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Wednesday, October 07, 2009

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- [Community](#)
 - [Home & Garden](#)
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 - [Photo Galleries](#)
 - [Videos](#)
- [Special Sections](#)
 - [Newcastle Days](#)

Browse > [Home](#) / [Local News](#) / Protestors attend City Council meeting, say developer is racist

Protestors attend City Council meeting, say developer is racist

October 7, 2009

By Tim Pfarr

UPDATED — 1:44 p.m. Oct. 7, 2009

More than a dozen protestors from the Seattle Solidarity Network came to City Hall for Tuesday's council meeting to protest the staffing practices of Lorig Associates, a developer Newcastle has worked with extensively.

The protestors said Lorig discriminated against Patricia Perkins-Milton, a black woman who worked for the developer for 11 years. They said she was one of two black people working for the company during most of that time, and that she was denied promotions.

They said that although she filled in at a normally higher-paying position for five months, she was forced to train an inexperienced white worker who would permanently take the position.



Protestors line up outside City Hall before Tuesday night's City Council meeting. — By Tim Pfarr

On Wednesday, Tom Fitzsimmons, chief operating officer of Lorig, sent an e-mail to City Manager John Starbard and Director of Development Steve Roberge apologizing for the appearance of the protestors.

Fitzsimmons said Perkins-Milton voluntarily separated herself from Lorig, received a severance package from the developer and signed an agreement that prohibited her and Lorig from making disparaging remarks about each other. He said Perkins-Milton "is acting in complete disregard for that agreement."

Fitzsimmons said the agreement also stated mutual recognition that neither Lorig nor Perkins-Milton had a claim against the other originating from the separation.

"We strongly disagree with how Ms. Milton portrays the facts about her employment and voluntary separation from Lorig," Fitzsimmons said in the e-mail.

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- [April 2009](#)
- [March 2009](#)
- [February 2009](#)
- [January 2009](#)
- [December 2008](#)
- [November 2008](#)
- [October 2008](#)
- [September 2008](#)
- [August 2008](#)
- [July 2008](#)
- [June 2008](#)
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