

Councilman has conflict of interest

I have a few thoughts regarding Sunday's article about the possible conflict of interest by Lomita Mayor Mark Waronek when it comes to the Ponte Vista project.

I have attended many Lomita City Council and Planning Commission meetings. I have always been very proud of the way our city government has been run and issues researched and discussed in detail before decisions were reached. Our council has always looked out for the best interests of our citizens: This includes things that are happening outside our borders that could have a negative impact on our quality of life here in Lomita.

When it comes to the Ponte Vista housing project in San Pedro and Waronek's involvement in it, I have some major concerns. Waronek is a paid consultant for the Bisno Development Co., which is planning to build Ponte Vista. From the beginning, he has been a very strong supporter of the project, even before our council had the opportunity to study the impact it would have upon us. I wouldn't expect that from a City Council member. Waronek was also liaison from the city to the Lomita Chamber of Commerce when the chamber voted to support Ponte Vista, again, before the City Council had all the information needed to make a proper decision about its impact on Lomita.

Is Waronek motivated by his position as a council member or as a consultant for Bisno? To me, the answer is clear, and Bisno is it. If not, then Waronek would have led the way for a study to find out the ramifications the project would have on our traffic and quality of life before he would endorse it.

To claim that he would recuse himself from City Council discussions about the project when it comes before them and then spend the rest of the week campaigning for it seems to be out of order to me. He even supported Ponte Vista before the environmental impact report came out. Our council voted to oppose the project once all the facts were made known. Your article mentions that perception sometimes does not reflect the reality of the situation. In this case it appears obvious to me that the reality is that there is a conflict in interest on the part of Mark Waronek

— RICH COLBARY
Lomita