

TOWN OF ORO VALLEY – IT’S OUR NATURE TO RECALL

In the Town of Oro Valley there is a slogan that reads “Oro Valley –It’s Our Nature” that should read, “Oro Valley – It’s Our Nature to Recall”.

A group of Oro Valley citizens opposed to the Town Council’s decision to purchase the Hilton El Conquistador Country Club, Golf and Tennis facilities for the purpose of creating a community center, have begun the process of ordering a recall to remove Town Mayor Satish Hiremath and three Council members.

The organization, Oro Valley Citizens for Open Government, filed for petition numbers to recall the mayor and three council members who voted to buy El Conquistador Country Club and Golf Course. The council approved buying the club, Tucson’s largest golf and tennis facility with 45 holes of premier golf and 31 hard-surface tennis courts, collectively. Additionally, the property includes approximately 18 acres of developable land along Oracle Road among the approximately 300 acres.

The Council approved the purchase 4:3 back in December for \$1 million. (\$.08 PSF for the land value). But, their road to recall was in approving a half-cent sales tax increase that is to begin next Sunday, March 1, to cover costs of improving the property.

You might recall back in October 2011, a former council member decided to recall Joe Hornat and Mary Snider shortly after being elected, because they voted to double Oro Valley’s utility sale tax from 2 to 4 percent and bring it on par with other communities. That recall did not go to vote.

The latest recall effort was this past October 2014. That one

was to **recall Councilman Mike Zinkin in Oro Valley**. But, it **did not** go to a vote either, and so no one recalls exactly what that one was for. How quickly we forget our recalls.

Between October 2011 and October 2014 is the longest period of time I can ever remember since living here that there has not been any recall efforts in Oro Valley. But the brief recess is now ended.

Oro Valley Citizens for Open Government (OVCOG) will begin collecting signatures the first week of March to recall the mayor and three Council members. This time with resolve, because the previous referendum failed due to a technicality, and was then upheld in a court of appeals. So they are optimistic the number of signatures needed to order a recall are attainable this time.

Ryan Hartung, who is heading up the recall effort said in a written statement, "The Oro Valley Town Council voted 4-3 at their February 18th meeting to not suspend the sales tax increase which was approved for the purchase of this property, even though the purchase is not yet finalized. If enough signatures are collected, a special election would take place in November 2015, when Oro Valley residents will have the opportunity to remove Mayor Satish Hiremath and Council members Lou Waters, Joe Hornat, and Mary Snider." But won't change the half cent sales tax.

One can only hope that both sides have met to discuss their differences and only then decided this to be the best course of action. But alas no, that isn't part of our nature in Oro Valley to discuss and listen – Our Nature is to Recall.