

Ward 6 Staff



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Ward 6 – Newsletter

A Message from Steve

AUGUST 31, 2011

The Primary election is over, but it seems there's an on-going felt need to recreate history and in the process assign what are intended to be unflattering labels to anybody who would have offered alternative options on the night we took the vote to try this new "all mail-in vote" process – me in particular. So let me make a few comments about mail-in, registered Independents and transparency.

To refresh the memory of some, the night the Mayor and Council voted to adopt the new "all mail-in" voting system, this is what occurred:

- a. We held an one hour public hearing during which the speakers split nearly 50/50 'for' and 'against' the new system,
- b. The prior system had 11-13 polling places per ward to which a voter could go on Election Day to cast a ballot. It also offered the option of voting by mail
- c. The City has had a hard time staffing and locating suitable polling places. I conceded that point during the discussion after the public hearing.
- d. Immediately after the public hearing was closed, a motion was read by one council member, a second to the motion was made by another council member, and supporting comments were made by a third council member.
- e. The motion was to adopt an "all mail-in" vote process that retained only one polling place per ward
- f. I offered a compromise motion; retain the hybrid system, but recognizing the difficulties and costs associated with operating 11-13 polling places, reduce that number to "no more than five polling places per ward" (compared to the "one per ward" option that was on the table). I did not get a second to the motion
- g. I offered a second substitute motion – let the voters decide at the ballot box which system they preferred. That motion also failed.

So, the new system passed by a 6-1 vote.

If the goal is to increase voter turn out, and if the new process achieves that, there's some merit to what the Mayor and Council adopted. It still ignores the wishes of many voters to have a convenient way to go to the polls on election day, but that is lost in the glee over the incremental increase in participation, to the extent that that occurs.



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

Planning and
Development
Services 791-5550

Southwest Gas

889-1888

Gas Emergency/
Gas Leaks

889-1888

West Nile Virus

Hotline

243-7999

Environment
Service

791-3171

Graffiti Removal

792-2489

AZ Game & Fish

628-5376

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According to the City election web site on primary night, 14.66% of registered voters cast ballots in the primary election. In round numbers, that's about 39,000 ballots cast.

In an article that appeared in the Sunday Arizona Daily Star, they drew conclusions of cause and effect that any first year statistics student would question;

Specifically, they predicted a 20% response rate to the mail-in ballots, despite the fact that the arithmetic in the article didn't add up correctly, but that's a detail. After all, they're only voters' ballots that we're talking about. This was 'nearly double' the usual 12.5% for a Mayoral primary. I know just more arithmetic.

The article correctly pointed out that there was a contested Ward 1 primary as well as a write-in candidacy for Mayor. Neither of those was cited as a possible reason for the turn-out. A Stat 101 student would call those potential confounding variables.

But I'm willing to offer the olive-branch of consenting to their conclusion (my olive tree is looking rather bare after the last few weeks' pruning) and simply say that we should not be satisfied with fewer than 1 in 5 people participating in our electoral process, regardless of how it is conducted. That means that 4 out of 5 need to be given a better reason to participate than we are giving to them. Is that a function of the quality of the candidates, the current image of local government, people being fed up with hard line partisanship, or what?

I don't pretend to have the answer, but it's something that we as elected employees of the electorate ought to be concerned about.

Another issue that seems to have gotten under the skin of some was when I suggested that the City correct misinformation it had on it's web site; specifically, that every registered voter would automatically receive a ballot. That was incorrect and after the City refused to make the correction; I took the initiative to publicly advise registered Independents that if they wanted to receive a ballot, they should not rely on the web site information. Once that happened, the City relented and took down the incorrect information.

What is now being argued is that by virtue of a post card having been mailed out last May, everybody knew the rules of the game. True, to a point. My point was simply that with a new system in place, make sure that all of the information you're giving out is clear and correct.

According to the Star story, in the Primary, 3,400 Independents returned ballots. Although the data on the City web site does not break that number out, assuming it's accurate, that's 3,400 out of over 39,000 ballots having been reported returned, less than 10% of those participating. But Independents represent over one-third of the electorate. Earlier in the week the Star had reported that over 9,000 Independents had requested ballots. So two-thirds of those who requested didn't send them back? That's a problem.



Important Phone Numbers

Senator John
McCain (R)
520-670-6334

Senator Jon Kyl (R)
520-575-8633

Congresswoman
Gabrielle Giffords
(D)
(8th District)
520-881-3588

Congressman
Raul Grijalva (D)
(7th District)
520-622-6788

Governor Janice
Brewer (R)
Governor of Arizona
602-542-4331
Toll free:
1-800-253-0883

State Legislators

Toll Free
Telephone:
1-800-352-8404
Internet:
www.azleg.gov

Mayor Bob Walkup
791-4201

City Infoguide
[http://
cms3.tucsonaz.gov/
infoguide](http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/infoguide)

Frankly, even if the 40,000 ballots cast number is right, in a community of over 500,000, that's nothing over which we should claim bragging rights. None of us should be happy with, or proud of, these results. When we're pleased with one registered voter in five participating in our election process, far fewer than that even bothering to register to vote, it should cause both parties, as well as the City staff, to do some soul searching to try to identify the reasons.

