

Open meetings?

Prosecutor looks into complaints vs. county board

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

The Oakland prosecutor's office is looking into alleged complaints that two county commissioners have violated the Michigan Open Meetings Act.

"I'm still conducting interviews with the players involved, but I expect to be finished soon, possibly next week," Chief Assistant Gerald D. Polsson said Friday.

Polsson confirmed that Marilynne Burton-Ristau, president of RAIL (Residents Against Incineration and Landfill), and The SpinalColumn, a weekly newspaper in western Oakland, have filed formal complaints. Polsson declined to go into specifics other than to confirm he will talk

with commissioners involved.

But Burton-Ristau Friday said her complaint focuses on separate incidents on March 12 at the county auditorium and on March 17 in Washington, D.C.

At the March 12 incident, Burton-Ristau was asked to stop using a tape recorder as commissioners discussed the county's solid waste program during a Republican caucus.

PRIOR TO the meeting commissioner John Pappageorge, R-Troy, caucus chairman, asked members of the audience — including Burton-Ristau — not to quote off-the-cuff remarks by fellow Republicans. The caucus was called to encourage impromptu discussion, he said, and fear

of being quoted — or tape recorded — would inhibit the free exchange of ideas, he said.

During the caucus, Pappageorge interrupted proceedings and pointedly asked Burton-Ristau to stop recording comments.

Burton-Ristau contends — and the Michigan attorney general's office confirms — the 1976 open meetings act empowers anyone to record, on television, public gatherings as long as he or she does not interfere.

Pappageorge Friday said he "asked, rather than ordered" Burton-Ristau to cease using the tape recorder.

He acknowledged, however, that his tone of voice could easily have been interpreted as a command. Pappageorge is a West Point gradu-

ate and a retired Army colonel.

The other incident about which the Orion Township resident and the newspaper are complaining is a meeting in Washington, D.C., when county commissioners discussed the county's solid waste program.

About 20 commissioners attended the meeting called by County Board Chairman Roy Rewold while they were attending a meeting of the National Association of Counties.

BURTON-RISTAU and the newspaper complain — and the attorney general's office confirms — holding a meeting of a quorum of a public body in a place the general public could not be expected to attend is a violation of the law.

Rewold, a Republican from Oakland Township, said he thought the Michigan law would not be binding if commissioners met out of state. Commissioner Lawrence R. Pernick, D-Southfield, said several commissioners questioned whether it was a possible violation of the open meetings law.

"But we went along," said Pernick, chairman of the Democratic caucus.

Fairlane Hudson's workers join UAW

Workers at Dayton-Hudson's Fairlane Town Center store have voted to join the UAW.

The vote was approved 246 to 232. Of 521 eligible employees, 478 voted. Because of last Friday's vote, 542 salespeople at the Dearborn store will join the union which has already organized workers at the Westland Hudson's store.

The union has won two of three membership elections held in the last year. Workers at the Westland store voted to join the union last May. In October, employees at the Summit Place store in Pontiac rejected the union.

In a prepared statement, Dayton-Hudson president Dennis Toffolo said, "We, of course, wish the outcome of today's vote had been different. However, we respect the process, and will wait for certification before responding further."

Mary Grab, president of Local 35, representing the Hudson employees said, "We're ecstatic, but this is what we expected. We overcame tremendous odds. It's a beautiful win."

Organizing efforts are under way at Hudson's stores at the Oakland and Eastland malls, as well as Flint, according to Bob King, director of UAW Region 1A, Hudson's top gun in Hudson's organizing efforts.

A National Labor Relations Board hearing officer has recommended setting aside election results at the Summit Place store in Waterford — opening the way for a second union vote.

There, workers rejected the UAW amid charges the company granted raises to select employees and announced new benefits and perks to dissuade workers from voting for the union.

An NLRB ruling on the hearing officer's recommendation is pending.

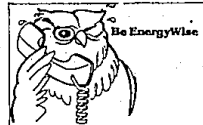
Hudson's Westland UAW employees are waging a high profile campaign in hopes of forcing that retail chain's management to the bargaining table.

Last May, the sales staff at the Westland Center outlet voted for UAW representation. Nine months later, there is no contract. Issues are

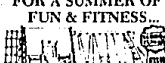
tied up before the NLRB.

While UAW members believe the company is stalling, Hudson's officials say they need time to clarify what they believe was false information given by the union to the NLRB in January.

Compensation varies for Hudson's sales employees. Some receive a commission, others do not. Still others receive Performance Plus, a bonus system for some sales personnel based on sales goals.



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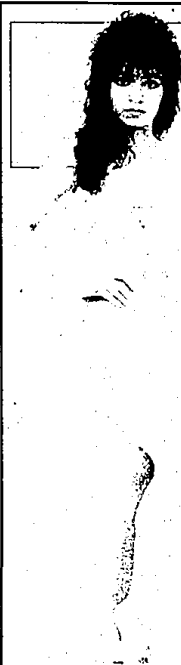
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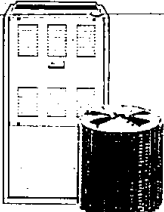
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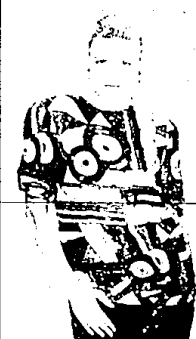
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