

46th District Democrats General Meeting minutes
Olympic View Church, Seattle WA
May 17, 2007

Scott White called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Scott led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Scott explained the format for the Candidates' Forum. Candidates will make brief statements, then Q&A according to prepared questions. **Motion** to adopt this agenda and format, seconded and **approved** by voice vote.

Seattle Port Commissioner

Bob Edwards, Gael Tarleton, Thom McCann, Jack Block Jr., Alec Fisker

Statements

Bob Edwards. Bob thanked voters for electing him to this position. He said he flies small planes, and thinks of that as a metaphor for his public service. He served on other public bodies dealing with regional issues. After takeoff, he hit turbulence in terms of his elected offices. He voted against the 2002 tax increase. A high priority is moving goods and people.

Gael Tarleton. Gael says she is a Democrat running for Port Commissioner to change the way it does business, restoring trust and creating living wage jobs. Gael wants to bring a culture of accountability. She created a system at a local business to collect and deal with ethical problems. For 25 years, Gael worked on security trade and economic opportunities to the area. Gael listed some of her endorsements.

Jack Block Jr. Jack Block Jr. is a proud Democrat. The Port is a public resource of immense value, subsidized with public money. Most ports are self-funded and don't require public funding. Jack wants to improve accountability and make the Port self-sustaining. He has been a working longshoreman. His experience qualifies him for this position. He supports open public meetings and improved communication.

Thom McCann. Thom thanked the group. This is his first campaign event. He ran a restaurant at the Port. The Port needs reform. Thom wants greater transparency. The Port should use bio-fuels, and it should create family-jobs, not "Mc-Jobs." Thom wants to reduce and eliminate the Port tax. He is against the Alaska Way tunnel, and opposes the swap of the airport for the railroad right of way.

Alec Fisker. Alec thanked the group. Alec says he is in a tough race and asked for our support. Alec lives in the 46th District. He favors transparency at the Port, The "real" discussions should get out in the public. Alec talked about the air emission study.

Q1: Some believe the mission of the Port is to support economic growth, while others believe the mission is to publicly subsidize economic growth. Some believe the mission of the Port is to move people and freight, while others believe the mission is to develop valuable real estate holdings. What do you believe is (or should be) the mission of the Port?

Bob Edwards. About 115,000 jobs are directly related to the Port. It should be more environmentally friendly. We can have some of the cleanest air from the Port and have a healthy clean Port.

Gael Tarleton. The Port's mission is to create and sustain living wage jobs, and be an economic engine, contributing to the community.

Jack Block Jr. The Port creates economic growth and development related to trade and transportation. We should get back to that core mission, and not do real estate development.

Thom McCann. Trade is responsible for 700,000 jobs. The Port helps create those jobs through transportation infrastructure. The Port manages community resources, like marinas.

Alec Fiskén. The mission of the Port is to run a great efficient airport and an environmentally sound seaport. It should be an advocate for maritime jobs.

Q2. A local newspaper columnist recently wrote that the Port of Seattle made an \$85 million profit last year. However, the Port of Seattle levies a property tax on the citizens of King County, while many other more profitable west coast ports receive little or no property tax subsidy. Should the Port continue to be subsidized by taxpayers? If yes, why? If no, how would you end the subsidy?

Jack Block Jr. Tax dollars should not subsidize operations. The bond authority is meant for growth and capital projects.

Bob Edwards. The tax rate is actually coming down. Operations are not subsidized by taxes. Taxes fund port jobs, apprenticeships and he supports that arrangement.

Gael Tarleton. Gael supports the tax levy because it is an important part of our transportation infrastructure. Predictable income is needed for planning investments, move freight, and move people. Money is needed to improve, repair and operate the Port.

Thom McCann. The airport has very high fees. Other Ports operate without tax subsidy. Subsidies are growing rather than shrinking.

Alec Fiskén. Alec would phase out the tax levy over 10 years. Large customers can afford to pay their full fair share of Port costs.

Yes / No Questions

Question	Edwards	Tarleton	Block	McCann	Fiskén
Are you a Democrat?	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Member of any other party in the last year?	No	No	No	No	No
Support Clean Elections - full public campaign funding for qualified candidates who take little private money?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support RTID ballot measure?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Favor trading Burlington Northern route for King County Airport?

Yes Yes Yes No No

If the trade takes place, would you support moving commercial airline traffic (Southwest Airlines) from Sea-Tac to Boeing Field?

