

President's Message

Ted Trakas

The most important, far reaching news in the neighborhood this summer has to be the election of Reed Williams as the new District 8 council representative.

In last month's newsletter, Mr. Williams gave responsible, 'neighbor friendly' answers to our candidate questions:

Question: Do you support a "no new billboards" ordinance for San Antonio which would prohibit construction of new billboards, or conversion of old style billboards to digital design? (Please answer by 'Yes' or 'No'.)

Answer: Yes

Question: Items are artificially put on 'fast track' and passed without real public scrutiny or input. Do you share this viewpoint? If so, what do you pledge to do to correct the problem?

Answer: Yes. Decisions made without transparency and due process destroy mutual respect and trust among all parties and kill responsible government. First, we must request that city staff, developers and zoning authorities provide sufficient time for volunteer citizen groups to understand and become involved in the decisions affecting their neighborhoods. Second, your Councilperson must work proactively to restore trust among all parties with early, continual, and respectful dialogue. Third, the five-signature memo method of accelerating items to the agenda should only be used in emergency situations and with proper notification to all citizens affected.

Question: Will you pledge not to put private and special interests above those of ordinary citizens? How will you work with neighborhood groups to protect quality of life of our neighborhoods?

Answer: Land use issues are a specific application of the open process discussed in question two. I pledge to protect the interest of all citizens. Designating citizens as ordinary, special, or private is divisive. Bridging these divides is a precondition to sustainable development in our neighborhoods. Your City Council representative must be perceived as intellectually and financially independent of all interest in order to have the credibility to eliminate distrust and facilitate desirable change in our neighborhoods. As your independent City Council representative, I will always strive to not only protect, but also improve the quality of life in your neighborhoods.

Question: Even in the area represented by our association, the urban blight of graffiti is becoming more pervasive. What new initiatives do you support to correct this and other Quality of Life problems?

Answer: Improving the quality of life in a neighborhood is a shared responsibility of the government and the citizens. The City must increase the expenditure for police, fire and EMS personnel and equipment. Increases must be made now while we are restricting expenditures in other areas of the City budget. We cannot wait for the economy to recover to protect our citizens and property. To assist the citizens, I propose regular working sessions around the district to inform the citizens and provide structure for their efforts to improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

Question: If you are elected, what other neighborhood problems will you work to solve?

Answer: We have many obvious problems in our neighborhoods such as traffic, crime, and emergency response times. All will require diligent attention. The question going into any difficult job is not just what, but how. Currently, problem solving in our City and Districts is on demand and reactionary. We are jumping from crises to crises. This must change. I spent a career transforming organizations from on-demand problem solving to planned and scheduled problem solving. It was successful in the private sector and is directly applicable to what we face in our City today.

Mr. Williams garnered a resounding majority votes in the runoff election in June and we look forward to working with him over the next 2 years.

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