Continuing Concern About Councilmember Lori Acton’s Employment

15th KZGN News Talking Points Editorial

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As you should remember, there is considerable interest about the charges of conflict of interest of Lori Acton taking a job with Pertexa. The problem is that councilmember Lori Acton has accepted employment with a temp agency that is supplying labor support to Pertexa.

The question is, did she violate the CA elections code by taking this position? At last night’s council meeting, the city attorney presented his opinion report to the council and public.

His opinion is that with the information they were able to gather, it appears she did nothing illegal. However, the city attorney did also say that her employment with this company would prohibit the council of making any changes to the existing contract in any way.

Even if she recused herself from the discussion, that would not be enough to allow the council to move ahead with anything new with Pertexa.

During public comment on the topic, three people supported her in taking the job. Jerry Taylor added that even if nothing illegal was done, that perhaps the council should consider the ethics of this type of action.

He obviously is expressing concern that this doesn’t look good at all. In the future, the council should consider the ethical impacts in such decisions.

The mayor said that she had received two written letters on the subject from the public. One letter was to file and not read publically. Another letter from Carol Wilson suggested Lori should resign.

As a side note, I find it very interesting that many people on the Facebook forums will rant and criticize her from their computer, but I didn’t see any of them at the council meeting stating their comments.

People have to understand that while the forums are a means of comment and venting, the council has no requirement to actually take these comments into consideration when they decide things.

While I’m sure some of them do read the forums, not all do. So, they do not see your comments. If you have a concern about something the council is dealing with, you have to contact them directly, or come to the meeting and express your comments.

Otherwise, they tend to dismiss your comments on the internet forums. A couple of the councilmembers expressed concern that this happened, but since Lori has been open about the discussion, they think they have all learned an important lesson and to move on.

One member of the public commented, that providing there is no new information that comes out about this topic, it appears nothing illegal was done. Well, that is also my position.

A concern of mine is that there are still the unanswered questions from Toss and Pertexa as to their records of the sequence of events.

1. Will she disclose her council/personal emails and phone records, including text messages, voluntarily so that the public can see if there was any contact between Lori and Pertexa/Toss/Fanestra prior to her being hired?
2. When was she contacted by Toss for employment with this company, and what is her job title?
3. We have heard nothing from Toss or Pertexa about this potential conflict.

This is key to sorting out whether there was wrongdoing or not. We need to hear from Toss and Pertexa. For them to provide employment information, she would have to give her permission.

In conclusion, in considering, her not wanting to show the whole world her personal emails and phone records, I suggest she choose to just let the city attorney review the records to determine if there is anything that would contradict her contention nothing illegal occurred.

I would be completely comfortable if the city attorney would review the records and report that after reviewing her records, nothing was found. Lori has the power to clear this all up, or let it be her legacy as a councilmember that she used her office to get a job.

Tell me what you think about this editorial or any other topic you’d like me to discuss! Whether you agree with me or not, I’d like to read your comments. I encourage your email comments. I may read some email comments on my next editorial. Please email them to info@kzgn.net.

This has been a KZGN talking points editorial, seen right here on KZGN TV. Join me next Tuesday for my next editorial. I’m Tom Wiknich, and that’s what I think!