No No No No No

Based on what you know today, in your judgment, was it ethical for Port Commissioner Pat Davis to sign the memo approving the payout to former Port CEO Mic Dinsmore?

No No No No No

City Council Position #3

Venus Velazquez, Bruce Harrell, John Manning, Al Runte

Statements

Bruce Harrell. Bruce's father was a PCO. Bruce is a labor lawyer. He was born and raised in Seattle. Transportation, trade, affordable housing are important issues. He worked with Teamsters, and came from a working class family. He is proud that his work helps people. He spoke of his endorsements.

John Manning. John has a new vision of public safety. By that he means an investment in people, schools among other services. John walked the streets of Seattle as a law enforcement officer. He raised his family in Rainier valley and knows the challenges families face. We don't have the resources we need on the street. We need to bring back Community Service officers who work with residents in non-enforcement situations.

Venus Velazquez. Venus is a mother of two kids who go to Orca Elementary. Peter Steinbrueck was the last City Council member who was raising kids in Seattle. Venus worked on social change and social justice. She committed her life to seniors, children and families. She is results-oriented and gets things done.

Al Runte. Al filed yesterday, so he thanked the group for letting him speak this evening. Al said we are beginning to lose our middle class character. Al is progressive, and would oppose the parking garage at Woodland Park zoo. Al says developers should pay their fair share. We need City services, good schools and safe neighborhoods.

Q1. There is a perception by some that relations between the City and the neighborhoods have deteriorated in recent years. Citing the Northgate South Lot and Thorton Creek as examples here in north Seattle, many residents feel their voices are not heard, or it required a protracted organizing effort to be heard. If elected or re-elected, how will you work with neighborhoods on similar projects in the future to ensure that residents have the opportunity to engage in a meaningful public process?

Venus Velazquez. Work with neighborhoods. Venus was a neighborhood planner with the City for 4 years. She is familiar with the challenges of land use, affordable housing and growth in a neighborhood. She would take neighborhood plans to the neighborhoods.

John Manning. John sees this as a perception rather than reality. Public safety will create a better environment that promotes development. Neighborhood plans should be acknowledged before making new plans.

Bruce Harrell. To engage neighborhoods, the first thing is to listen. Many meetings involve arguing. Bruce uses what he calls aggressive listening where he tries to articulate the views of others. We must agree on an agenda with specific criteria. Measure and track progress against those goals.

Al Runte. City Hall is disconnected from neighborhoods. For example, a four-story condominium project will have units at \$600,000. This distorts the family character and makes it hard for middle class residents to stay.

Q2. Decreasing open space requirements for commercial/mixed use development and reducing parking requirements are touted as policies that help to increase density. Please explain how you see these policies fitting with other goals, including having adequate open space and amenities which make neighborhoods attractive?

Bruce Harrell. This issue gets to the core of the issue of affordable housing. Inclusive zoning and incentive zoning are tools to help with this. Green spaces and open spaces are needed to maintain balance.

Manning. Take care of other priorities before increasing density. Parking, traffic and an adequate transportation system must be built first, to get people out of their vehicles. John would listen to what the community has to say about that.

Venus Velazquez. This is the core of neighborhood planning. Growth should be targeted for the city center. We should preserve single family housing. We should balance growth with existing infrastructure - match to projected growth.

Al Runte. A progressive city recognizes that the city beautiful and country beautiful are both needed. Homes need green spaces. Clichés will not solve the problems, Land use codes should be enforced.

Q3. What do you see as the top two (2) transportation challenges facing Seattle today? How do you propose that we solve those problems? Please be specific.

Venus Velazquez. SR-520 will be a bigger battle and will be more contentious than the Viaduct. Venus' second priority is to stop using cars as much as we do. That means increase transit and provide alternatives - busses, streetcars, trains. She would work to pass RTID. The Viaduct will not be solved for a long time.

Bruce Harrell. The Viaduct is one. Bruce voted "no and no." Bruce would regionalize this by working on traffic flow beyond the viaduct. Bruce wants a surface solution. SR-520 is his other priority.

Al Runte. Pot-holes should be fixed. The bond issue will start that process. Al likes more progressive rail routes. Rail around the lake would be a good solution.

John Manning. Lower Metro fares, provide better connections and people will get out of their cars. John opposes the Viaduct Tunnel. He would put off replacing the Viaduct until it becomes more urgent.

