

Unable to Reach a Consensus, Los Alamitos City Council Appoints New Member on 3 to 1 Vote

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Published 04/14/2009 - 6:00 a.m. Pacific Time

Last night the Los Alamitos City Council appointed Constantine "Dean" Zarkos to fill the Council seat vacated by the resignation of former Mayor Dean Grose who resigned due to public outrage over a racial slur. Despite calls for the Council to find a candidate upon which all four sitting Council members could agree, it was not to be.

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Members of the public and Council members themselves often called for a consensus building candidate, but when the votes were taken in the first round of nominations, no candidate even got a majority, not to mention a consensus. Council Member Gerri Mejia made two nominations, both of which failed for lack of a second. On two other nominations, Council member Ken Stephens, broke with the majority and voted against the nomination along with a negative vote by Mejia. Stephens also put forward a nomination which was not seconded.

Thus, after a first run through of the five candidates, three candidates did not even manage to get their nominations seconded, and the other two could not get a majority. On each vote, Council Member Poe voted with Mayor Edgar, while Mejia and Stephens voted in the other direction. There seems to be a general feeling that Edgar, Poe, and Stephens, represent the majority and Mejia represents the minority. This means that the only way Mejia could affect the outcome would be if they stayed with the idea of creating a consensus.

After the first round failed to achieve an appointment, the Council held a deliberation session. During the discussion, Stephens expressed concern about the cost of holding a special election as a way of breaking the impasse. In concluding his remarks, he indicated he would support Zarkos. Even though Stephens voted against Zarkos in the first round, Stephens changed his position and voted with the majority to appoint Zarkos. Mejia voted no on Zarkos and he was appointed on a 3 to 1 vote.