

Assembly overrides golf resort veto

AUG 8 1997

Butte residents start recall proceedings against DeVilbiss

By PAUL STUART

Frontiersman reporter

PALMER — The Mat-Su Borough Assembly Tuesday night voted 6-1 to override Mayor Barb Lacher's veto of a measure to convey borough land for development of a golf resort in the Butte. Only District 2 Assemblywoman Janet Kincaid dissented.

Butte residents, unhappy with the course of events, have begun efforts to recall their assembly representative, District 1 Assemblyman Larry DeVilbiss, who led the charge to ap-

prove the land deal.

The assembly action technically sets the stage for negotiations to proceed on 13 conditions attached to the ordinance conveying the 320 acres to Homestead Resort Properties by means of a lease with an option to purchase. In practice, it isn't that simple.

The developer has not responded to calls and letters from the borough to begin the process.

Borough Planning Director John Duffy, who is also part of the four-member negotiating team, said, as of Tuesday, Homestead developer Victor Trygstad hadn't returned phone calls or responded to certified letters, so talks could be scheduled.

Butte residents Jim Courtney and Ted Cox on July 31 submitted the application for a petition to recall DeVilbiss, saying they believe he violated borough code by "granting unwarranted benefits and treatment to Victor Trygstad re-

garding his attempts to acquire 320 acres of borough property.

"Specifically," the recall application states, "we believe that Mr. DeVilbiss has had private meetings with Mr. Trygstad, and has been presented with plans and financial documents that were purposely kept from public scrutiny. We believe these meetings have been part of an attempt by Mr. Trygstad to circumvent the public and competitive processes, with complicity and concurrence of Mr. DeVilbiss."

Deputy Borough Clerk Kristie Van Gorder said the application is still under consideration. She said it normally takes one to two weeks to make a determination whether a recall petition should be granted.

Meanwhile, if the petition is allowed, Courtney and Cox said they are confident they can quickly gather more than 500 signatures to get it on the ballot for the October election, or for a special District 1 election.



Larry DeVilbiss

The deadline to put material on the October election ballot is fast approaching. And special elections cost the borough about \$35,000. Van Gorder thought it was possible, but not definite, that a decision on the recall application might be made in time to get the question on the October ballot, if the petition was approved and the necessary signatures gathered quickly enough.