

# Response to Maria Alegria's flyer about former City Manager Belinda Espinosa

## **Maria's flyer said:**

*The group that organized the recall is made up of friends and political allies of the former city manager, and their rallying cry is, "Bring Back Belinda."*

**THE TRUTH:** We are very happy with Charlie Long. We like Charlie Long. It has never been our intention to bring back Belinda Espinosa. Belinda has another job as the city manager in Dixon. Our issue was THE WAY in which Belinda was terminated, the fact that there was no replacement, and the amount of money it cost the city in severance pay and legal fees — when the city was under no contractual obligation to pay — which total more than \$300,000. Bringing back Belinda has never been the recall group's intention.

## **Maria's flyer said:**

*GATEWAY WEST PROJECT: from June 2004 to June 2007 the monthly fee was never collected, and former City Manager Espinosa never even reported it to the City Council.*

**THE TRUTH:** That's because the loan was never booked into the city's accounting system by Belinda's predecessor, former City Manager Marc Grisham, who negotiated the deal with TKG Development. Therefore, Belinda had no knowledge of the loan agreement.

## **Maria's flyer said:**

*OLD TOWN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT: The development agreement included an "unlawful" \$150,000 payment to a local business in order to silence opposition to a portion of the development plan.*

**THE TRUTH:** The developer, Brian Hirahara, offered to pay Mike Stott, the owner of the Bear Claw, this amount in a PRIVATE TRANSACTION solely between the two of them. This was corroborated at a City Council meeting by Mike Stott, who told the Council that this financial arrangement was between him and the developer, and that the city was not involved. That payment had nothing to do with the city. Brian Hirahara at a later date brought the private agreement to Belinda Espinosa AND SHE REFUSED TO APPROVE THE PROJECT with a \$150,000 payment stipulation because it is ILLEGAL for redevelopment money to be used that way.

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## **Vote YES to recall Maria Alegria and Stephen Tilton**

CONCERNED CITIZENS OF PINOLE FOR THE RECALL OF MARIA ALEGRIA AND STEPHEN TILTON  
(510) 587-3225      FPPC ID# 1298568      Visit [www.PinoleRecall.com](http://www.PinoleRecall.com) for more information

### **Maria's flyer said:**

*PEAR STREET BISTRO LOAN: . . . but it wasn't until September 18, 2006, that Belinda Espinosa reported the delinquency to the entire City Council.*

**THE TRUTH:** This statement is not true. The Pear Street Bistro Chronology clearly shows the city staff first became aware of the Pear Street Bistro delinquency in June 2006. The Redevelopment Subcommittee learned of it at its July 11, 2006 meeting. The full council was not notified until the September council meeting because the August council meeting was cancelled, as a quorum could not be put together because council members were on vacation. Mayor Peter Murray explained this in detail at the January 15, 2008, council meeting.

### **Maria's flyer said:**

*CITY FORCED TO SAY NO COMMENT: Council members will state only "no comment" in response to inquiries as to why Espinosa's contract with the city was not renewed.*

**THE TRUTH:** Does Maria's flyer sound like a "no comment"? If Maria Alegria were abiding by this statement, she never would have produced her flyer, because all she does is comment about Belinda. Both Maria and Stephen Tilton have done NOTHING BUT COMMENT about Belinda since she was terminated.

### **Maria's flyer said:**

*The recall is only about punishing those elected officials who made a hiring decision based on facts and merit rather than friendship and political alliances.*

#### **THE TRUTH:**

- In May 2006, Belinda was given a very favorable performance evaluation by the entire council, and this evaluation was unanimously endorsed by the council.
- Belinda was recognized as Contra Costa College's Woman of the Year for Pinole in 2007. She was nominated by Contra Costa County Supervisor Gayle Uilkema.

Belinda was terminated because Maria Alegria, Stephen Tilton, and David Cole needed a scapegoat for Gary Wong's failure to repay his loan. Even the *Contra Costa Times* said that Belinda was trying her best to get Gary to pay.

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— On February 5, 2008 —

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This flyer comes to you from

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