

Ward 6 Staff



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Council Member



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Teresa Smith



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Ward 6 Newsletter

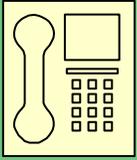
AUGUST 18, 2010

A Message From Steve

Tempting fate, I agreed to a Friday the 13th guest appearance on Bill Buckmaster's great show Arizona Illustrated. The segment is just under 15 minutes - if you'd like to 'tune in' after the fact click the following link <http://www.tucsonweekly.com/TheRange/archives/2010/08/13/friday-roundtable-councilman-steve-kozachik>. We covered a wide range of topics, many of which are familiar topics to this newsletter in recent weeks. Here's a summary of the more important local issues on Mayor and Council's plate.

The RTA/Sun Tran transfer is still unresolved. As if there weren't enough issues between the RTA and the City to sort out, now we also have Five Intergovernmental Agreements to work through with the goal of coming to agreement on the financial participation by each party in support of services such as weeknight, weekend, express and Para Transit routes. All spring Mayor and Council have been working under the assumption that financial commitments under which the RTA had been operating with respect to those services would carry over into the fy'11 budget year. We now know that there is a need to resolve mutual subsidy levels - and we're left with a \$3.7 million gap in our budget. I have written to the RTA membership and expressed the desire to continue talks until we come to a satisfactory resolution. As stated by Mayor Lynne Skelton, we need to take a step back, let cooler heads prevail and come back to the table ready to work out a solution. In the interim, I have asked the City Attorney to meet with the RTA attorney and find a way to resolve the larger "Maintenance of Effort" dispute that exists between us and them. Specifically, the attorney's are \$31 million apart in their opinion of how much the City is obligated to subsidize the transit system. Until that issue is resolved, the ability to successfully conclude any agreement on whether or not to transfer the system to RTA for operations is severely hampered.

Proposition 400 is the sales tax increase proposal that will appear on the November ballot. I have been vocal in my opposition to asking for a tax increase until we have made further cuts in the operating budget, added more effective cost recovery measures and thereby shown the taxpayers that Mayor and Council are out ahead of the ballot measure, leading in living within our means. We will likely need to make more cuts simply to achieve a balanced fy'11 budget. For that reason, I have continued to suggest ways to chip away at the existing budget; cuts to General Fund operating budgets, increased cost recovery at Parks and Recreation, increased bus fares with the proceeds going towards deficit mitigation, and more. The City Manager, via the Citizen's Core Tax Committee is



Important Phone Numbers

Tucson Police
Department
911 or 791-4444
nonemergency

Mayor & Council
Comment Line
791-4700

Neighborhood
Resources
791-4605

Park Wise
791-5071

Water Issues
791-3242

Pima County Animal
Control
243-5900

Street Maintenance
791-3154

Development
Services
791-4505

Southwest Gas
889-1888

Gas Emergency/
Gas Leaks
889-1888

West Nile Virus
Hotline
243-7999

Environment
Service
791-3171

Graffiti Removal
792-2489

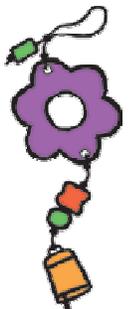
Continued: A Message From Steve

proposing a 15% across the board cut to all operating budgets if the sales tax measure fails. While he and I have a significant difference of opinion on the wisdom of that approach, in fairness to him, and so that you each have the opportunity to hear all sides of the issue ahead of the election, we will be hosting a Town Hall at the Ward 6 office in order to let Mr. Letcher and his staff present their proposal. The Town Hall will be on September 16th @ 6:30pm - please mark your calendars and plan on attending. An informed electorate is the cornerstone of our system - this event is a part of reaching that goal. We will also address Proposition 401 / the Charter Amendments. That part of the evening will simply be informational; that is, introducing the Four proposed changes. They're pretty straight forward so my guess is that the bulk of the conversation will be sales tax related.

At the last Council meeting, we were presented with what was represented to be the Guaranteed Maximum Price for the proposed Convention Center Hotel. I say 'represented to be' because there will be additional costs beyond what the developers have put before us if the City and Rio Nuevo District elect to move forward with bonding for the project. Some of those added costs relate to simply putting together a bond package (approximately \$250,000), having to rebid the subcontractor costs (the existing bids expire on September 1- estimated cost for rebidding is in excess of \$100,000) and having the feasibility study updated (cost in the \$15,000 to \$20,000 range.) When I inquire as to the funding source for these and other charges, the answer is "bond proceeds." That's taxpayer debt. We've studied this thing to death. I will be urging the Mayor and Council to encourage the Rio Nuevo District Board to make a recommendation to us as soon as they are able so we can stop the bleeding of spending on preparatory work and make a decision. As owner of the hotel, the District needs to take the lead on this. That is what I will be urging. This is still a fully publicly funded project. Given that, every dime we spend in this decision making process comes off from your kitchen table. In fairness to the taxpayers, it's time to fish or cut bait on this.

Now for the Fun Stuff!

This Saturday you can take your frustrations out on me and benefit Ben's Bells. What an absolutely heart rending, and at the same time uplifting story. Check it out at <http://www.bensbells.org>. At 5pm on Saturday the 21st, I'll be the target at the Dunk Tank located at 316 N. 4th - all proceeds going to support the Ben's Bells program. I'm so confident that none of you have a good enough throwing arm to drop me in the drink, I won't even be bringing a towel.



Did you know that this month Tucson is celebrating our birthday? There are a ton of events around the city celebrating our unique history and culture. You can find them all listed at www.tucsonsbirthday.org



And finally, this week you have a truly eclectic choice of back to school entertainment; At The Fox - Thursday the 19th, Jim Messina and Richie Furas Band Concert Saturday the 21st, Road to Rio movie.

At The Screening Room - Friday the 20th a very timely showing of "Liberty" - an engaging show that deals with a Prince William County, Virginia battle over immigration policy. At The Loft - these each run through Thursday the 19th - The Girl Who Played with Fire (not for the feint of heart), MicMacs, and Winter's Bone.

The Rialto has a variety of 'metal' bands on the 20th, Bodies Exhibit continues through the week and Museum of Contemporary Art continues it's Made in Tucson, Born in Tucson, Live in Tucson exhibit that celebrates local artists.

There you have it - something for every taste to celebrate this final week before the start of the new University school year. Enjoy your last week, and support our Ward 6 creative class.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Kozachik".

Steve Kozachik
Council Member, Ward 6
<http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/ward6>

Come visit us online at www.tucsonaz.gov/ward6