

August 17, 1998

60171

To: Mayor Joe DeZurney & City Councilors

Re: Diane Rinks, City Administrator

Lafayette → On behalf of the signatures below, this letter addresses the performance of Brownsville's City Administrator, Diane Rinks. The intent of this letter is not to alienate Ms. Rinks, but to address the unprofessional manner in which she is, and has been, dealing with others. This letter has been signed by taxpayers, business owners, contractors, and citizens that have had unpleasant and offensive dealings with Diane.

Diane will cite city ordinances, the way she feels they are to be interpreted, but when asked to show this city ordinance, neglects to do so on a timely basis, or not at all. This unprofessionalism in regards to information being requested, and not produced, is intolerable. Diane has also made rude comments about dealing with certain families, and stated the fact that she does not have time to deal with these taxpayers questions and concerns. If this is not her job, whose is it?

It is our opinion that Diane has misused tax dollars when she has requested that the city engineer inspect properties that county inspectors have already inspected and approved. She has cost property owners and contractors unnecessary fees, expenditures, stress, and time. It is our belief that Diane's behavior borders on harassment, and extreme unprofessionalism.

It is true that Diane has done some good things for the city. However, taxpayers have paid her more than \$300,000 in salary and benefits for this job. Her gross mismanagement of time by intruding on other city employees and by not delegating her authority properly, creates an additional cost to the City and causes her to be inundated with a heavy workload.

The lack of respect that Diane has shown to the people who pay her salary and others who want to do business in Brownsville is inexcusable. It is our view she has given our great city a black eye. *Lafayette*

It is our opinion that her conduct as City Administrator is unacceptable. Since she is an "at will" employee, we feel that it is your job to terminate her employment with the City, as City Administrator.

Please take this matter seriously. Thank you for your time.

Letters to the editor

Why I asked the City Council to dismiss City Administrator

To the Editor & Brownsville Citizens:

This letter is addressed to the people that may not understand the reasoning behind our decision to ask the City Council to dismiss Diane Rinks as our City Administrator.

I met with Diane in July and asked her to discuss with me the lack of respect and her rudeness in the process of approving our site plan review. I asked for city ordinances on certain issues, and she had not produced them in a timely manner.

Diane made it clear that if I had a problem with anything she had done as City Administrator, I should take the matter to the City Council. I told her that she and her husband have been friends of ours for a long time, and that I would rather not go that route. She repeated that if I did not like what she was doing, I needed to take the matter up with the city council. So, after discussing this matter with several people with similar circumstances, that is what we decided to do.

Let me make it clear for all to understand. This is not a personal attack against Diane Rinks. I have always respected her as a person, and still do. My complaint with Diane is her lack of administrative skills. As an administrator, she lacks people skills, certain technical skills, and does not know how to be a positive can-do administrator. This combination leads to unprofessionalism. In her position as City Administrator, professionalism is a job requirement.

Was Brownsville in dire straits financially when Diane was hired as City Administrator? YES! But isn't it true that the citizens of Brownsville voted in a new tax base in 1988 that was more than 3-times higher than the previous tax base to help solve this problem? YES! Isn't it true that Diane has been paid a salary by the taxpayers to do this job? YES!

My wife and I were adamant about not having negative press regarding this matter, and everyone that signed the letter to the City Council agreed. We do not want to divide our town. People need to be encouraged to want to live and work in our community, not discouraged.

Diane has the ability to be a good administrator, and hopefully the fact-finding committee that has been appointed will make good recommendations for her and for the welfare of our city.

If anyone has any questions or concerns in regard to what has been stated, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,
Skip and Julie Smith

Brownsville residents ask council to dismiss City Administrator

by Mike Dallum

Larry Reed, a land use planner and building code consultant of Eugene, represented a group of local residents that signed a letter accusing City Administrator Diane Rinks of misuse of funds, lacking people skills and being unprofessional. Over 100 signatures were on the letter that was read into the record. Reed said Ms. Rinks is deficient in three areas, people skills, needs to be more professional and is lacking in technical skills in some areas.

Following Reed's presentation, Mayor Joe DeZurney gave the audience a chance to express opinions and to speak. Michael Worthing spoke as a local contractor and said Rinks stands for what she believes are the rules of the city. Kathleen Swayze said "We need someone with strength."

Skip Smith said "She causes grief and I'm disappointed in Diane and disappointed in you (the Council) for not doing something." Several people spoke to being able to work out a solution and asking to give Diane Rinks a chance. More spoke about Diane's rudeness with dealing with people.

Bob Netter, a building inspector for Linn County said "Diane is thorough and accurate. She reviews a project before the project begins." He went on to say that the County employs five full time planners to deal with review of building permits and said he believes there were ten new residences in Brownsville seeking permits in the past year. Rinks said in Brownsville, between April and July of this year, they have had 18 applications for building permits.

Councilor Charline Shipley-Kalupa suggested that a commission be formed of local citizens to look into the matter and to return to the Council in 35 days to make recommendations. Following a short recess Mayor Joe DeZurney asked that councilors Bill Sattler and Charline Shipley-Kalupa join him for a meeting on Thursday night at 7 p.m. in City Hall to appoint a committee to look into any allegations made against Diane Rinks. DeZurney suggested that commission be made up of a council person, planning commission member and maybe someone from the Chamber of Commerce.

