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October 4, 1983

CONFIDENTIAL

Mr. Tom Spieker  
3700 South El Camino Real  
San Mateo, CA 94402

Re: East Palo Alto Political Organization

Dear Tom:

Your Palo Alto Park Association has inquired about the timing and procedures for a political challenge through a recall action against the present East Palo Alto Council governing majority.

The following advice is predicated upon 15 years of campaign experience, including 16 primary and general elections (14 of them in East Palo Alto), one presidential campaign in New Hampshire and seven other states, and one Senate campaign here in California, together with a rather close observation of the CCAIN group's personalities and operations and the special circumstances of East Palo Alto. It is political, not legal, advice and there is no charge for it.

A recall election can be won in my judgment, but there are a series of principles which should be recognized first; and second, there are some specific steps and check points which should be accomplished before recall petitions

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are circulated.

First, the general principles:

1. A volunteer organization of at least 80 part-time volunteers, willing to canvass their neighbors, is crucial to success in East Palo Alto.

2. It is necessary to have at least two full-time persons of total dedication and tremendous energy in order to create, motivate and sustain this organization for the next nine months or so.

3. The best asset you have right now is the nucleus group of perhaps 20 people around Gertrude Wilks and Oneida Branch on the east side and Arn Cenedella and the Hilbers on the west side.

4. To keep this group motivated and working, there is a need to have (a) a clear goal, (b) an easily understandable time schedule, and (c) specific and doable tasks which volunteers can undertake on that schedule.

5. It's not who is for you that wins an election, but who votes for you on election day (or by absentee ballot).

6. Considering the foregoing principles, your goal is clear: 1,800 votes which will actually be cast for recall on election day. I would not recommend the effort of a recall election until your organization can demonstrate its

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effectiveness by identifying 2,400 of East Palo Alto's roughly 9,000 registered voters who will state to your volunteers that they feel a commitment to vote for recall.

My own past experience in congressional races is that about 3/4ths of the people who tell you they are committed will actually vote. For this reason, 2,400 commitments can be expected to result in 1,800 votes if the volunteer organization gets them out to vote, either by absentee ballot or on election day.

7. The best way to obtain these 2,400 commitments is to take the precinct results from last June's election and assign a percentage quota of the 2,400 necessary commitments to each precinct on the basis of the opposition to incorporation expressed in that election.

Thus, if Precinct X has 500 voters, and voted 105 for and 95 against incorporation, you might set a goal of getting 200 voters in that precinct to commit to vote for recall. When you have reached a total of 2,400 such commitments, then and then only can you feel comfortable about winning the recall election.

8. The process of obtaining the commitments is fairly simple:

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(a) Obtain from the San Mateo County Clerk the precinct walking lists for each precinct.

(b) For 9,000 voters, representing approximately 4,000 households, you need 80 volunteers, each volunteer to work on weekends calling personally on 50 households with the relevant pages from the walking list. (To ask most workers to cover more than 50 homes is to ask too much . . . they may likely not even start the work.)

(c) This visit would be extremely low-key . . . merely asking voters if they would support a recall of the EPACCI incumbents, and not asking the known pro-incorporation people anything.

(d) If a voter responds to your volunteer's inquiry, "Yes, I will vote for recall," put a red line under his or her name. (Put an "X" opposite the name of obvious opponents, and a "?" for those who say they are uncertain or don't want to give an answer . . . quite often the latter group are opposed to your position.)

9. In addition to obtaining these commitments, ideally the 80 volunteers would take the one hour instruction course from the County Clerk in how to register voters,

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register people who are favorable to recall, obtain and distribute absentee ballot applications for the red-line voters and then, in the 30 days preceding the election, make sure that all of his or her red-line voters cast an absentee ballot if possible and, if not, that they actually go to the polls on election day.

10. From the foregoing, you will note my belief that getting 80 working volunteers is all-important. I would suggest that the apartment-house operators commit themselves and their managers to covering the four precincts west of Bayshore. This should reduce the number of committed volunteers on the east side of Bayshore to perhaps 60 people. If you can't motivate 60 volunteers to work in the next 90 days, however, this will be a signal that you can't win the recall election at this time and should therefor wait for the first opportunity when sufficient motivation can be created through some outrageous action of the ruling majority.

11. These 60 people should all be homeowners in East Palo Alto and, hopefully, minority residents in the neighborhoods where they are canvassing, registering and obtaining absentee ballots. I understand Gertrude Wilks has already started formation of such a homeowners' organization. I would rely unequivocally on Gertrude's advice as

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to whether she can succeed in creating and maintaining the necessary 60-person organization. If she says yes, then help her in whatever way she asks. If she says no, then I would have grave doubts about proceeding at this time.

12. Assuming Gertrude's response is affirmative, I would suggest the following timetable:

(a) By October 15:

Appoint 16 precinct captains and assign number of red-line commitments per precinct. Start canvass of neighborhoods with volunteers, with goal of having each volunteer covering 10 homes each weekend for the succeeding five weekends. Goal: 500 committed red-line voters each weekend (this is about 32 per precinct).

(b) By December 1:

If you have 2,400 committed red-lines, agree on candidates to replace recall targets and prepare and print necessary recall petitions.

(c) By January 7:

Commence circulation of recall petitions, again on weekends only.

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13. I will be glad to provide free advice and assistance at every step of this procedure, as will my wife and chief campaign expert, Helen Hooper McCloskey. I would highly recommend, however, getting a gung-ho young black leader, male or female, to supervise the whole operation.

I'm sorry to be committed elsewhere this Thursday evening, but will stand by to meet with your group whenever you say in the future, given reasonable notice. On Monday and Thursday nights I teach at the University of Santa Clara from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

I am sending a confidential copy of this memorandum to Arn Cenedella for his comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,



Paul N. McCloskey, Jr.

PNM/jb

cc: Arn Cenedella