

Planning Official Quits Over Marcello Letter

By ALLAN KATZ

Thomas J. Lupo resigned today as a member of the Regional Planning Commission's executive committee.

He took the action because of a letter written by RPC chairman Joe D. Lindsay that praised Jefferson Parish rackets figure Carlos Marcello.

Lupo said he has submitted his resignation to Mayor Moon Landrieu. He said he hopes Landrieu "will name a member of the black community of New Orleans to the RPC in my place because they have had no representation on the Regional Planning Commission."

Lupo said he hoped to accomplish two things by his resignation:

—"To give voice to the view that public officials cannot do anything they want without any recriminations. I feel strongly that most people have reacted to Mr. Lindsay's letter praising Mr. Marcello in the same way I have reacted."

—"To provide Mayor Landrieu an opportunity to remedy a defect in the structure of the RPC that has to this date resulted in no black represen-

tation on the executive committee. The final choice, of course, is the mayor's and the City Council."

LUPU SAID over the weekend he would resign from the RPC if Lindsay didn't. Lindsay replied he "has no intention of resigning."

Mayor Landrieu could not be reached immediately for comment on the latest development in the furor over 44 letters written by persons from the New Orleans area praising Marcello. Lindsay's letter, one of the few made public to date, was among the file of letters used by Marcello's attorneys in an effort to gain relief for him from a two-year sentence in federal prison. He is supposed to begin serving Sept. 4 for striking an FBI man in an incident at New Orleans International Airport in 1966.

In his controversial letter, written Aug. 28, 1968, Lindsay said he had known Marcello five or six years and in their dealings, Marcello had left "nothing to be desired in business ethics or procedures."

THE LETTER was written

19 days after Marcello was convicted in federal court in Houston for striking the FBI man.

In an Aug. 22 statement, Lindsay said writing the letter at the request of an attorney "may have been a mistake" but maintained that he had "told it as it is" insofar as his dealings with Marcello, which, he said, were limited to trying to arrange one land deal that fell through.

Lindsay said today he wouldn't comment on Lupo's

See LUPU— Page 4

Continued from Front Page

resignation "until more facts concerning it become available."

He said that so far as he knows, Jefferson Parish President Thomas F. Donelon and the Jefferson Parish Council, which appointed him to the RPC, have no intention of asking him to resign.

LINDSAY ALSO said he does not agree that his letter to Marcello will have any effect on the credibility of the RPC.

"I feel I can stand on eight years of dedicated service," Lindsay said. He is one of the founding members of the RPC. "I think I have the right to be judged on nearly a decade of devotion to the cause of area planning," Lindsay said.

In Lupo's statement, the New Orleans businessman said he feels so strongly about the letter that "I could not sit on the commission if this kind of thing is to be permitted to happen.

"I feel it would be preferable if I found other civic forums for my energy," Lupo said.

He added that he holds no personal grudge against Lindsay but feels the act of writing the letter in Marcello's behalf and then retaining a seat on the RPC will impair any future recommendations made by the planning body.