

Sunday, September 21, 2008

OPINION: Voters to decide on eminent domain limits

By **JIM DRUMMOND**

For the Orange County Register

Yorba Lindans appear ready to give a resounding "yes" vote to a measure limiting eminent domain use within city limits when ballots are cast in the Nov. 4 election.

The one-sentence Measure BB is the 12th issue to be placed before residents in city history, if 1967's 1,963 to 638 vote approving incorporation is included in the count.

BB asks voters to decide whether or not to adopt a two-page ordinance prohibiting the city from taking private property without the owner's permission to transfer to another private owner for economic development.

The measure would not stop the city from using eminent domain for such traditional public projects as making street improvements and building municipal facilities.

Arguments supporting the measure are included in sample ballot packets ready for mailing beginning today to Yorba Linda's 41,840 voters by the Registrar of Voters.

The pro-BB arguments were written by City

Council members John Anderson and Jan Horton and signed by Allen Castellano, Hank Wedaa and Jim Winder, although Winder voted against placing BB on the ballot because it would limit future councils' options.

Leading a grass-roots campaign for the measure is Main Street businessman Louie Scull, a frequent speaker during the council's public comment period. Scull spent \$987 for 200 green-and-white signs he's placed around town and flyers he hands out at public events.

Scull came to Yorba Linda in 1969 and bought the building that now houses his Yorba Linda Plumbing business and Vintage Radios in 1973. A longtime proponent for Old Town upgrades, Scull opposed the recent higher-density downtown development plan.

No anti-BB arguments were submitted, and no organized opposition has surfaced to date.

Two past councils authorized the city Redevelopment Agency to use eminent domain for private development within agency boundaries, which include Old Town and Savi Ranch.

The first eminent domain period expired in the late 1990s, but was reinstated for eight years by a council that included current members Castellano and Winder in the early 2000s, when the process was described as a "tool" in a redevelopment "tool belt."

Council repealed the latter authorization in 2006, after residents gathered 9,790 and 9,771 signatures on two petitions in 21 days to overturn higher-density zoning council approved for Town Center in 2005.

A FINAL NOTE

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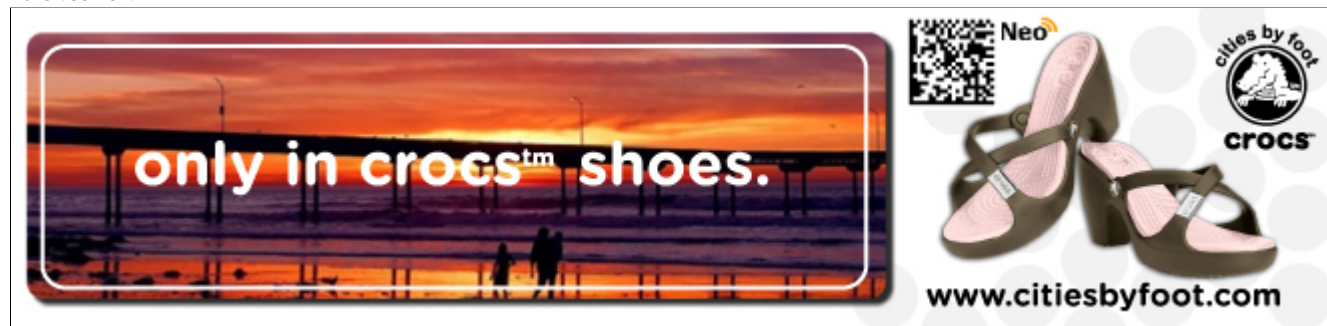


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The Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District teachers' union endorsed Carol Downey, Judy Miller and Eric Padget, president Linda Manion announced. Downey is seeking a third, Miller a sixth and the recently appointed Padget a first full term. Opponents are Jim Brunette and Shawn Burch for the three seats up for election.

Jim Drummond is a longtime Yorba Linda resident. Fax him at 714-704-3714 or send e-mail to jimdrummond@hotmail.com.

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