

## Pratt on Texas Commentary 8/23/2007:

Here's the likely story to develop from the Lubbock Councilwoman Linda DeLeon and City Secretary Becky Garza recall petition debacle:

One, the claim will be made that nothing illegal or wrong was done, but "we could have done things better."

Two, they'll claim that DeLeon wasn't given any advance information as to the results of the verification procedure. They'll say she was simply given a copy of the original stack of petitions as they were turned in - no notations or anything. The petitioners were given a copy too upon submission that makes it all fair.

Note at this point, however, that this does not explain how phone calls with the supposed results of the verification were being placed the night before the day of the 2:30 p.m. press conference at which those results were officially released. That is the issue which should be investigated and which casts solid doubt over the integrity of the Secretary's office.

Three, the City Secretary will continue to talk about how her office was just following whatever rules it is she had decided upon, and there might be more apologies to the media for not talking more. This attitude to the media makes it appear that nothing wrong really happened - just poor communication.

Four, the city hall Kool-Aid drinkers will try and keep the focus on the idea that cheating and dishonesty as to the petition signature verification is being alleged by critics. As well as the idea that the whole deal is just about a nightclub - as if that somehow relieves them of responsible action.

In reality, I've been focused upon the *poor process and incompetence* of executive decision making of the City Secretary. I've not alleged cheating but rather, I've said that the Secretary has created a distrustful environment. And, after knowing full well of the distrust and suspicion, and having been given the free reign by the state to allow watchers in the process, continued to throw more fuel on the fire instead of working to contain and eliminate it. (This seems to be standard operating procedure for Lubbock's city officials of late.)

Irrespective of whether illegality or favoritism occurred, it's the shockingly poor decisions and judgment of the City Secretary that points to the need for her to go. Too many are fooled by the title of the Office - Secretary. They forget that it is not an assistant's position, it is an executive job and is paid in that manner. We have a right to expect executive level performance.