Yes / No Questions

Question	Velazquez	Harrell	Manning	Runte
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Are you a Democrat?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Member of any other party in the last year?	No	No	No	No
Do you favor putting more beat officers on the street in 2007 and funded within the current budget?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support RTID ballot measure?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Do you support full public campaign funding for qualified candidates who agree to take no or little private money for their campaigns?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Have you supported a partisan candidate other than a Democrat (i.e. Republican or Green) for office in the past five years (since 2002)?	No	No	No	No
Do you favor decreasing open space requirements for commercial development and reduced parking requirements to increase density?	No	No	No	No

City Council Position #7

Tim Burgess, David Della

Statements

Tim Burgess Tim believes the City Council needs a new voice, focused on common sense. Tim believes David Della has been ineffective. Tim is chair of his community council. He wants to preserve the historic character of the neighborhoods. He has served as a police officer. Tim wants solid balanced economic growth by creating jobs for working class people and everyone else. Tim has run his own business.

David Della. Dave is running for his second term. Dave and his family were a working poor family. He worries we are pushing out middle class people. He wants to keep Seattle affordable and livable. He lowered electricity rates for the first time in a decade. Dave supports economic growth, affordable housing, and better transportation. He wants streets to be safe for pedestrians.

Q1. In the course of balancing the budget and deal making, it turns out that you are the deciding vote on how to allocate the last \$6 million of the budget. However, there is support to only spend the funds on: A) Police, B) Human Services, or C) Street Repairs. Further, the way the votes play out, that last \$6 million must be spread out in lump sums of \$3 m, \$2 m and \$1 m. Again, your vote determines how the City spends the last \$6 million in the budget. Which gets \$3 m, \$2 m and \$1 m? Why?

Tim Burgess. Urgent need to hire additional police officers. Then human services, then streets.

David Della. The priority at the City Council is to put people first. No one should fall through the cracks. Public safety comes next. Streets can get help from the state and other sources.

Q2. As our city grows and the economy grows, working people continue to be priced out of the Seattle housing market. What policies can the city adopt to promote affordable housing for people of *all income levels*, especially low-income individuals?

Tim Burgess. We are at an emergency point for affordable housing. First, waive development fees for anyone pledging to build affordable housing. Shorten the permitting process if you build affordable housing. Use tax abatement much more aggressively.

David Della. Work with state for zoning flexibility. Make more use of inclusive zoning or incentive zoning. Streamline the permit process. Create opportunities for working families.

Q3. Most all city operations are located under the Mayor in the Executive Branch. These include a wide range of services such as Police, Fire, City Light, Dept of Neighborhoods, and many others. Please describe your view of the Council’s role in providing oversight of the Executive Branch.

Tim Burgess. The Council does not stand up and exercise its responsibilities. The Council needs the willingness to use it's authority.

David Della. David favors strong oversight over all City departments. David insists on a strategic business plan, with regular reporting on progress toward those plans.

Yes / No Questions

Question	Burgess	Della	Clark
Are you a Democrat?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Member of any other party in the last year?	No	No	No

Do you favor putting more beat officers on the street in 2007 and funded within the current budget?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support RTID ballot measure?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Do you support full public campaign funding for qualified candidates who agree to take no or little private money for their campaigns?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Have you supported a partisan candidate other than a Democrat (i.e. Republican or Green) for office in the past five years (since 2002)?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Do you favor decreasing open space requirements for commercial development and reduced parking requirements to increase density?	Yes	Yes	Yes

City Council Position #1, 5, 9

Jean Godden, Tom Rasmussen

Statements

Jean Godden Jean lives in the 46th District. When she left her job at the newspaper, she joined the 46th and became a PCO, then ran for office. It's been a great experience. She chairs the energy and environment committee. She lowered electric rates.

Tom Rasmussen Tom ran for City Council, saying he would be open and accessible. He's made improvements and added services for seniors. Tom told a story about providing water for people in need, and how he established an emergency fund. Tom worries about aggressive driving. He started a program with "red-light" cameras to catch cars running through intersections.

Q1. In the past few years, the voters have shut down the monorail, opposed rebuilding the viaduct, and opposed replacing the viaduct with a tunnel. Further, polling suggests that voters would have opposed replacing the viaduct with the surface option. How do you interpret these messages from the voters? And what are your top priorities for transportation? Please be specific.

Jean Godden When initiatives come to public votes, it means leaders have not made clear messages about their plans. The City must work collaboratively with the State and County on transportation to move people and goods. Stakeholders must be involved in solving problems.

