

CONNOR

Continued from Page A1

again with Connor later this week to begin more detailed discussions of Connor's future role in city government.

A newcomer himself to City Hall, Maloof was elected this spring, after campaigning largely on the promise of launching a grass roots economic development plan that he called Forward Peoria! He has since implemented that plan in the form of a complex committee structure.

Maloof said Tuesday he does not believe Forward Peoria! will conflict with what he has planned for Connor because Forward Peoria! is designed as a short-term project. According to the mayor's timetable, the Forward Peoria! committee structure will be disassembled starting this winter.

However, the mayor's hand-picked administrators for Forward Peoria! believe their work eventually will evolve into a long-term project. And they expressed serious concerns to the mayor Tuesday about whether a study by Connor would duplicate or overshadow the work being done by their 15-odd committees.

Frank Renner, the local lawyer who managed Maloof's mayoral

campaign and then became chairman of Forward Peoria!, said he and Maloof have always had a "philosophical disagreement" about the time frame for Forward Peoria!

All along, Maloof has insisted the project be limited to six months in its initial stages. But Renner contends that many of the problems being studied by committees will require much more than six months of consideration — which is what Maloof now proposes for Connor.

The mayor and his Forward Peoria! leaders agreed Tuesday morning to meet with Connor and discuss ways of avoiding any conflicts.

Other community leaders Tuesday were unaware that Maloof was courting Connor for City Hall activities. But all agreed that Connor is a valuable asset to the city and that Maloof would do well to utilize Connor's talents.

Former Mayor C. Richard Neumiller pointed to Connor's involvement with the Illinois Chamber of Commerce during the 1970s and said Connor clearly has the ability to undertake a similar project locally.

"If he would become involved in something like this," Neumiller said, "it certainly wouldn't surprise me because Dave Connor has always had the best interest of Peoria at heart."