

Habig denies city's claim of 'false statements'

Centennial man goes to DA over campaign claims

BY SHIRLEY SMITH



BETTY ANN HABIG

Did Centennial Ward I councilwoman candidate Betty Ann Habig publish a false statement in her campaign literature? If she did, would it "be actionable under any applicable election law?"

Centennial Ward I resident Sam Drury believes that her alleged false statements about the city manager's compensation and the cost of a city survey amounted to a violation of the law and took his complaint to the District Attorney, Carol Chambers.

Drury stated in his letter to the district attorney: "I believe that Betty Ann Habig has knowingly and/or recklessly violated provisions of C.R.S.1-13-109. I understand you are obligated to forthwith investigate the claimed offense of the Uniform Election Code and to prosecute the violator if reasonable grounds exist for prosecution."

Habig, who had previously served on the city council, had resigned to pursue a state office (but was not elected) said, "Sam has been a rabid and at times irrational supporter of the mayor, so his recent actions come as no surprise. I have confidence the people of Ward I will see through this for what it is, a strategically timed political hatchet job designed to help get the mayor's candidate elected."

Centennial Mayor Randy Pye had asked City Attorney Robert Widner to look into the matter of Habig's campaign literature.

Habig firmly denies any "false statements."

She claims that the material she used in her campaign literature came from the city's own web site. The statement refers to the city manager's compensation. Habig's

figure is higher than the city's.

The law says "No person shall knowingly make publish, broadcast or circulate or cause to be made, published, broadcasted, or circulated in any letter, circular, advertisement, or poster or in any other communication any false statement designed to affect the vote on any issue submitted to the electors at any election or relating to any candidate to public office."

Habig replied to the city council, "I have been apprised of the council's discussion regarding my campaign literature and the only comment/response I have is this: 'It appears the mayor is not only attempting to abridge my freedom of speech and engage in overt acts of intimidation, but abusing his power through the misuse of Centennial resources for his own political purposes.

'The data provided in my campaign literature comes straight from Centennial's website; therefore, I stand as firmly behind this data as the city that provided it.'"

Mayor Randy Pye said that her figures (about the city manager's salary) are "absolutely untrue, outright fabrications."

The city cites as an example of Habig's so-called incorrect information "as one example brought to your attention by the city manager at your public meeting, the campaign literature states that 'in the past two years the city council increased the city's manager total compensation from \$168,700 to \$262,600.' The statement was cited by the city manager as absolutely false." City Manager Jacque Wedding Scott said her salary is \$145,000 annually. There are other amounts for items such as benefits, and car allowance bringing the amount up to \$175,900.

Pye said, however, it was not the intent of the city to move forward with the complaint. The district attorney could choose to institute an investigation.

Habig advises going to the city's website at www.centennialcolorado.com, to check out her figures. She claims that is where she got the financial information.