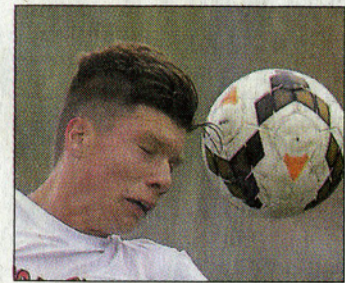


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PALOS VERDES ESTATES

Four challengers running for seats on PV Homes Association

The candidates are creating a rare contested election for the PVHA Board

By Priscella Vega

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Dissatisfaction over the Palos Verdes Homes Association's handling of public parkland has prompted four candidates to challenge five incumbents for seats on its board of directors.

Dick Fay, Jennifer Laity, Mike Moody and Ried Schott are supported by Residents for Open Board Elections, a coalition of citizens who believe the current board lost sight of its mission to protect and oversee buildings and landscaping in Palos Verdes Estates.

The challengers to Edward

Fountain, Mark Paullin, Phillip Frengs and Dale Hoffman will compete in a rare contested election for the homes association's board of directors, a group that predates the city council.

Motivating the challengers is the controversial 2012 land-swap agreement in which the Palos Verdes Estates City Council and

the homes association unanimously approved transferring a parcel of parkland to a couple who live on Via Panorama.

"We'd like to have legitimate people in there," said John Harbison, leader of the Citizens for Enforcement of Parkland Covenants that sued over the land swap and

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won in Los Angeles Superior Court in June. Both the city, homes association and homeowners are appealing that decision.

"A lot of people who are concerned in the community are asking for new leadership and so (ROBE) came forward," said Harbison, an organizer of ROBE.

Although all five seats are up for election, Harbison said newly appointed board member Carol Swets is not targeted because she didn't take part in past decisions. ROBE "shouldn't question her leadership," Harbison said.

In a Dec. 7 letter, ROBE asked the homes association to modify its ballots to include the challeng-

ers. Harbison said they received an email from the homes association on Monday saying it "did not intend to do a second mailing" and would not pay for one. The homes association said ROBE could mail a second round of ballots at their own cost or could pay for issuing a modified ballot.

ROBE will meet tonight to determine how to proceed, but Harbison said it's likely they will create and mail out their own ballots.

"The specific question we still have to work out with them is to make sure the process we're using is constructive to how votes are being counted," Harbison said, adding that it still unclear how the homes association will proceed if residents who already voted based on the first round of ballots want to

change their vote for new nominees.

Sidney Croft, the association's attorney, said earlier this week that residents are free to run for an open seat, but it's been a "long time" since incumbents have face challengers. It's common for corporations like the association, he said, to support its incumbents.

Before electing a new board, Croft said a notice is posted announcing the selection of a new board at the association's annual meeting.

"If they get a majority... to vote for them, then they'll be elected," Croft said.

Since the homes association does not offer provisions for write-in candidates, Harbison said he looked to the organization's bylaws and eventu-

ally found direction in the California Code.

According to the California Corporations Code, a minimum number of signatures is required to add names to an annual ballot. In this case, 100 signatures is needed. As of Dec. 16, ROBE had 188 signatures.

A few of the ROBE supporters are former mayors, a former president of the homes association and members of the Palos Verdes Unified School District.

The homes association mailed ballots to the community on Dec. 5. Ballots must be received by the homes association by Jan. 8. For further information on new nominees, visit: www.pvegoodgov.org.

The Palos Verdes Home Association is located at 320 Palos Verdes Drive West.