On September 21st recommendations will be presented to the Council from the commission. Councilor Dave Heagy said "We recognize there's a problem. We will take action on the grievances."

Following an executive session that lasted for close to one and half hours, the council went back into the regular business of the meeting. They opted to shorten the agenda to several items which included approving the job description for the City Planner position. They also approved the legal services agreement for the Alley Grant project.

Council committee chooses five member panel to investigate charges against City Administrator

by Mike Dallum

At a special Thursday night meeting with Brownsville Councilors Charline Shipley-Kalupa and Bill Sattler and Mayor Joe DeZurney, a panel was chosen to investigate and research alleged improper actions against City Administrator Diane Rinks.

The members of that committee who have agreed to serve are Councilor Dave Heagy, Planning Commission members Rick Morrow and Randy Schoonover, President of the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce Kent Haworth and local contractor Larry Mallars. Other names that were suggested have not yet been contacted or have not agreed to serve, according to Mayor Joe DeZurney.

The three councilors discussed a number of names before agreeing on a list. The committee also wanted to give the commission some kind of direction or mission. The committee agreed that they hoped the commission would contact people that signed the original letter of complaint, also take a random sample of all people who have received building permits, contact professional and technical persons, such as city engineers, city planners and building inspectors to help with interpretation, and get details about particular instances. The commission will report to the council at the September 21st meeting to make recommendations.

A discussion was also held about the rights of Diane Rinks. The city attorney will set the parameters of the meetings and it could be up to Rinks to choose if those meetings should be public or executive session. The committee will set meeting times and place.

According to Mayor DeZurney, some of the folks contacted definitely said no, they would not serve. DeZurney also said a first meeting has not been set. He said that he and the city attorney would be present at the first meeting.

The next regular council meeting is set for Tuesday, September 8, because of the Labor Day Holiday.

Two cities of discontent?

To the editor:

For years the news making city for discontent has been Halsey, not Brownsville. I find it rather concerning a public official in Halsey now is spearheading a discontent movement in Brownsville. I find it also concerning he does this in a public vehicle going door to door in Brownsville. Maybe a committee should be appointed to look into this also. I too am rather disappointed in the goings on of things in Brownsville. I am disappointed the City Council has bowed under lynch mob mentality. How many council meetings ago did the council publicly give Ms. Rinks a vote of confidence? Which councilor stated he didn't see anywhere in her job description where it said to be nice? Which councilors disagreed at the time with that statement? It is easy to find discontented people to speak up against someone, just check the list for people who have been told NO! Check the list for people who have been caught violating a building code, a city ordinance, or the process. Perhaps we could check the list for relatives and friends of these same people.

Probably we should forget about all the checking and just get right to the lynching. Or perhaps we should demand our city councilors do the job they said they would do when they

took their oath of office. They should do their evaluations of their City Administrator. They should make their recommendations. They should stand by their conclusions and not give in to the hand clapping people with the rope two or three meetings later.

Then maybe the rest of us could get on with our lives in Brownsville.

Victoria Chaney

Julie Smith leads attack on Brownsville City Council

by Don Ware

Julie Smith presented a scathing criticism to the Brownsville City Council during the meeting Monday evening, October 5. She accused the special committee appointed to examine the city administrator's performance, of bias and incomplete work, and the Council of not looking at the facts and not doing their duty for citizens. Several members of the audience also spoke in support of Mrs. Smith's statement. A heated and direct exchange took place

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between the Council and members of the audience.

In other business, Councilor Bill Sattler announced his resignation from the City Council, effective at the end of the meeting, to accept the position of Brownsville City Planner. "I am taking a large cut in pay from a job where I have a good reputation, because I want to work in Brownsville," he stated. He committed to applying all planning laws and regulations fairly and directly to all citizens. "Give me a chance to do this job for Brownsville," He added.

At the end of the meeting the temper of discussion had cooled. Skip Smith made several suggestions of the Council. One was to have a customer satisfaction form available at City Hall for citizens to list their complaints/satisfactions. Mayor Joe DeZurney appointed Skip as chair of the committee to develop the questionnaire and to be in charge of reviewing the results and reporting to the Council. Present at the meeting were Mayor Joe DeZurney and Councilors Nielsen, Sattler, Shipley-Kalupa, and Ware.

RECENT LETTERS ABOUT THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR

the blame fully on her for actions, but because she is a public official she should be held accountable for the actions she may incur, as with any other public official of our town if found to have acted in the wrong.

This problem isn't new, though. The council and mayor have heard the complaints of individuals for a long time, but chose to ignore them or to blame it on hard feelings. But to hide behind that ignorance as an excuse to feign surprise at the outrage of those in attendance, that only fueled the frustrations more. And yes, things started to get out of hand, myself included. But to have those you put your trust in, play ignorant of the problem, when you yourself tried and were ignored, emotions were high and people upset.

