

Pinole mayor hires consultant in recall fight

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By Tom Lochner

Pinole Mayor Maria Alegria has hired Kevin Reikes of Sacramento-based Media & Associates as a consultant for her election campaign, she said in an e-mail late Wednesday.

Alegria and City Councilman Stephen Tilton face a recall election Feb. 5.

In 2006, Reikes worked for Laura Canciamilla in her unsuccessful Democratic primary race for state Assembly, helping produce negative cable and print campaign materials that portrayed her rival, then-Contra Costa Supervisor Mark DeSaulnier, as untrustworthy and in the pockets of developers. Canciamilla's campaign paid Reikes' firm, Media & Associates, \$193,267 in the 2006 election cycle. DeSaulnier beat Canciamilla in the primary and won the general election over Republican Antioch Councilman Arne Simonsen.

In 2004, Reikes was a political consultant to the West Contra Costa Unified School District in the successful campaign for Measure B, a five-year, \$10 million-a-year parcel tax measure.

The same year, Reikes was on the losing side working for developer GreenPark in an unsuccessful campaign to derail Hercules Measure M, which passed by a wide margin. That ballot initiative, by residents and environmentalists, was designed to prevent suburban sprawl in Hercules' eastern hinterlands by restricting land use there primarily to agriculture and recreation. GreenPark wanted to build more than 500 homes, a hotel, offices and stores at Franklin Canyon.

Reikes faces a media-savvy and resourceful opponent in Pinole resident Jeff Rubin, the volunteer spokesman for recall sponsor Concerned Citizens of Pinole who is known in other circumstances as the Punctuation Man. Rubin is the founder of National Punctuation Day and Punctuation Playtime, an assembly program for elementary school children.

Alegria also said she authorized a recent public opinion survey "to gauge how the lies and innuendoes of the recall group are impacting our community."

Residents told the Times they received calls from survey-takers asking them to rate the performances of all four council members — the fifth, David Cole, resigned in August; his seat is also up for election Feb.5.

The residents also reported they were asked about Pinole police Chief James Rose; Pinole firefighters; state Sen. Tom Torlakson; Mark DeSaulnier; various other personalities; and how they feel about the direction their city is headed.

Alegria's term runs to December 2008. No one took out papers to run as a replacement candidate for Alegria as of early Thursday.

Pinole mayor hires consultant . . . 2

On Tuesday, Pinole Planning Commissioner Deborah “Debbie” Long took out papers to run for Cole’s seat. Former Pinole Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Ivette Ricco took out papers for Cole’s seat last week.

Also last week, residents Richard White and David Vida took out papers to run as replacement candidates for Tilton, whose term expires in December 2010, the same as Cole’s. No one filed completed candidacy papers with the Pinole City Clerk as of early Thursday.

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