

Westlake may oust mayor, seek agreement with Perot

By Miles Moffeit
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The Board of Aldermen has called a special meeting Wednesday to consider authorizing the town attorney to "take all action necessary" to oust Mayor Scott Bradley from office and to "negotiate an interlocal agreement" with utility districts controlled by developer Ross Perot, Jr.

Alderman Jerry Moore said he did not know enough about the agenda items, requested by Alderman Carroll Huntress, to comment in depth. Huntress did not return telephone calls yesterday.

"It's a very unpleasant situation," Moore said. "You've got Scott, who's a very adept attorney himself and has demonstrated an ability to use that ability against the aldermen. We have irreconcilable differences.

The aldermen already plan to put Bradley on "trial" April 28, saying that they will address their complaints about his performance and will consider removing him from office. Bradley has called the hearing a "kangaroo court where the aldermen can be judge and jury."

For weeks, Bradley and four aldermen have fought a bitter battle, which has spilled over into two district courts, over whether Stagecoach Hills is part of Westlake and who should control development of Perot's Circle T Ranch.

Aldermen Al Oien, Howard Dudley, Jerry Moore and Huntress have been pushing to disannex Stagecoach Hills since one of its residents, Don Redding, filed to run for office. Bradley has repeatedly denounced their attempt as a way to disenfranchise voters and a candidate from the town.

When the mayor learned of the agenda posted at Town Hall yesterday, he voiced anger and dismay - particularly over the item relating to Perot's utility districts on the Circle T, whose status is being negotiated in closed-door mediation.

"This confirms our worst fears: that a secret deal has been cut with the aldermen with Perot to give the town away, and to do it before the May 3 election," Bradley said. "This is an example of the worst possible dishonesty in government I can imagine."

He said it also appears that the aldermen are trying to remove him from office before the "so-called trial."

"It sure sounds like they're planning my funeral before the execution," Bradley said. "It sounds like they're taking all actions necessary to prevent the execution. I can't believe I'm living in America."

Perot officials, Oien and Moore said yesterday that no deal has been struck on the utility districts.

"Mediation is going on, and we're working toward agreements," said Rick Patterson, president of Perot's Alliance Development Co. "Bradley's statement that a secret deal is cut is just to stir up the public."

Bradley and the aldermen had been trying for years to dissolve the utility districts that blanket Perot's Circle T Ranch. Heading into mediation, Perot said that the town must first agree to a finance plan to channel millions in town sales tax revenues back to his ranch for roads and waterline improvements.

In recent weeks, Huntress and Dudley have said they now accept that Perot's districts are in the town to stay and believe that the town could share Perot's expertise in road and utility joint ventures.

Bradley, who said he believes that the districts are undemocratic and could eventually saddle the town with taxes and debt, said the aldermen are preparing to "hand over the town" to Perot - quickly, before the May 3 election. Redding supports the dissolution of the utility districts and he has been critical of Perot's plans to develop the Circle T.

Moore said he will wait to "hear a presentation" Wednesday and then decide whether to move on the item.

"You can jump at the bogey-man," Moore said. "But I think he's aggravating the situation. We want to give him [town attorney Bill Wood] the power to negotiate an agreement and he would have to bring it back to the board."

Moore said he believes that a compromise can be worked out to allow Perot to use some town sales tax dollars for the Circle T. He declined to elaborate on specifics, but said he believes that the timing is right for an agreement.

"We've been debating this for years, so why not now?"

Some town residents said they were disturbed by next week's agenda items.

"These three aldermen have not asked the citizens what they want. They're moving their own agenda," said Jerry Dinsmore, 47, a senior vice president at GTE who has lived in Westlake three years. "In the past, they had the best interest of the town at heart. I find it an amazing turnaround, a complete 180."

Bradley hasn't been "doing anything inappropriate," Dinsmore said, adding that "the aldermen are the ones who are acting inappropriately."

John Douglas, a Stagecoach Hills resident for 13 years, agreed.

"This business about the mayor, what can be done other than going to the meeting, being supportive and cheering him on," he said. "Authorizing the town attorney to negotiate an agreement with the MUD sounds like a sellout of the officials of Westlake."
