintenance of city streets. He charged that those in the street department have not had proper guidance from the city engineer, nor is time

on streets well spent.

Laporte called for use of the city's blade to give streets a "crown." All streets in the city should also have correct drainage ditches to carry off rain water, he claimed.

Erosion and improper care of streets have given the city a poor reputation. If elected, Laporte pledged himself to "keep after those in charge of maintenance" to see that home owners have access to their property.

He passed photographs of the W. B. Seward home at 1517 Williams St. among the audience to illustrate the need for proper diversion of storm waters.

Rousseau built his platform around a need for closer cooperation between the Belmont

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Water Board and the council...

He charged the water group with "neglect of its duty" in the past. Rousseau urged that members of both bodies sit down to a round-table discussion until some solution is worked out.

The water board, the young real estate man said, has \$40,000 in its treasury, yet charges \$380 for 50 feet of new pipe. The California Water Service, which serves several other Peninsula cities, lays pipe on demand without charge, Rousseau claimed.

"Yet they manage to show a profit and pay dividends to their stockholders," he stated.

The water board's action in denying building permits, he claimed, is actually turning away city income from taxes on rejected new construction.

In calling for consolidation of the two bodies Rousseau cited the growth of San Carlos and San Mateo as evidence that "there's something wrong in Belmont."

McCarthy, an attorney and chairman of the health and welfare committee on the council, titled his talk "Dogs are not people, but children are."

He declared that Belmont is not alone with its dog problem; mayors of other cities on the Peninsula are also seeking a solution.

The councilman stated that recreation is one of his chief jobs as a councilman. He cited the recent development of neighborhood toddle parks as evidence of "a good start toward an adequate community recreation program."

McCarthy urged that the city's toddlers, 'teen-agers of tomorrow, be considered in a future recreation studies. He said he was in favor of a civic auditorium with all the trimmings, but had concluded that such a facility is "beyond our means."

Candidates endorsed a city manager plan with some reservations during the question period which followed. Other subjects which were brought up included an architectural board of review and a city master plan.