

SPRD board has vacancy after resignation

By **Jim Cornelius**
News Editor

The Sisters Park & Recreation District (SPRD) board of directors has a vacancy in the wake of the resignation of Mike Morgan. Morgan submitted his resignation at a board meeting on Tuesday, January 5.

Morgan had been dissatisfied with the board’s handling of the absence of fellow board member Andrew Gorayeb, who had told the board he could not attend board meetings due to pending litigation in which Morgan and Gorayeb both figure.

SPRD will post the vacancy in local newspapers and on its website. The SPRD board will appoint a candidate to serve out the remainder of Morgan’s term, which ends June 30. Interested candidates may contact SPRD at 541-549-2091 for information on applying for the interim position.

Board members of the park and recreation district are elected by voters of the district. The next election affecting SPRD is May 19. Candidates must file for election by March 19. Current chair Jeff Campbell’s seat will also be up for election.

The attendance issue that led to Morgan’s departure from the board was fallout from a matter unrelated to SPRD. Gorayeb, in his role as Sisters City Manager, was named in a lawsuit filed against the City by food-stand

owner Ky Karnecki in December 2013. Morgan is a cooperating witness in the suit and related a conversation with Gorayeb in which he alleges that Gorayeb said negative things about Karnecki.

Because he informed the board of his inability to attend meetings, the board considered Gorayeb’s absences “excused.”

Morgan asked that the SPRD board request Gorayeb’s resignation. The board has no authority to remove an elected board member, but can formally request that a director step down. At its November 11, 2014, meeting, the board voted 3-1 not to ask for Gorayeb’s resignation. Morgan wanted the board to reconsider that decision after then-chair Darren Layne had acknowledged to *The Nugget* that the situation could not go on indefinitely. Morgan told board chair Jeff Campbell he would resign if the board did not act, and on January 5, he did.

In a letter to board members he wrote: “Passing a board resolution asking Andrew to resign would be doing everything we reasonably can be expected to do to resolve the non-participation and conflicts problem. We would be doing what the public expects us to do which is putting the well-being of SPRD first. What I absolutely don’t understand is your

refusal to date to do that.”

The board, however, considered the issue resolved by the November vote, in the absence of a material change in circumstances.

Gorayeb told *The Nugget* he has remained engaged in SPRD’s work, despite not attending board meetings. He says he now will be able to attend.

“...sometimes you have to endure hardship in order to stand up for what is right.”
— Andrew Gorayeb

“I can go back to board meetings,” he said. “Based on direction from the city attorney, I couldn’t attend board meetings... I’ve not shirked any responsibility at all. I just wasn’t able to attend board meetings. I wish I could have attended board meetings. I wanted to be there.

“I am proud of my board colleagues for resisting a regrettable ultimatum in this unfortunate situation,” Gorayeb said. “Given the nature of things, I’m sure both SPRD and I are in for a rough time, but sometimes you have to endure hardship in order to stand up for what is right.”

COUNCIL: Chris Frye named mayor by city council

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took less than 30 seconds. This is typical.

First the newly elected councilors were sworn in and seated. Next, the council president called for nominations for mayor. Womack opened the nominations and nominated Frye. Returning councilor Wendy Holzman seconded the motion, and briefly gave her reasons for supporting Frye.

“I believe that Chris Frye is qualified to bring our council together; to work together collaboratively,” Holzman said. “He is level-headed, thoughtful, prepared, listens well, and can articulate council positions to the public.”

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— Wendy Holzman

Frye was selected on a 4-1 vote.

The selection of council president took one minute. Connolly nominated Asson and gave a brief discussion of her reasons for the

nomination. “I would like to nominate David Asson,” she said. “I think his experience on council; his willingness to stand up and disagree with council members gives him the faith and trust of the community.”

“I think that McKibben has done a really good job as council president... His experience would serve us well.”
— Chris Frye

The nomination died for lack of a second. Holzman then nominated Womack. Frye seconded the nomination.

“I think that McKibben has done a really good job as council president for the last two years, doing the ins and outs of the agenda items, and running meetings well. His experience would serve us well,” Frye said.

Womack was selected on 3-2 vote.

Elections for the city council are held every two years. At each election three council seats are up for a vote. The top two vote-getters are elected for a four-year term. The third is elected for a two-year term. In the latest election, Connolly and Asson were voted in for four years and Holzman for two years.

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