Mayor-council in tiff

A rift is evidently developing between Abbeville Mayor J. C. Vorhoff and key administration officials over steps - or strides - taken by Vorhoff and others, reportedly without benefit of council sanction.

The discord arrives on what many view as an economic breath of fresh air for Abbeville - Coastal Zone Management funding of Audrey Hotel renovations. But to insiders, including what appears to be a majority of city council members, the chasm has been widening for quite some time and is reportedly the product of a lack of executive communication.

As a result, the present city engineer has threatened to fight current handling of the plans and further developments could split the city administration in half.

Late this week, city fathers - or the five council members - received word of Coastal Zone Management program funding of hotel renovations. Some $400,000 in CZM monies is to be used, according to reports, to refurbish the old hotel building, the future home of city hall and city operations.

And that's the gist of the arguments of some city fathers ... they're just now being advised of the move and of the city's plans for the Audrey building.

City Engineer Elray Schexnайдer, who, by all indications, was bumped from the Audrey project by Parish Engineer Gene Sellers, told the Meridional today that his plans don't include sitting still.

"I've got some decisions to make," stated Schexnайдer, referring to alternatives in the matter. "And they'll become known Tuesday night at the city council meeting."

Schexnайдer did say that Sellers, acting in partnership with Vorhoff, filed funding pre-application papers with CZM, but that, "conceivably, the project could be taken away."

"Morally, he (Sellers) has done quite a bit of work on the project," Schexnайдer stated. "But city council never moved on the hotel matter, and that's the thing that moves me."

And he's evidently not alone in his feelings.

When asked to comment about the Audrey Hotel plans, District C Councilman Larry Campisi - in a written statement - said: "As District C Councilman, I was pleased to be informed that the city was chosen to get CZM funding."

"However I am dismayed by the lack of planning and foresight of the Vorhoff administration in deciding Abbeville's needs."

"I speak of priorities," the councilman continued.

"While it is nice that the city has received funds for this work, I think we must realize that we can't go to the well of state funding too often."

"The Vorhoff administration knows this all too well," Campisi said.

"Specifically the problems of drainage and sewerage, of street improvements and of mental health are far more outstanding."

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