

# Appointed SV council irks CFOG

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SCOTTS VALLEY — Angry that the majority of the City Council acquired their seats by appointment, members of Citizens for Orderly Growth have submitted an initiative requiring that council vacancies be filled by an election within nine months of the vacancy.

The council's present policy is to fill vacancies by appointment for the remainder of the term, which may be up to four years.

"Quite a number of people in Scotts Valley feel the need for more direct representation," said CFOG member Gail Burk. She pointed out that Councilmember Barbara Leichter — who supports COFG — had tried three times in the last year to get City Council to adopt such a measure, but she was rebuffed each time.

Not surprisingly, the council majority usually votes the opposite of the way CFOG would like.

Leichter and Mayor Ray Carl ran in an election for their posts. Council members Rey Retzlaff, Ed Lang and Phil Liberty were appointed, the latter over Leichter's strenuous objections.

CFOG gathered approximately 940 signatures from Dec. 20 to Jan. 9 to qualify the initiative for the June ballot.

Because only 445 signatures are required to put a measure on the ballot, CFOG's measure will almost certainly be declared valid, said a spokesman for the city administrator's office.

Once the signatures have been verified, the City Council must either vote the petition into law or order it to be placed on the June ballot.

CFOG members asked that the matter be placed on the council's Feb. 15 agenda. A city spokesman estimated the signatures will have been verified using a random sample by the end of January.

The initiative would require City Council vacancies to be filled at the next regularly scheduled election, or to call a special election if a regular election does not occur within nine months.

Calling a special election seems unlikely, Burk said, because with school board, water board, City Council, presidential and supervisorial elections "there's some kind of an election in Scotts Valley every six months."

If the council does not vote the initiative into law, it will be placed on the June ballot, which will include the presidential primaries, supervisorial primaries, and two Scotts Valley City Council races.

The council may still appoint persons to vacancies when they occur, but only until the next election, whether or not that term was scheduled to end, Burk said.

The initiative also requires the City Council to interview applicants for temporary appointments during public sessions.

Council member Rey Retzlaff was appointed in 1981 to replace the late Rad Lyon; Lang in 1982 to replace Rupert Lissner, and Phil Liberty was appointed in August of 1983 to fill a seat left by Rod Pulley.

Pulley himself suggested when he resigned that a special election be called to fill his seat, but his idea did not win the support of the council majority.