



The Carmel Pine Cone

TRUSTED BY LOCALS AND LOVED BY VISITORS SINCE 1915

City administrator reminds candidates about rules on campaign signs

By MARY SCHLEY

WITH SO many people running for city council and the school board, campaign signs are popping up all over town.

But the Carmel Municipal Code forbids the placement of political signs on public property, and their proliferation in medians, on street corners and in other public spaces prompted city administrator Chip Rerig to send a reminder to the candidates for city office this week.

“We have identified an increasing number of campaign signs for our upcoming election on public property including city-owned medians, rights of way, mini-parks and the like,” he said. “Please note that the city’s municipal code prohibits such signage placement on city property. If you or your supporters have placed campaign signs in these types of right-of-way areas or any other city property, please have them removed no later than Sept. 30 at 5 p.m.”

The one-sentence section of code simply states, “It is unlawful to paste, glue, tack or otherwise post or display any sign, placard, advertisement, poster or inscription whatever without first obtaining permission of the city council.”

Any signs not retrieved by their owners or supporters will be picked up by city workers and stored at city hall, where candidates will have to schedule appointments to pick them up.

The same rule applies to the “Dan Albert for Monterey City Council” sign at Junipero and Sixth and the various signs for CUSD candidates, but Rerig said he did not issue the warning to them.

“I think we’ll just retrieve the signs for candidates outside the village and contact them afterward,” he said.

Rerig speculated that about 50 or so candidate signs have been placed on public property. No laws prohibit supporters from placing signs from their favored candidates on their own land.

In response to Rerig’s admonition, David Refuerzo, husband of mayoral candidate Judy Refuerzo, suggested the “city has more important things to worry about than removing some political signs.”

“I would think that public works personnel have more pertinent public safety tasks — wildfire fuel abatement, for instance — to focus on rather than removing some signs that will only be out for another month or so,” he wrote, without declaring any intention to remove the signs himself. “Monterey County doesn’t waste their time removing these signs, and rightly so. If you still feel compelled to remove the political signs, then while you’re at it, you should also be removing the real estate signs, as they are typically in the right of way.”

(Real estate signs hanging in front of homes are allowed under the city code, while sandwich boards advertising open houses are not.)

The only other person to respond to Rerig’s warning this week was Jake Odello, who is running for the CUSD board. “I want to rectify and respect the city space as soon as possible,” he said. “I have a team going out tonight to check the city area and move signs or remove them.”

Odello asked Rerig to describe the right of way so he knows where it is and can be sure his signs are not illegally placed. “I will get this addressed ASAP,” he wrote.