

Ballot measure group deletes misinformation about election cost

By KELLY NIX

A PACIFIC Grove community group that's urging voters to increase the pay for members of the city council removed erroneous information on its website about the price of holding a special election in June after The Pine Cone reported on the cost.

City councilmembers in February decided to hold a special election June 2 to allow citizens to decide whether to increase their monthly pay from \$420 to \$897 for members of the council and from \$700 to \$1,645 for the mayor. The panel has not had a stipend increase since 1998.

'Improving accuracy'

A group started by former P.G. Mayor Bill Kampe called PG Citizens for Sensible Government to promote the proposed pay hike, per Measure C, stated on its website that there would be no cost difference between holding the June special election or putting Measure C on the Nov. 3 general election ballot, which will include races for the city's mayor and several council members, along with numerous state offices, the governor of California and a congressional seat.

"There is no meaningful financial reason for the delay," PG Citizens for Sensible Government claimed on its "get the facts" page.

However, The Pine Cone last month asked Monterey County registrar of voters Gina Martinez about the cost of the special election, and Martinez estimated it would run about \$63,000. Alternatively, Martinez said that putting Measure C on the November ballot would amount to a "negligible" cost.

Faced with the registrar's figure, PG Citizens for Sensible Government last week removed the language from its website.

"We are committed to improving the relevance and accuracy of content as needed," Kampe said. Regarding the cost of the election, he said it's added the group's perspective under a section on the website entitled "Why June?" The former mayor said that a "number of persons" contribute to the group's website.

'Transparency sought'

Former P.G. city councilman Luke Coletti heads Transparent Pacific Grove to promote government transparency. In a March 26 letter to Kampe and the city council, he responded to the deletion of the erroneous election information.

"Thank you for removing the misinformation you had included on your website," Coletti said.

Transparent Pacific Grove launched a signature-gathering campaign in March to require voter approval of compensation and benefits for the mayor and councilmembers. The group is collecting signatures to get the initiative on

the November ballot, which it says would "ensure accountability and transparency through direct voter oversight at elections where voter participation will ordinarily be the highest."

Primary elections typically have lower turnouts than general elections.

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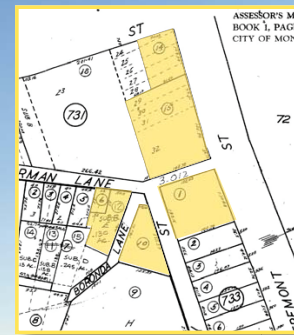
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\$11,490,000

6 Total Parcels



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