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Wiretap testimony sought

Mitchell subpoena eyed in area trial

By Thomas Connor

THE ATTORNEY for former East Chicago Mayor John Nicosia said yesterday he will try to subpoena two former United States attorneys general for testimony in Nicosia's trial on charges of accepting bribes to permit construction of a gas pipeline.

In Federal District Court in Hammond the lawyer, William Barnett, said he will seek the testimony of John N. Mitchell and Richard Kleindienst, and also of Lawrence Morrissey, who headed a task force that developed the case against Nicosia.

Barnett said he wants substantial proof that there was no tapping of Nicosia's phones during the investigation.

KLEINDIENST succeeded Mitchell after the latter's resignation nearly a year ago. Elliott Richardson, the current attorney general, was named to the post by President Nixon after Kleindienst resigned in the wake of the growing Watergate scandal.

Barnett said he also wants an explanation of why charges were dropped against Northern Natural Gas Co. of Omaha and a subsidiary, Northern Gas Products Co., and of why some of the charges were dropped against another sub-

siary, Hydrocarbon Transportation Co.

These actions occurred after Ralph Blodgett, an attorney for Northern Natural Gas, went to Washington to confer with Mitchell, Barnett said.

BLODGETT was enroute back to Omaha from Washington when he died in the crash of a United Air Lines plane near Midway Airport last December.

Barrett's statements were made in what Judge Joseph Sam Perry, presiding at Nicosia's trial, said was "open court" in the judge's chambers. Perry said he wanted the chambers proceedings on the record, but out of hearing of the jurors.

He also said he understands that Mitchell "has substantial interest in a related company," El Paso Natural Gas Co. Later he said it is "related" only in the sense that it is in the natural gas business.

In the trial, now in its fifth day, Nicosia, an East Chicago physician, is accused of accepting \$14,500 in bribes in 1966 and 1967. The prosecution alleged the money came from a \$223,393 bribe fund supplied by Northern Natural Gas and maintained in the name of a Salem, Ill., engineering firm.