

Group seeking Doo's ouster loses in court

Star-Bulletin staff

The community group that organized a failed petition drive to oust City Councilman Leigh-Wai Doo because of his vote favoring the city's rail transit project lost another battle yesterday, this time in Circuit Court.

The Grassroots Rail Recall group lost the suit it had filed against City Clerk Raymond Pua for his removal of more than 1,000 signatures from its recall petition.

Pua said he removed the signatures after people who had signed the petition sent in signed postcards asking that their names be withdrawn.

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He said the action was in line with the City Charter.

Circuit Court Judge Patrick Yim yesterday ruled that Pua had acted properly and denied the request to force a recall election.

Jerry Hiatt, an attorney who represents Doo and worked with city attorneys on this case, said Pua has had more than 1,900 requests from people asking to have their names withdrawn due to misrepresentation.

"The record shows the City Clerk scrutinized all of the signatures," Hiatt said.

"It was an excellent and well-reasoned decision. Judge Yim is a

very careful judge and I think he listened carefully to both sides."

Complaints surfaced shortly after the group submitted its petition in June to force a recall vote with people saying they had been told it was a petition to stop rail transit, not to oust Doo, Pua said in earlier interviews.

Robert Hazzard, spokesman for the recall effort, said the petition clearly stated that its purpose was to recall Doo.

He said his group wanted Doo ousted to break the 5-4 City Council support base for rail transit in time for a crucial vote this September.