

Question 2

Questionnaire for City Council Candidates 2009

Palo Alto Neighborhoods (PAN)

Terminology: "the City" refers to the government of the City of Palo Alto.

Experience:

Non-incumbents: Describe your personal experience with Palo Alto City government and recent issues that have come before the Council (Public Hearings). What was your role? (For example, did you send an email, speak to the Council, lead a group of citizens, etc.?) How extensively were you involved?

Incumbent (Klein): What have been your major initiatives on the Council? Describe your role and the results.

[L] Nancy Shepherd: www.electNancyShepherd.com

While PTA Council President I reported on to the City Council on school issues. This helped connect city government to the school community in many ways. Additionally, while working as a co-chair/producer on the 2001 Little Big Game revival at Stanford Stadium for the Paly/Gunn rival football game, I secured City Council endorsement for the game along with enthusiastic smiles and attendance. I organized city participation in the opening ceremonies with Council Members, fire trucks, and motorcycle police leading the parade of school children marching into Stanford stadium.

As a member of Palo Altans for Government Effectiveness (PAGE) I chaired a series of programs on leadership building called "How Do You Make a Good Community Better." Speakers included Bill Johnson, Publisher of the Palo Alto Weekly; Ed Everett, Former City Manager of Redwood City; and Steve Toben, Former Mayor of Portola Valley. Also California State Senator Joe Simitian presented his talk called "13 Tips for Effective Advocacy" which I was able to video tape for future leadership programs. The purpose of this series was to help Palo Altans with civic engagement best practices and formed the basis for PAGE's promotion of "Civic Engagement for the Common Good" which the City Council adopted as one of its goals.

[M] Brian Steen

I am a current board member of Palo Alto Rotary and initiated its joint project with the City of Palo Alto Community Services Department to create attractive "gateways" to the City at the intersections of Middlefield Road and Palo Alto Avenue, and at El Camino Real and Palo Alto Avenue.

[N] Mark Weiss

Gunn High, class of 1982

(editor in chief of student newspaper, varsity basketball (league champions, 1981), junior varsity tennis, Oaxaca student exchange)

Dartmouth College, a.b. 1986 in English (editorial board, The Dartmouth)

I was student body president fall semester at Terman Junior High in Palo Alto in 1977 which means either a) I am due to win some kind of election every 32 years or b) only a 14-year-old would find merit in my candidacy.

[A] Dan Dykwel : <http://www.dandykwel.com>

I have been attending City Council meetings since before I ran for the Council in 2007. I would appear to make statements on topics of which I was involved or concerned with, such as the Palo Alto Black and White Ball, Alma Plaza, PTA, Stanford Hospital, and the Chamber of Commerce.

I also served on the Blue Ribbon Task Force for the Public Safety Building in 2008 and found it to be a rewarding experience that allowed me to see how the City pursues its primary task of providing for the safety of our citizens.

Through these activities, I have come to know many of the department heads at the city and feel these relationships will help me be an effective collaborator on the Council.

[B] Victor Frost: No response from candidate.

[C] Chris Gaither

Most of my personal experience with Palo Alto City government has involved day to day life issues that affect either me or others as residents. I will phone a particular department when an issue surfaces in our neighborhood of California Avenue area or other parts of the city. For example, the street sweepers were cleaning the streets around 3:30 to 4:00 in the morning in our neighborhood. Our area is a mixture of commercial and residential. It really is like a downtown section. This start time for sweeping in the residential section is way too early, and the noise is noticeable. I phoned the Public Works manager, explained the situation, and offered a solution. The request – please start the street cleaning in the commercial area first at 3:30 or 4:00 a.m., and then progress towards the residential sections around 8:00 a.m. when people are in general awake and about to start their days. The Public Works manager accepted this solution. As a result, we don't have sweepers on our residential streets at 3:30 or 4:00 a.m. any longer. I also suggested that we install permanent signs like those in San Francisco announcing a regular schedule for cleaning each street throughout the city. This will keep our streets clean with a regular maintenance schedule. The Public Works manager is taking this into consideration. Another example – when Sergeant Hernandez was on the PAPD (he is now at Stanford), I received a parking ticket on Grant Avenue because my car was not the required length (I believe 15 feet) away from the fire hydrant. On this particular part of Grant Avenue, a large section of the curb just before the hydrant was painted red which in my mind indicates you cannot park in that red zone, and a smaller section before the hydrant was cement. After I received my ticket, I noticed that Sergeant Hernandez was ticketing people in that same spot on a daily basis, at the same time. I phoned him and spoke to him about the red zone, and the fire hydrant. He told me that the red zone appeared to be painted there by the owner of the apartment complex or done by a private person. In other words, the city did not paint the curb red. Because of my inquiry, Sergeant Hernandez got the powers that be to remove the red paint. Now, people can park along the curb without being too close to the fire hydrant and risk getting a parking ticket. In addition, when I see a problem anywhere in the city, I will call the city dispatch and phone in such issues like hanging tree branches/limbs; drainage and flooding; road obstructions; lost children or people in need of medical assistance. There are things every one can do to assist our city's government and operations.

