

northwest

Recall of Duty

Sam Adams' opponents emerge, organize

by Jaymee R. Cuti

Portland Mayor Sam Adams and his fellow commissioners present a united front. They are focused on city business and will not address his sex scandal at City Council meetings.

When a group wishing to recall Adams sent an open letter Feb. 16 asking City Commissioner Amanda Fritz, an unconditional Adams supporter, to introduce a nonbinding "vote of confidence" resolution among commissioners, her office responded with a terse "no comment." She has since declined to return calls from *Just Out*.

Some 300 citizens, many frustrated that the council is stonewalling questions about the scandal and public trust, have joined an effort to recall Adams, if for no other reason, they say, than to continue the dialogue.

"It's not about removing Sam Adams from office. Right now the jury is still out for me," said Ally Powell, a spokeswoman for Recall Sam Adams and Citizen Recall, Web sites aiming to be a clearinghouse for the campaign to recall Adams. "Before anyone decides how right a recall is for Portland, there needs to be a dialogue. Right now, Recall Sam Adams is making that happen."

Powell, who is a student, returned to Portland from Eugene in January with her three kids to find

the city split about Adams' admission that he had sex with teenager Beau Breedlove and lied about the relationship during his 2007 mayoral campaign. Oregon Attorney General John Kroger is investigating whether Adams committed a crime. Many on the council, including Adams, claim they cannot speak about the incident because of the pending investigation.

"Sam Adams said we can trust him to earn back our hearts," Powell said. "Three days transpire and in the City Council meeting he says no one has a legitimate reason to question him—that until the attorney general is done with his investigation, no one in our local political community is going to address these issues. That's really damaging to this community."

Powell believes a town hall meeting, where Adams' allies and critics can voice their views, would help the city heal.

Another perspective from within the recall effort is simpler.

"In Sam Adams, as with any corrupt politician, you will see traits of lies, cover-up and abuse of power," said Jasun Wurster, who runs the identical recall Web sites.

According to Wurster, the sites were purchased by a local attorney wishing to remain anonymous for fear of political and financial retribution.

Wurster, a political science student who worked for Fritz's 2008 primary campaign and Ralph Nader's 2000 presidential campaign, says he is a democracy purist.

"Elections are what define us as a people.

They're long and painful. They allow leaders to emerge. When that process is subverted, we are robbed of the process to elect our own leaders," said Wurster, who supported Kyle Burris, a 21-year-old who ran against Adams for mayor on the "Portland Nationalist" ticket.

Wurster vows to run a "very high-road campaign." He and Powell say they are insulted by characterizations that the recall is motivated by homophobia. "People in support of Sam need to not act like this is a bunch of redneck Bible thumping. I'm surely not that," said Powell.

Wurster says he deletes "a lot of very homophobic and hate-infused messages of intolerance" left on the recall Web site. "This cannot be subverted by people who have a political or, more so, a social agenda," he said. "It's not going to be or I'll pull the plug on it at any minute."

Wurster says he plans to run a "neighbor to neighbor" campaign that he learned as Fritz's deputy campaign manager.

Starting July 1, the campaign has 90 days to

Jasun Wurster demands that Portland Mayor Sam Adams' recall campaign not be motivated by a political or social agenda.

collect the required 32,183 signatures. Wurster hopes to recruit 2,000 volunteers to gather only 30 signatures each from their friends and neighbors, providing a 27,817-signature cushion to account for the "digital provocateurs" he says are signing up on the recall Web site. A special election on the recall would be held within 35 days after a five-day reconsideration period.

To avoid a recall, Powell advised that Adams hit the streets. "He needs to do some serious campaigning. If he wants to win anybody's heart back, he knows how to do it," she said.

Despite his dedication to the recall, Wurster would prefer that Adams resign. "I think it would be politically in his best interests to resign, take a couple years off and come back. To have people throw you out of office, I don't think there's any recovering from that." 10

For more information about RECALL SAM ADAMS visit www.citizenrecall.org.

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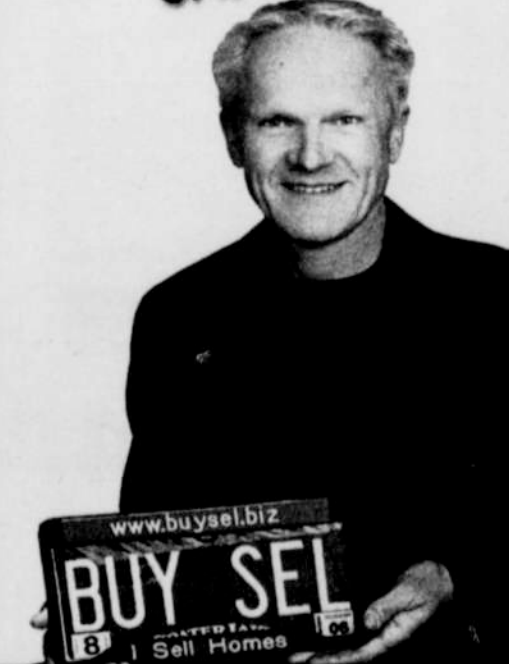
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