



Why I am supporting Jarrett Smith

One of the take aways I got from the mayoral forum and several gatherings with Jarrett Smith, is that gnawing feeling that candidates make promises about projects, etc., that they know voters want to hear. While this is a “revelation of the obvious”, it is *not* what I hear from Jarrett.

Jarrett honestly (and painfully) is up front about what the new city manager is uncovering about our city budget, that the budget and our fiscal health are in trouble. Unless that focus is not handled properly, none of the “promises” a candidate makes about anything that involves expenditures can materialize.

One candidate said this:

The Rec Center replacement would be paid for via a developer partnership, possibly with a non-profit developer, and we would seek state and county assistance. The city would contribute the land and I think we could consider a property tax abatement.

Notice the terms, “would be paid for” via a partnership with a developer and agreement that doesn’t exist, “the city would contribute land” or “possibly with a non-profit”, possibly? Many of us like to hear the word, “non-profit”.

I think what I’m trying to say is that Jarrett’s focus is on bringing us together to discuss, argue, compromise and come up with *community* decisions without making pie in the sky promises. He views budget transparency that overshadows the operation of our community as a central issue and citizen participation is essential.

These past years have shown me how important experience and broader knowledge is to an elected office. Someone wrote me, in support of Talisha,

“A knock on her is that she’s Kate’s creature. That may have been true when she was part of the council under Kate, but Kate’s gone on the bigger things. I expect that a Talisha Searcy on her own will be able to face the oncoming challenges of our city.” This is one of the main reasons I do not support Talisha. She has shown for too many years, she has not listened to the majority of concerned citizens who pleaded before her. It’s hard to understand why this supporter is so sure Talisha won’t become someone else’s “creature”.

Talisha has promise, but I feel she is not quite ready for a position that requires a broad expertise and experience and the strength to be independent and objective.

Seth has an in-depth pulse on many of our city’s issues. I appreciate his commitment, passion and energy, but I believe he is a better advocate on the *outside*, than to be on the inside. We need his voice in our community.

We’ve watched Jarrett grow into his responsibilities since he was first elected to the City Council 10 years ago. Some folks don’t think he’s done much, but his style is not flamboyant, he doesn’t need his ego stroked, he has a quiet strength as a leader.

I was so impressed with how many people seconded his nomination (they just kept coming) from all walks of life in our community. That said a lot to me. His previous involvement in COLTA (Commission on Landlord Tenant Affairs) and that he and his family are renters, offers us a unique leadership perspective and who truly believes in rent stabilization and the need for affordable housing.

And, since council members have limited resources and other jobs, I'm sure all the issues brought to Jarrett by constituents could not be addressed but he does the best he can without making far reaching promises. The expectations of what council members can do ought to be re-evaluated to enable our reps to serve us more realistically.

Jarrett's experience, commitment to his principles that have shaped his vision for our beloved community, and the depth of his understanding of how we can, together work toward lifting us out of the financial downward direction we have been moving toward, is not made of unrealistic promises, but of a collaborative effort to together solve our problems in order to move forward.

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