In terms of public hearings, a few local developers have approached me to attend either the planning commission's or city council's hearing on their specific projects. I attend in person to hear the arguments for and against, and to show my support for that specific project. In addition, our La Comida board members have appeared before both the council and the finance committee when those two entities review and approve the budget and the city's allocation for

La Comida. I have appeared a few times with the group years ago namely to show La Comida's interest and appreciation to the city for its respective funding.

[D] Tim Gray : www.vote4Gray.com/

I own and operate Treasury Advocates, a business consulting practice, in downtown Palo Alto. I am trained as a Certified Public Accountant, and am a financial adviser to Not-for-profit hospitals throughout the nation. I know how to step the tide of beauracracy growth, and find ways for competing interests to cooperate. I also have a specialty tax practice in mergers and acquisitions.

After working as a Certified Public Accountant as an auditor and consultant, I was part of the financial leadership that built the financial operations of the Lucile Packard Childrens Hospital at Stanford from the ground up. I have learned the nuances and patience needed to navigate through very large beauracracies, and deliver solid solutions that served the greatest good. The core principle in my business is to find the points of agreement and strengthen them, and to face tough issues head-on, so that respect can be retained for varying points of view.

[E] John Hackmann

Part of my public policy experience was serving on the Boards of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Palo Alto, The Consumers' Co-operative Society of Palo Alto, and the MayView Community Health Clinic of Palo Alto.

Specific to the Council, I have appeared and spoken on important issues before the City Council, as many know, on many issues over the last twenty years.

1) In July and August I spoke at four meetings of the Finance Committee and City Council, and was one of the leading quoted critics of the "gross receipts tax" approach to Measure A concerning small businesses, home businesses, professionals, tutors, doctors and other self-employed people.

2) In September I spoke up with others at City Council, successfully, to encourage a somewhat larger collection of books in the downtown branch of the Palo Alto library system, so it feels more like a "real library," as two council members stated.

3) I spoke up at Council for Baylands protection as habitat for both the harvest mouse and an egret species.

4) I fought for preservation of the historic first African-American Church on the Peninsula, on Ramona Street. I was a leading voice as an attorney in this fight which many preservationists thought could not be won but which we did win and the church building today still stands and forms a graceful transition between the residential neighborhood and a larger building.

5) An athletic field for soccer and softball was the focus of my efforts and the efforts of many others before the Council years ago. This athletic field is still used today by the students of Castilleja High School.

6) I formed Friends of Embarcadero with one other person to create new bicycle lanes and to improve traffic on Embarcadero Road. This project was approved as a pilot project by the City Council but then was not implemented due to budget constraints.

On all six of these issues, the first two not yet completely resolved, I was successful in working with others and organizing the message. On the City Council I believe I will be able to work collegially with others and continue my track record of success.

[F] [Karen Holman](mailto:karenholman.org) : karenholman.org

I have served on the Planning & Transportation Commission for the past 8 years, two of those as Chair. Previous involvement included the South of Forest Avenue I (SOFA) working group, serving as co-chair on SOFA II, and numerous community organizations.

Among other things as a member of the Commission:

- I emphasized the need and changed the focus to waste reduction rather than only on recycling when the Environment Services Center was being proposed. This led ultimately to a Zero Waste Plan being adopted by the City. Initiated by Acterra's formation of the Zero Waste Task Force of San Mateo, Santa Clara, and San Benito Counties and then the City's Zero Waste Task Force, I was a member of both groups.
- A proposal I developed to allow the subdivision of lots with at least one existing historic home accompanied by a preservation covenant was adopted unanimously by the City's Historic Resources Board, Planning Commission and City Council. This allows the conservation of the smaller, more affordable homes. Development pressures have proven that market forces would result in demolition of these smaller, more affordable units to be replaced by one larger, more expensive home.
- I am about to recommend the adoption of a new practice that would require mitigations and conditions of approval to be in place prior to certificates of occupancy being issued whenever and wherever feasible. This should help eliminate or minimize the environmental impacts resulting from delayed or neglected requirement fulfillment.
- Palo Alto needs more grocery stores, especially neighborhood serving. I initiated the discussion of a Grocery Store combining district that should be coming back to the Commission for discussion. The purpose is to identify locations we need and want to encourage or require grocery stores, including in Neighborhood Centers.
- I initiated consideration to revise the Planned Community zone process to eliminate the abuses too often experienced as part of these projects, and am one of three Commissioners who is working on revisions.
- Recommended that staff maintain a standard conditions of approval checklist for foothills (OS) projects. The list has been established and expanded to include conditions which address, for example, staging of construction in sensitive areas, transport of oak tree debris, and leach field construction which minimizes root disturbance. This is a result of my initiation.
- I first raised the issue of concrete as a major construction product pollutant and its impacts on our CO2 emissions.
- I was a constant advocate for the completion the recent Bay Lands Master Plan.

