

## Beach town election bitterness lingers

*Tampa Bay Times (FL) (Published as St. Petersburg Times) - March 29, 1988*

- Author/Byline: TAMMERLIN DRUMMOND
- Edition: CITY
- Section: CITY TIMES AND INDEPENDENT
- Page: 1

MADEIRA BEACH - A bitter mayoral contest that voters in this small beach community thought they settled earlier this month has taken a new twist now that the election is over: a battle of letters.

Things got rolling March 11 when newly elected Mayor Hugh Lamont wrote to each of the four city commissioners asking them to meet with him individually before he takes office April 5.

That letter prompted angry responses from Vice Mayor Michael A. Doyle and Commissioner Peter O'Toole.

After Lamont edged Miller Newton in a heated mayoral race on March 8, both sides talked of mending fences and getting on with the business of running the city. But a week before Lamont is to take office, the spirit of "letting bygones be bygones" has faded.

Although Lamont sent similar letters to each of the commissioners, only Doyle appears to have taken exception. He said he wanted to reply publicly to Lamont's letter because he does not trust the newly elected mayor.

"It is my belief that you have misled the public over the last year or so and displayed a total disregard for the complete truth," Doyle said in a letter to Lamont dated March 23. "This would tend to indicate that you are more interested in your own personal interest rather than in the community."

Doyle also urged Lamont to apologize for using "dirty politics" when he sent out newspaper clippings detailing Newton's background.

The articles described a lawsuit filed by a man who claims he was held captive by a controversial drug treatment program while Newton was director. The articles also included an account of Newton's problems paying campaign bills while he was Pasco Circuit Court Clerk.

Lamont said in a second letter to Doyle on Monday that he has no intention of apologizing for the last-minute mailings.

"I never attacked Miller Newton personally on anything," Lamont told the Times on Monday. "All I did was make his public life public knowledge and it was already public knowledge anyway because it was in the newspaper."

Doyle's letter, which made references to O'Toole, the only commissioner who supported Lamont, also prompted an angry response from O'Toole. The letter accused O'Toole of turning against his fellow commissioners who were up for re-election by supporting their challengers.

"The election is over. I'm sorry you cannot put it in the past," O'Toole wrote. "My only objection is your use of the City of Madeira Beach letterhead which to many would imply that your letter had prior city approval and sanction which it did not."

Other commissioners who hope to keep a distance from the squabbling declined to comment on the letters.

- Caption: BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO, (2)Hugh Lamont; Michael A. Doyle

- Dateline: MADEIRA BEACH
- Record: 058