

Mayoral Election Completes Power Shift on Los Alamitos City Council

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At Tuesday's City Council meeting, Dean Grose was elected Mayor, completing the power shift which began with the November 4 general election. The election of Grose was a departure from the norm of electing the previous Mayor Pro Tem, Gerri Mejia, into the top position.

The November 4 defeats of Ken Parker and Council Member Driscoll, which came after a bruising campaign, set the stage for the election of Grose as Mayor, rather than Mayor Pro Tem Mejia. A citizen's group, Citizens for the Preservation of Los Alamitos (CPLA), spearheaded the successful campaign to defeat Parker and Driscoll. The apparently well funded campaign, included direct mail flyers and other publicity focusing on embarrassing travel expense reimbursements for Parker and Driscoll. Until their defeat, Mejia could have been expected to be the next Mayor. In fact, the election of Grose as Mayor, seem to catch Parker by surprise. When he was giving his farewell speech, before Grose was nominated for Mayor, Parker referred to how well qualify Mejia was to be the next Mayor. When Grose's name was placed into nomination, there was a noticeable murmur of surprise from the crowd.

While CPLA's campaign against Parker and Driscoll focused on the questionable expense reimbursements, according to Mejia, the real issue involved the City's contract for trash hauling. She said "When Ken and I came out early on and said we want to make sure this {the trash hauling contract} goes out to bid, because for almost the last 30 years it hasn't... that kind of put a target on our backs." Although there was much talk about everybody working together, with the defeat of her political allies, Mejia, clearly has her reservations about the council's future. She said after the meting "Instead of going with what is appropriate, which the Mayor Pro Tem would come into be the Mayor, they spoke continuously, Dean {Grose} and Troy }Edgar}, about bridging gaps and coming together and I think this is the perfect opportunity for them to do that by going with the sequence of putting me in as Mayor. But the fact that they didn't... it concerns me that as long as it's what they want, then they'll go along with it, but if it's not, then they're not going to."

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