

Watsonville's planning chief fired by Radin

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Watsonville Planning Director Bud Carney said this morning he has been fired by City Manager John Radin.

"Radin asked for my resignation yesterday, and I refused to give it," said Carney, 47, the city's planning director since 1984. Carney said Radin then told him he was on "administrative leave" until Sept. 30, when his employment will end. Carney said today would be his last day on the job, which pays \$56,664 annually.

In an interview at City Hall this morning, Carney was sharply critical of Radin, saying he is "totally out of control as an administrator" and has acted in a "bizarre and irresponsible" manner that shows "total disregard for the law and employees' rights."

Carney said he and Doug Spinelli, whose job as assistant planning director was eliminated during a heated City Council session Tuesday, plan to sue the city.

On Tuesday, Radin twice cut Carney off when he was trying to speak in favor of retaining Spinelli's position.

Carney wouldn't go deeply into the reasons for his dismissal, but said, "In my mind it has nothing

to do with what happened Tuesday. It has to do with many incidents." The power to fire the planning director rests with the City Manager, not the City Council.

Carney said he had learned that Chuck Comstock, the city's administrative services director, will be named interim planning director. Neither Comstock nor Radin could be reached for comment this morning.

Spinelli and Carney aren't the only ones leaving the planning department. Planners Cary Darling quit recently to go to Japan and John Mahaney is leaving next week to enter medical school. That leaves two planners, Maureen Owens and Meredith Roeder.

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Carney called Radin's actions "so immoral and outrageous and unconscionable that it is beyond anybody's comprehension. There will be two people left to run the department. There are probably 75 to 100 projects in the mill, and there will be virtually no staff."

The decision to eliminate Spinelli's job in a public meeting was "unthinkably vicious," Carney charged.

Carney said he enjoyed working for the city and would return if asked to do so by a different administration.

"I was looking forward to working with the new City Council" that will take over after the Nov. 7 elections.

Carney said he wanted to make strong efforts toward improving housing opportunities for low-and moderate-income people, "particularly the Hispanic community."

Spinelli spent half his time overseeing the city's housing-rehabilitation efforts, and Carney argued to the council that cutting the job would be a signal to the federal and state governments that Watsonville isn't serious about such programs.

Watsonville is still getting some federal and state money for housing rehabilitation, but lost a bid to renew a program that provided funds for Spinelli's work. The grants the city is getting require the city to provide its own staff, and it was Radin's recommendation to reduce that staff by cutting Spinelli's job.