Worth noting: The Planning & Transportation Commission (PTC) does not review commercial or multi-family residential projects unless they are specific and large sites or PC zoned projects.

For instance, the PTC did not review the Arbor Real project that replaced the Hyatt Hotel. Nor does the PTC review single family homes except those in the Foothills.

[G] Larry Klein www.ReelectLarryKlein.com

I initiated the reduction in the amount of housing that could be built on the Summerwind and Palo Alto Bowl sites in South Palo Alto.

-- Along with Peter Drekmeier I led the Council to pass one of the first mandatory Green Building Ordinances in the country. It has become a model for other cities in California.

-- Four years ago when I ran I was critical of the performance of the then City Manager (the most critical candidate according to the Palo Alto Weekly) and I thus welcomed the opportunity in 2008 when I was Mayor to lead the selection process for our new City Manager.

[H] Leon Leong : www.leonleong.com

I recently voiced my concerns with the proposed Business License Tax, through e-mail & speaking at the Finance Committee, and with meeting with City Staff. I highlighted concerns with the Business License Tax model.

Prior to that issue, I presented economic data to the Finance Committee highlighting the trend in one of it's revenue sources, the documentary transfer tax, so that they would better be able to assess the size of deficit issue in the fiscal year.

In early October, 2008, I e-mailed the council about the need to revise their forecasted revenue from economically sensitive sources: Sales Tax, Transit Occupancy Tax, Documentary Taxes & Property Taxes. I received only one response back from the council members.

[I] Corey Levens : www.electcoreylevens.com

To date, my involvement in the community has focused on local neighborhood and school organizations and issues. I have served on the Board of Directors of my local neighborhood association, the Green Acres Improvement Association, for 4 years; I served for 4 years on each of the Nixon Elementary School and Terman Middle School Site Councils and am currently serving my fourth year on the Gunn High School Site Councils; I was a member of the High School Task Force and the Terman School Principal Search Committee; and I have served on the Board of Directors of the Stanford Campus Recreation Association (SCRA), which just re-opened after a total renovation, for the last 5 years.

I have not been an ardent "Council watcher" and only occasionally attended City Council meetings. I have, however, paid close attention to the activities and decisions of the Council and their impact on the neighborhoods of Palo Alto. And, as a practicing attorney with my office located in Palo Alto, I have paid close attention to the manner in which the Council has treated the business community. It is my dissatisfaction with what I have seen that has motivated me to run for the Council. As a new candidate, and one who has not sought or accepted the endorsements of former or sitting Council members, I believe I can bring a sorely needed and long overdue NEW VOICE and NEW PERSPECTIVE to the Council.

[J] Gail Price

I have had direct engagement with the City Council members on numerous occasions over the last 18 years. I was a member of the City-School Liaison Committee several times during my two terms on the School Board and we worked collaboratively on various items, including library services and coordination, data base purchases, support of the library bond, exploring mental health and recreational services to support students, child care centers on school property,

advocating for additional athletic facilities, opening of Terman Middle School, supporting the modification of shuttle bus routes to better serve students at schools throughout Palo Alto.

I supported the library bond and have consistently sought opportunities for improved partnerships between the City and the PAUSD. During the early to mid 1990's, I was an alternate to the Comprehensive Plan Committee and a member of the Child Care Task Force (appointed by City Council). As President of Palo Alto Community Child Care Board, I also spoke to the council about the need for accessible, affordable quality childcare and the importance of City support of the child care subsidy program. As a Principal Planner in the City of Sunnyvale, I also spoke to the Palo Alto City Council on regional planning issues during the mid 1990's.

[K] [Greg Scharff](http://ElectGregScharff.com) : ElectGregScharff.com

I graduated Bowdoin College in Maine with a B.A. in economics and a J.D. from Columbia University School of Law in New York City. Through an interdisciplinary program, I also completed 18 credits at Columbia Business School. I've been a Palo Alto resident for over 20 years and have had my law practice just off California Avenue for almost 10 years. As the father of three children who've attended local schools, with my oldest just having left for college this year, I've been actively involved as a parent leader and understand that our schools are one of the great resources I want to protect. As an attorney and a Palo Alto resident, I have had extensive experience with land use issues, issues facing our local business community, and issues that affect the day-to-day lives of the people in our community. As an attorney, I fully understand the legislative process; how to draft an ordinance and the many legal issues that continually face our city. I love this community and am committed to preserving the wonderful quality of life that we have in Palo Alto.