So maybe the only way to get them to listen, was not the voice of one, but the yell of one hundred!

Mrs. Howell, be it right or wrong, this says that there is a problem, in a town this size. There could have been more signatures, but some feared retaliation, some didn't want to cause waves, and some had no problems. But the names on the petition was by word of mouth, who shared a common concern. If only a few are found to have legitimate complaints, then that is reason enough in finding a solution.

I only know my reasons for signing the petition and for attending the council meeting. I was not there to make points with any one side, but there for my own personal beliefs on this issue. It's because of the situation I was in, that caused me to become involved with the city and Diane, and because of the disagreement of certain areas, I did decide to become more involved with the management of how our town is run, much to the chagrin of some. I was on the Spaulding Way Safety Committee, the Budget Committee, the Planning Commission, and am now running for City Council. It is because of my running for council that I know at all times what I'm saying and with which words I use when I speak. I couldn't have said that 2 1/2 years ago. So I give credit where it belongs, I learned from the best, Diane!

That's why I can say, I do know the good Diane has done for Brownsville and the knowledge she has to offer, but I also know the other side of this issue and that's something I can't ignore either!

Thank you. Jane! Beeman

Recent letters about the City Administrator

To the Editor:

Recent letters to the editor revolving around complaints received by the City Council regarding the actions of our City Administrator.

It is sad to see that this has led to airing our dirty laundry in the pages of The Tin reading the letters to the editor the last few weeks it looks like a couple dozen of the Administrator's close friends and supporters have been offended and are venting their frustrations.

However, these are serious complaints which have been made and attacking the who have made these complaints doesn't do any good. There are many long-time residents of Brownsville backing up these complaints, and these are not people who go around justing for a fight.

The City Council has appointed a Fact Finding Committee to look into the conduct of the City Administrator. I certainly hope that a few letters to the editor will not cause them to handle this matter lightly.

Bob Kennedy
Exotic Woods

7-2-02

Brownsville City Council votes to fire administrator

By George Petrocolone
Daily Democrat-Herald

BROWNSVILLE - The Brownsville City Council voted Monday night to fire long-time City Administrator Diane Rinks.

The council will meet at 9 a.m. Wednesday in the Kirk Room of the Brownsville library to discuss what the city will do next.

Rinks said this morning that in some respects she is relieved. "It was not a surprise," she said of the action. "I've been expecting this for six months."

However, Rinks said she could be contacting her attorney over some unresolved issues that she declined to go into.

The motion to terminate her has been disputed by the three councilors who voted against her firing.

Councilwoman Kathleen Swayze and Brownsville resident Lynda Chambers claim the vote was taken after the meeting had been closed and people were getting ready to leave.

They said first they heard councilman Bob Kennedy mumble something and then Mayor Charline Shipley-Kalupa say she recorded it.



Diane Rinks

When they asked Kennedy what he said, they say he couldn't remember, so Councilman Skip Smith grabbed a copy of the motion and read it aloud.

Kennedy, Smith, Shipley-Kalupa and Councilwoman Pat McConnell then voted in favor of the motion.

Swayze and Councilmen Rob Wingren and Carl Rybloom opposed it. Chambers said she has a tape recording of the meeting, including the mayor gaveling it closed and the dispute that followed.

She said that Shipley-Kalupa acknowledged adjourning the meeting, but said that she reconvened it.

Both Swayze, Chambers and City Planner Bill Sattler claim that never happened.

But Smith said that there were people in the back of the room who heard the motion clearly.

"They just didn't want to hear it," he said of Swayze and Chambers.

Smith, who said he learned Monday afternoon that the motion to fire Rinks would be made at the meeting, claims that he heard Shipley-Kalupa reconvene the meeting.

Chambers said the audience was stunned.

"It was clear that the four of them knew what was going to happen," Chambers said. "They're covering for each other."

The reason cited for terminating Rinks was a policy that allowed public works employees' use of city-purchased gasoline in their personal vehicles.

The council learned earlier this year that the employees who use their personal vehicles on the job were filling them up with fuel purchased by the city, instead of collecting the 33 cents per mile the city pays for mileage.

At the time it came up, Rinks said it was cheaper for the city to supply the fuel than to pay the mileage.

Councilman Skip Smith told the council that it is illegal to use

fuel that is exempt from federal taxes in private vehicles.

The practice was stopped, and Rinks accepted full responsibility for the gaffe.

Mayor Charline Shipley-Kalupa said it was Rinks taking responsibility that got her fired.

Shipley-Kalupa said that although the gas issue was the primary reason for the firing, it really has to do with culmination of a number of things over the years.

"It's been brewing for some time," the mayor said. "There's been a lot of agitation for several years."

Shipley-Kalupa acknowledged that one of the underlying issues was the upcoming recall election of Smith.

Smith has been accused of being a disruptive influence on the council and of wasting thousands of dollars by calling the city's contracted attorney for advice he has been using to undermine city staff.

Smith said he does not expect the sudden firing to help him in the recall election; in fact it might hurt him.

Ballots for the election are scheduled to be in the mail July 8 and returned by 8 p.m. July 23.