Tom Rasmussen Voters want elected officials to lead and listen to them. Officials look at the facts and make decisions. Funding for public transit is Tom's highest priority.

Yes / No Questions

Question	Godden	Rasmussen
Are you a Democrat?	Yes	Yes
Member of any other party in the last year?	No	No
Do you favor putting more beat officers on the street in 2007 and funded within the current budget?	Yes	Yes
Support RTID ballot measure?	Yes	Yes
Do you support full public campaign funding for qualified candidates who agree to take no or little private money for their campaigns?	Yes	Yes
Have you supported a partisan candidate other than a Democrat (i.e. Republican or Green) for office in the past five years (since 2002)?	Yes	Yes
Do you favor decreasing open space requirements for commercial development and reduced parking requirements to increase density?	Yes	?

City Council

Sally Clark

Statement

Sally Clark reviewed some of her accomplishments and priorities. The Bridging the Gap levy gives Seattle opportunities and Sally is looking ahead to those plans.

Q1 - The City has been pursuing a pro-growth/high-density vision for Seattle. However, decreasing open space requirements for commercial/mixed use development and reducing parking requirements in an effort to increase density can have a negative impact on neighborhoods. Please explain how you see policies supporting increased density fitting with other goals, including having adequate open space and amenities which make neighborhoods attractive.

Sally Clark. Decrease parking to change traffic. Developers should get greener. Plans should understand the neighborhood and fit in better.

School Board,

Sally Soriano, Peter Maier, Darlene Flynn, Sherry Carr, Lisa Steubing, Brita Butler-Wall, Harium Martin-Morris

Statements

Sally Soriano. Sally went on the Board 4 years ago. She favors strong accountability and supports the Public Sector. Charter schools lost in a statewide vote. Sally has a background in industrial hygiene, which helped when we found lead in the water in schools. Sally worked hard on the WASL in the state legislature.

Peter Maier. Peter is a longtime PCO in the 36th District. Peter graduated from Seattle Public Schools, as did his children. Peter says we need leaders who are focused and steady. He also worked against charter schools. Accountability will build confidence in the schools. He chaired Schools First! in the last two campaigns. He is a PTA parent and has worked on the class-size initiative I-728.

Darlene Flynn. Darlene has not decided whether she will run for re-election. She has questions she would ask such as, "What is the cause of inequitable opportunities?" Answer: Unequal resources, differential teacher quality and discipline.

"What is the School Board's role in fighting inequity?" Answer: School tax reform at the State level.

Sherry Carr. Sherry has two children in Seattle Schools. Sherry lives in the 46th District. She realized her school was failing. Sherry was PTA President. They started a Montessori program, which reversed the school's problem. They have a wait-list, now. Not every school has the resources they had. Sherry helped parents at other schools improve their schools. She found the School Board unhelpful in those efforts. She would refocus the Board on academic outcomes and parent involvement.

Lisa Steubing. Lisa reviewed her endorsements from many political figures. The Board needs to get back to Board basics with a simple measure of when they are doing a good job. Only about 50% of 9th graders graduate. Lisa has studied this problem. She says we should treat our teachers as professionals. Schools should be used as part of the community. Teacher - family - community.

Brita Butler-Wall. Brita has not decided whether she will run for re-election. The School Board has three responsibilities. The budget was in trouble, but now has a surplus. Brita helped design the process for school closures. Second, is to set policy around student health and safety, technical education, community advisory committees. Third, the Board supervises the Superintendent. Brita is happy with the new Superintendent.

Harium Martin-Morris. Harium is running because he believes every child in the City deserves a quality education. Harium was a kindergarten teacher, then he taught second grade. He was a national consultant on school reform issues. One of his children graduated from Hale last year. His daughter will go to Roosevelt next year. He is a second generation PTA President. He went to every School Board meeting for 5 years. Seattle has great resources.

Q1. For nearly two decades the school district has discussed the issues of disproportionality by race and ethnicity in the achievement and discipline gap. Yet many recommendations are yet to be implemented. What would you propose the school district do to address and correct this problem?

Darlene Flynn. What do race and class have to do with it? We have just scratched the surface. Race and class are strong factors, even if that makes people uncomfortable. We attracted a Superintendent who knows a lot about closing that gap. Leaders must be comfortable and willing to face these issues.

Sherry Carr. Sherry agrees the new Superintendent will be an asset in this respect. We should also benchmark other districts that have had success. We will need courage to face the issues and rebalance the resources to

address the issue.

