

Seaside Co. protests mayor's 'intrusion'

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SANTA CRUZ — The Seaside Co. is telling the City Council to back off from its offer to interject Mayor John Laird into the union dispute at Cocoanut Grove and Wellington's Restaurant.

In a letter to Laird Wednesday, Seaside

Co. President Charles Canfield says, "This company does not recognize the City Council as an entity having any legitimate right to become involved."

Canfield that sending Laird forth to help mediate is worse than a threatened economic boycott that was suggested by Councilman Michael Rotkin.

"As ill-conceived and irresponsible

though it was, (the Rotkin plan) was far less of an intrusion into the private rights of business and labor than the unanimous directive to you to personally intervene."

Laird responded, "Two weeks ago the council specifically did not take sides in this matter (but) following a tradition established in cities across this country

unanimously offered my services in resolving this dispute."

Laird recently sent the company a letter inviting representatives to a "pre-meeting" to work out ground rules for negotiations. "I am disappointed by the tone

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and content of the Seaside Co. response," Laird said.

Seaside has refused to negotiate with a bargaining unit of Local 483 of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union that workers approved in August and that was certified by the National Labor Relations Board in October.

The Seaside Co. contested the election, but the NLRB upheld the union and on April 30 ruled the company must negotiate.

However, the company can still appeal the NLRB decision in circuit court.

Canfield notes that the hotel employees union was voted out at Casa Del Rey Hotel that Seaside purchased in January and challenged the council whether it would, in turn, tell the union it could not appeal the decertification election.

He also challenged, "Similarly, should the Santa Cruz Seaside Co., now, as a concerned taxpayer-citizen, attempt to influence the outcome of the future negotiations between the city and its employees by economic or other external pressures."

He intimates that the City Council may be using "confrontation politics," and says, "Unfortunately, the Seaside Co. has now learned through on the job training that confrontation politics works well for some in this city.

"We do not believe that this approach to government serves the community at large."

Laird says the union employees are willing to negotiate and "this process works only when both parties are willing to search for common ground."

"Employees indicate their willingness to begin immediate good-faith negotiations . . . their issues concerned primarily good-faith bargaining and employee benefits.

"I reject the notion that seeking labor peace is 'confrontational.'"

Canfield said, "Quite frankly, we are appalled that the reputation and integrity of the Santa Cruz Seaside Co. was so callously and viciously assailed in the forum of the City Council.

"When members of the council begin to prejudge a legal situation and cast stones, we should all be concerned."