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East P.A. mayor loses job

Bostic ousted after pleading no contest to charge

By Janet Wells
Mercury News Staff Writer

A deeply divided East Palo Alto City Council ousted the mayor and vice mayor Monday night but couldn't agree on who should act as the city's leader.

Vice Mayor Warnell Coats initiated the issue of "council reorganization" after Mayor John Bostic pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor charge of illegal election filing in his June bid for a seat on the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors.

"I voted for (Bostic) on the assumption that he was innocent of the charges that were filed. It turns out he's guilty," Coats said

before Monday's vote.

"It's an image question. I don't think it's appropriate to have a mayor on probation or in jail. That's not acceptable to me."

But Coats' strategy may have backfired. First the council voted unanimously to have Bostic and Coats vacate their posts.

Then Councilwoman Barbara Mouton renominated Bostic for the position. Her motion lost.

Councilwoman Pat Johnson nominated Coats, but he did not get enough votes and then lost the vice mayor's post to Bill Vines by a 3-2 vote.

Bostic, manager of student support serv-

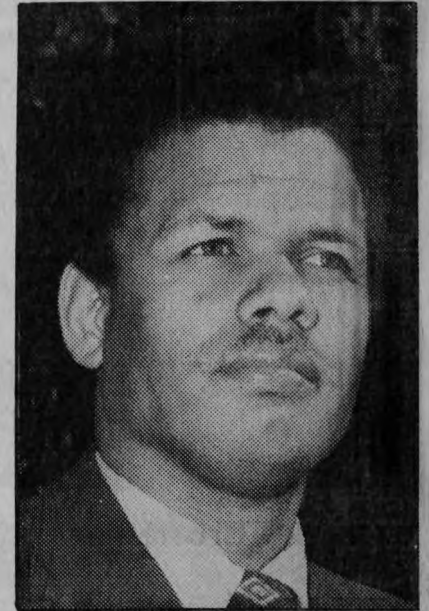
es at Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, had served as mayor only since April. He vowed Tuesday to regain the title.

"For Warnell it's a moral question. For me it's a duty question. I think we'll work it out," he said. "I am going to be the mayor and am going to support Coats to do the things he has to do."

The council very likely will not decide the mayoral issue until September at the earliest, Bostic said.

Mouton, who served as mayor for four years, said kicking Bostic out as mayor was

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John Bostic

... Vows to regain post

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"unnecessary. He just got in. I wasn't voting on a personality basis but on the principal of the thing.

"If everyone was ruled out because of misdemeanors, it would rule out most people on the Peninsula," she added.

Mouton blamed Vines for keeping the council split. He "was not willing to work toward a consensus and a resolution of the thing. He really wanted to be mayor."

Vines, who voted for neither Coats nor Bostic, did not return phone calls Tuesday.