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Local News

Posted on Tue, Nov. 18, 2003

The Mercury News

Mtn. View to debate finance rules for elections

By Joshua L. Kwan
Mercury News

Last year, three of the 13 candidates for Mountain View City Council -- including Mayor Mike Kasperzak and Councilman Matt Neely -- broke voluntary campaign spending limits they had agreed to follow, prompting an outcry among other candidates.

Tonight, the city council will discuss possible changes in Mountain View's campaign finance laws. It could be the start of the first major overhaul of the city's election code since 2000, when the council adopted the voluntary limit.

"One of the things that's turned out to be frustrating about our situation is the fact that it's voluntary and there's neither a carrot nor a stick," Councilwoman Rosemary Stasek said.

Among the options that will be examined are incentives for candidates to obey their pledges, including public financing from the city and a city-paid campaign mailer.

Greg Perry won a seat on the council in 2002 as an underdog who spent roughly half what some other candidates spent.

Perry advocates fining candidates who spend too much, in proportion to their excessive spending.

Kasperzak said he supports posting campaign finance statements on the city's Web site.

Kasperzak and Neely both told the Mercury News in February, when campaign finance reports were made available, that their mistakes were inadvertent.

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The Mountain View City Council will meet at 6:30 tonight at City Hall, 500 Castro St., for its regular session, followed by a study session that includes a discussion of campaign finance reform. To find the staff report, click on www.ci.mtnview.ca.us.

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