Lisa Steubing. Lisa encourages us to look at 5 schools chosen at random. We do not fund our schools equally. Every child deserves a school that is clean, bright and well cared for. Chairs, books and other resources must be available. We need to find a way to make schools welcome. Co-locating human services on campus helps merge schools with communities.

Harium Martin-Morris. Think of the gap in terms of poverty or socio-economics but not necessarily race. What can the City do to support those children to help them do better? Start with attendance, for instance. Strip away those root causes and the achievement gap will close significantly.

Brita Butler-Wall. Brita has studied this for many years. People love learning; the educator's challenge is to remove barriers to learning. Removing junk food was a step in the right direction. Racial barriers still exist, as do misunderstandings based on cultural differences. Gaps exist at age 5, before children even start school. Give the kids credit for their strengths.

Peter Maier. To close the gap, schools and the entire community must provide resources. Families must put high priority on education. School Board members have control over what the schools will do. Schools with poor achievement will need improvement plans.

Sally Soriano. This issue has been front and center in her work on the Board. Some schools are closing the achievement gap. Teachers in those schools can show others what works well in this respect. The new Superintendent uses a diagnostic test that will be valuable in identifying where problems are.

Q2 Studies show that parent and community involvement with children improve their chances in succeeding in school. How can the school district promote and foster partnerships among schools, families, communities, the city and the county?

Brita Butler-Wall. Family partnerships are very important in getting better outcomes. The community advisory committees are also good in this respect. We need better means to reach people in their homes to promote involvement in education.

Harium Martin-Morris. Use the resources we have now. The 46th District has UW, Seattle Pacific and great high schools nearby. Every school has a computer lab. We could open these labs for after school programs with community involvement.

Sally Soriano. Sally observed a school program for failing students, where people from the community came in and helped tutor 8th graders. At the end of three weeks, the students have improved significantly. We need authentic relationships with the community with real interactions.

Peter Maier. Parental involvement in the schools is really important. We need to invite parents and the community in. This event is a case in point. Athletic events, computer labs can also be used this way.

Sherry Carr. Find common ground with key stakeholders. After-school programs and supplemental help are ways people from the community can come in. Business in the area can be stakeholders, too - mentoring programs for instance. The School Board has paralyzed Parent Advisory Committees.

Lisa Steubing. Schools can be great public spaces. English as a second language could be taught on campus, where adults and children could work together. Closing buildings reduces the connections to the neighborhoods.

Darlene Flynn. We could have these conversations school by school. Darlene would focus on fundamental change in funding at the State level. The State underfunds all schools, then blames the parents and local School Boards.

Q3. Given that Seattle has one of the highest private school enrollments of any city in the U.S., what can the School Board do to attract more students back into the Seattle Public Schools while at the same time addressing the inequities that exist in our current educational system?

Sally Soriano. Address inequities first. Identify where help is needed. Go to the legislature, and raise the levy lid.

Peter Maier. Steady budgets for planning. Build strong schools throughout. Do better to hold students in the middle school years. Recruit better at kindergarten level.

Darlene Flynn. Private school enrollment has been flat from 20 years. Affluent families go to private schools. We often make concessions to keep kids in public schools. We need more state funding.

Sherry Carr. Offer desirable academic offerings. Dual language, Montessori programs for instance. Predictability of school assignments would help, too. Make sure programs are available across the City. Invest in areas to improve academic outcomes.

Lisa Steubing. The priority is to graduate the ones we have, not bring more students into the system. Home schools, and religious schools are not going to go away.

Brita Butler-Wall Seattle has good schools. We need decent program evaluations. Seattle schools give a better education than private schools.

Harium Martin-Morris. The schools should be where the people are. Don't overcrowd the schools we have.

Yes / No Questions

Question	Soriano	Maier	Flynn	Carr	Steubing	Butler-Wall	Martin-Morris
Are you a Democrat?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Member of any other party in the last year?	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Have you supported a partisan candidate other than a Democrat	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

(i.e. Republican or Green) for office in the past five years (since 2002)?

Do you support moving to an appointed rather than elected Board?

No No No No No No No

Do you believe the district should fund and support 6 classes per day for all high school students?

Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes

Do you support increasing the number of high school students who use Metro bus service to get to and from school?

Yes Yes Yes Yes No Yes Yes

Do you support Charter Schools?

No No No No No No No

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Stan Sorscher