

Mayor Tobler Needs to be Disclosin', Closin', Closin', Keep Those Wagons Rollin', Rawhide!

Special to BC Free

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While spending some “free time” wading through Nevada Commission of Ethics advisory opinions recently, I came across No. 09-16A.

On the surface, such a document might seem a bit drab, but since it deals with an advisory opinion requested by Mayor Roger Tobler himself, the interest tended to pique.



Mayor Roger Tobler

It seems last year, on April 9, Tobler appeared in person before six members of the state Ethics Commission along, according to the opinion document, “...with his counsel, City Attorney Dave Olsen, and provided sworn testimony.”

What Tobler sought an opinion of was whether he needed to disclose and/or abstain from voting regarding matters involving Boulder Inn and Suites – regardless of whether the matters are before the council or Redevelopment Agency.

As you might recall, Boulder Inn and Suites’ Bret Caruso 18 months ago had appealed to the City Council a Planning Commission denial of its mega-sized, billboard-sized vinyl sign on the west face of his building at 704 Nevada Way on grounds because it didn’t meet the city’s sign code standards.

At the City Council’s March 10, 2009 meeting, Tobler voted, along with the other four council members, to table the appeal until changes in the sign ordinance are made.

The vote by Tobler prompted the mayor to seek the ethics commission opinion “out of an abundance of caution.”

In his discussion with the ethics commission, Tobler said he does business with Boulder Inn and Suites to the tune of about \$600 a month, or 0.3 percent of his hardware store’s total sales.

(I guess that means Tobler’s total monthly sales are about \$180,000 with yearly sales just shy of \$2.2 million.)

The ethics commission ruled that even though the amount of business was miniscule, Tobler needs to disclose his business relationship with the motel every time Boulder Inn and Suites comes before the council or Redevelopment Agency.

They said, “Based on this relationship, Tobler’s actions would reasonably be affected by his relationship with Boulder Inn.”

He also was told that he does not have to abstain on such issues.

By taking the ethics commission's "conclusions of law" a step farther, it would seem any business that does at least \$600 a month in sales with Tobler's True Value Hardware store on Canyon Road would require the mayor to disclose such a fact before he discussed and voted on the issue at hand involving his "customers."