

PV Homes Association chief resigns

Announcement made
via email Tuesday night

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Amid a rare contested election, the Palos Verdes Homes Association's president announced that he will step down Thursday after serving 13 years on the powerful community group.

Mark Paullin, one of four board members targeted by a group of activists, wrote in an email addressed to homeowners Tuesday night that he had notified colleagues of his resignation Dec. 14.

Paullin oversaw 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

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to a couple who live on Via Panorama.

A coalition of citizens called Residents for Open Board Elections, believing the current board has strayed from its mission to protect parkland in the city, is backing a slate of four challengers in the election.

But Paullin on Wednesday said ROBE was not the reason he resigned.

"I felt no pressure from ROBE, and I'm not concerned about ROBE," said Paullin, who served two terms as president for the association. "I think these are intelligent and challenging people. I respect them, and I just decided this is not my battle."

Paullin didn't comment on why he did not announce his resignation before election ballots were mailed on

Dec. 5.

With the homes association's election already underway, it is unclear how the board will proceed to fill Paullin's spot. It may require the board to vote in a new member as it previously did for Carol Swets, who was recently appointed to the board.

Paullin is positive that whoever takes his seat will be a "confident director" for the board and the community.

"It will be sensible for the board to select a director who supports the majority opinion of the board and who has the energy and desire to fight the necessary battles that are forthcoming to the board," he said.

News of Mark Paullin's resignation comes just days after the Palos Verdes Homes Association was criticized for changing its position on revoking election ballots.

Ballots mailed on Dec. 5

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— Mark Paullin, about his resignation as association president after two terms

did not include the names of the new nominees because they failed to make a filing deadline, and ROBE has been mailing a second round of ballots that include the challengers' names directly to residents.

Palos Verdes Homes Association attorney Sidney Croft had said that residents who were unaware of the second ballot that contains the names of four challengers would be able to revoke their ballot and cast a new one if they visited the association offices.

By Monday, however, Croft had reversed himself, saying ballots cannot be revoked. He declined to com-

ment as to how the homes association will proceed if a resident is interested in recasting a vote.

"If they already mailed it in, they should check with their attorney if they want to do something. I already misspoke and it's already caused a lot of inconvenience. I don't want people acting on my advice," Croft said.

Croft added via email that he "mistakenly made an assumption, without first researching the issue," that residents would be able to revoke a ballot and cast a new one if they visited the association offices.

Critics believe Paullin's

resignation is an opportune time for the homes association to build trust in the community.

"In order to foster more trust and transparency, the association should allow homeowners — not board members — to fill the new vacancy," said Jeff Lewis, attorney for John Harbison's Citizens for Enforcement of Parkland Covenants that sued over the 2012 land-swap and won in Los Angeles Superior Court in June.

Lewis said the homes association should allow homeowners to choose a member of the board instead of "perpetuating a good ol' boys club of handpicking their

own members."

When asked if he had any regrets, Paullin declined to comment, other than saying, "I think as a member of the board there's been a lot of give or take on issues over the last years. I respect my fellow directors and I understand why decisions are reached."

Throughout his time at the homes association, Paullin has been involved in other voluntary activities like serving as a board member at the Aquarium of the Pacific and the Providence Little Company of Mary Foundation in Torrance. He said he's thought about stepping down as president for the past year and will continue his volunteerism by serving as the vice-chair for the Mary Foundation.

"I was hoping for a smooth ending to my service and I've been working hard to have a smooth ending," he said.