

Real estate advocates, realizing they were about to lose key votes on Pacifica City Council April 24, sought, in effect, to nullify the results of the city election by forcing a member of the progressive majority to resign or abstain.

The ploy was based on a letter from San Mateo County District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe (leader of the "Speed 'em Up!" death penalty initiative in 2016), saying he'd look into charges that Councilwoman Sue Digre didn't live where her candidate filing said she lived.

"She must resign," one of the out-of-town real estate speakers demanded.

It's not difficult to get a D.A. to say he'll look into a charge of violation of law. When Sue Vaterlaus tried to push the realtor's desperate "Hail Mary pass" by asking the City Attorney if Digre should recuse herself, the City Attorney said there was no need.

With that statement, the realtors' goose was cooked. Afterward, Digre joined Keener and Martin in approving a rent control ordinance and stopping the widening of Highway 1.

The new progressive majority voted against Vaterlaus' motion to put the matter of widening Highway 1 on the ballot. Almost all the speakers spoke against the

motion. Mayor Mike O'Neill, who said he thinks the project should be approved because it's been planned for so long, joined Vaterlaus in voting in favor.

Council seems poised to settle the matter of widening Highway 1 once and for all. New Councilwoman Deirdre Martin proposed that council officially notify Caltrans and the San Mateo County Transportation Authority that Pacifica will seek alternative methods of improving traffic, and it wants this project removed from the planning list. After decades of discussion, this vote, expected sometime in May, would halt the widening project once and for all.

The realtors spent a lot of money to elect their candidates to council, but in narrowly failing to re-elect MaryAnn Nihart, they lost their pro-growth majority. They'll spend heavily again to defeat rent control on the ballot, but the writing is on the wall on widening Highway 1.

Bill Collins