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East Palo Alto residents begin recall drive

By Thomas G. Keane
Times Tribune staff

The campaign to unseat four council members is backed by landlords

Two residents of East Palo Alto, backed by city landlords, have begun a recall drive to unseat four members of the City Council.

Edrick L. Haggans of Bell Street and John B. Bostic of Kirkwood Court have filed a notice with the Times Tribune to be published Monday initiating a campaign to oust Mayor Barbara Mouton, Vice Mayor James Blakey and Councilmen Omowale Satterwhite and Ruben Abrica.

Haggans, reached by telephone Thursday, said the notices would be served "as

soon as possible" to the four council members named.

A recall petition would — if enough signatures were collected — let voters decide if the four council members should remain in office.

The recall notice charges that the council members have failed to improve police services, have defied a mandate from voters to suspend a rent control ordinance and have wasted county funds. It also ac-

cuses the council members of mishandling negotiations to buy the Ravenswood High School site and of allowing resident aliens to apply for positions on the Planning Commission.

Blakey said today he has heard rumors of a recall but has not been served with a petition of intent to recall.

Blakey denied allegations that the council has not moved to improve police services and has allowed aliens to apply for

Planning Commission positions.

He said the rent control ordinance was instituted to protect citizens from skyrocketing rents. "We only did that to protect the citizens. Rent was going up sky high, unreasonably so. The people were going to be left unprotected," Blakey said.

The council sought to buy Ravenswood High School for recreation land, and not for commercial development, because

East Palo Alto is short of open space, Blakey said.

"I think I have put forth my best to serve the people. This recall was started by the landlords, who are unhappy with the rent ordinance," Blakey said.

He said he believes he and his fellow council members, who could not be reached for comment, will be vindicated.

Haggans and Bostic were both active participants in the rent control referendum campaign, which forced the City Council to place its rent control ordinance on the April 10 ballot. The referendum campaign

Please see **RECALL, B-4**

RECALL

Continued from B-1

collected more than 2,000 signatures; the city clerk ruled that 1,592 of them were valid.

Haggans is also the head of the East Palo Alto Property Rights Committee, which is circulating an initiative petition that would give the City Council virtually no control over private property rights.

Both men, who say they supported incorporation, are closely aligned with the group of East Palo Alto landlords that funded the referendum drive and the lawsuit challenging the incorporation election.

Gertrude Wilks, the fifth member of the City Council who opposes rent control, was not named in the notice.

The four council members named by the recall notice are required by law to reply with a 200-word statement within seven days.

If those mounting the recall gain the signatures of 25 percent of the community's registered voters, the City Council must set a date for the recall election. The election must be held within 88 to 120 days of the date the election is set, City Clerk Russell Averhart said.

Most likely, the recall notices will come as no surprise to them. In October, a widely distributed confidential memorandum from attorney Paul N. "Pete" McCloskey to Tom Spieker, a developer, advised that a recall election could be won.

McCloskey, who is currently appeal-

ing the Superior Court ruling that upheld the June incorporation election, told Spieker that the support of Councilwoman Gertrude Wilks would be crucial to the success of the recall campaign.

Wilks, reached at her home, declined to comment, saying that she was unaware the recall petitions were being filed.

The recall notice lists the following five reasons for a recall measure:

- "Misfeasance in office by wasting public funds available from San Mateo County by spending those funds for recreation rather than for improvement of housing in East Palo Alto.

- Misfeasance in office by opening eligibility for membership on the Planning Commission and on the Parks and Recreation Commission to persons other than U.S. citizens who are registered voters of the city.

- Misfeasance in office by wasting public resources by attempting to acquire Ravenswood High School for purposes other than to develop the site for commercial use and thus enhance the revenue and tax base and ability to provide public goods and services in the city.

- Nonfeasance in office by failing to take any action to improve police services or provide adequate protection in the city, thus leaving the citizens in danger of crime.

- Malfeasance in office by passing a rent control law, in contemptuous defiance of the clear mandate by (a referendum) petition of the voters of the city ... so as to discourage development, diminish the tax base, and thus waste the public funds of the city."

CURFEW

Continued from B-1

voted against the bill, but he said Thursday afternoon he was "comfortable" with the amended provisions. Naylor had opposed earlier versions of the bill, he said, because he feared police officers might harass young people by stopping them at random to determine if they were curfew violators.

Last Friday, McAlister said interest on the part of Northern California pediatricians encouraged him to resubmit

AB 1155 during the Assembly's second session.

"I had not expected to bring it up again because it looked extremely difficult to get the votes," McAlister said. "The members of the American Academy of Pediatrics urged me to make another try."

Palo Alto pediatrician Jim Flippen, head of the Accident Prevention Committee of the Northern California chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, has been one of the leading supporters of McAlister's bill.

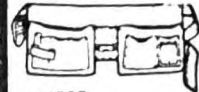
"Curfew laws are enacted in 12 other states and they have proved very effective in reducing driving fatalities among 16-year-olds," Flippen said.

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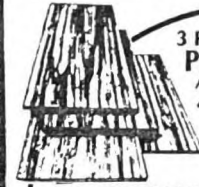
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R-19 6 1/4"
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2
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