

Sanitary board appointment 'political,' say Dems

By Carol Azhlan
staff writer

As a veteran member of the Oakland County Sanitary Code Appeal Board lost his post, Democratic county commissioners complained of "dirty politics."

Thomas Violante of Oak Park, a six-year member of the appeals panel, was replaced by Harry Howes of Huntington Woods.

John Woods. Howes was campaign manager for Republican Commissioner John E. Olsen of Huntington Woods.

"This is another example of the payoff the Republican Party gives to its workers," said Commissioner Dennis M. Aaron, D-Oak Park. "It doesn't give a damn about Oakland County."

"When you reward one of your workers with a fee-paying job, I think that's

dirty politics," Aaron said.

MEMBERS OF the appeal board are paid \$35 per meeting plus travel expenses. The five-member panel, consisting of one commissioner from each party and three citizens, hears appeals from restaurants, small business and homeowners on charges of health code violations.

The Republican-controlled Board of Commissioners also reappointed

Ronald H. Cooley, Rochester and picked Commissioner Marilyn E. Gosling, R-Bloomfield Hills, to fill the vacancy created by former Republican Commissioner Jeph R. Montante resigned.

Aaron accused bad chairman Richard R. Wilcox, R-Orionville, who made the appointment of "dumping Violante because of her partisan politics."

Aaron said Violante "has served this county with honor and distinction. He's a founder; a mover, a person of great inspiration to the community in Royal Oak."

Violante, owner of the Holiday Market in Royal Oak, is a member of the Oak Park school board and active in the Royal Oak Lions Club and Boys Club.

OLSEN, CHAIRMAN of the Republican caucus, defended the appointment and denied Aaron's charges.

"We are aware this is an important post," Olsen said. "He (Howes) has the qualifications to fill it."

"He's been an active participant in the political arena on a non-partisan

basis for many years. He was the campaign manager for Mayor Barbara Hollman of Royal Oak (a non-partisan post)."

Howes, owner of a Clawson insurance company, ran an unsuccessful campaign for Democratic county commissioner in 1972. He is a condemnation officer in Huntington Woods and is active in the Berkley Chamber of Commerce.

Olsen accused Aaron of "confusing this body and its appointments with those made by Gov. James Blanchard, who rewards his party workers."

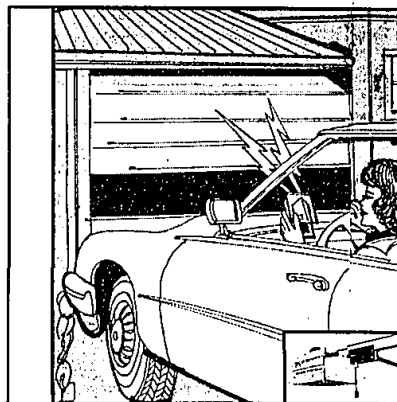
"I'm appalled to hear the continual charge that if somebody doesn't get appointed, it always comes down to partisan politics."

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Crime task force gets a new lease

Oakland County commissioners have renewed a \$14,000-a-year lease for office space to house the Anti-Organized Crime Task Force.

The cost covers custodial service and supplies, heat, electricity, water and maintenance.

The crime force, comprised of three Michigan State Police troopers and representatives from local law enforcement agencies, is housed at 31 Oakland Ave., Pontiac.

Commissioners last December eliminated the controversial task force from the county budget.

Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson, a Republican, originally operated the crime force from his county offices.

But the task force was later removed from Patterson's office after the prosecutor complained it was becoming too controversial.

The crime force had been steeped in controversy between Democrats and Republicans when it allegedly failed to make significant gains in curbing organized crime while causing friction between prosecutors, the sheriff's department and the Pontiac Police Department.

Murphy ponders child fingerprint program

Oakland County will consider launching a countywide fingerprinting program in an effort to deal with a national growing concern over missing children.

"There are 100,000 missing children in the United States," County Executive Daniel T. Murphy told the Republican caucus last week.

"Everybody across the country is going to get into this program," he said. "We should consider a countywide (initiative)."

Murphy said it's premature to discuss details.

He told Republican commissioners he will study implications and provisions of a bill sponsored by Sen. Paula Hawkins, R-Utah, which calls for such a program.

"I don't believe it's mandatory," Murphy said of the program. "But other communities will be doing it."

"We could train retired persons to go out to the schools and do the fingerprinting. It would be cheaper than hiring people for \$35,000 a year."

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