Which brings me to the final point:

Transparency – that's the cloud hanging over both the election process and how we have been perceived to be running the City. When half of the people speaking at the public hearing voiced a desire to exercise their voting franchise in person, by secret ballot, there's a reason for that that we should try to ferret out. When the City restricts all comments to the media to one point of contact, that's a problem. Regardless of the quality of that individual, he cannot be an expert on Police, Fire, Water, Environmental Services, I.T., Finance, or any of the other myriad aspects of the City operations. It smacks of controlling the message when the experts in the field are not allowed to go on camera. When the City Manager has to issue a plea to City Staff to make sure he knows what's going on "from the bottom up" but through chains of command, as he did in a memo this week, that raises a clear concern that he lacks the information he needs to properly manage the organization.

In the past week I have been told several times that my being accessible to the media bothers both staff and some politicians. My answer is simple. This is local government. Both staff and other elected officials are your neighbors. People have a right to know what's going on, how we're spending their money, and where we stand on issues. This applies to both staff and what I earlier called elected employees. My message to those who are troubled by my being accessible is simple. If you object to my opening myself up to the media, you can join me by doing three simple things:

- a. Answer your phone
- b. Do your homework
- c. Have something worth while to say when you answer the call. Don't dance because people see through that and they're tired of it.

I used the word "disenfranchise" when suggesting that to the extent Independents were being sent the wrong message by the City web site, they were not being equally included in the election process. And yet, there's another form of disenfranchisement. That comes with taxpayers feeling unable to reach their local government, and taxpayers feeling that their local government is no longer accountable to them. I believe that accounts for at least some portion of the sad voter participation data and it's something we can, and should take seriously, at both the City staff and elected levels.

By way of example.

I have been clear in stating my feeling that we need to begin to think about some leadership changes.

That is not a novel concept. Recently in cities such as Stockton, North Las Vegas, Galveston County, Corbin, Ky., Centennial, Colorado, and more, they have felt that it was

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time to transition into new leadership. Sometimes, it's just time. These are some of the comments given relative to changes in some of those locales:

- "Political turmoil and battles with firefighters"
- "Stepping down as city manager for personal reasons"
- "I just felt it was time"
- "She began discussing her resignation a few weeks ago with individual city Councilmembers"
- "I will leave after the city is on a well-defined path to get where it needs to be," he told the council members. "I know where the blame lies, whether it should or it shouldn't... All I ask is you let me (resign) with dignity, with a chance to correct what's gone on."

I draw your attention particularly to the last quote. Following on the heels of :

- a. The City Manager's Office recommending we move forward negotiating time lines and preparing bond packages for a \$200M hotel that was always 100% public sector money.
- b. Recommending in initial budget considerations across the board reductions of 15%, including police, fire and the 911 dispatch system operations.
- c. Contending technical issues with the 911 dispatch system were resolved early on and most of what was left were operator error or training issues, among the many other improperly reported elements of that whole affair.
- d. And now – ParkWise. Let's be absolutely clear. The lack of management controls led to significant loss of taxpayer money, an inability to track who has, or has had keys to our parking meters, an audit system that has been inoperable or non-existent and therefore of no value to TPD attempts to investigate, a "hostile work environment" (described as such by workers), and on it goes.

Every penny that was lost belongs to the taxpayers. TPD investigators didn't have a prayer of finding the person or people who stole the ParkWise money with the set of facts they were given.

If an organization suffers incident after incident, the correct answer for the CEO is not to continually point the finger at mid management or line workers accusing them of everything from not knowing how to do their jobs to "leaking" information to the media. In the private sector, the Board of Directors has a right to know how the firm is being managed. No less so in the public sector, but there the Board of Directors is the taxpayers. The job of the local government is not to hide information from the public. And yet, if all you do is to snip off the tail of a snake, it just keeps growing back. If all a manager does is shift blame onto lower level workers, the problem reappears in a new form later.

To resolve this seeming penchant for one embarrassment after another, it is simply appropriate to look to the top. To regain the public trust, sometimes it's just time.

I'm not going to hide behind saying the safe thing in order to avoid saying the right

thing. There's far too much jockeying going on for trying to find a way to take credit for the decisions we make. That should not matter. If you see a good proposal, support it regardless of where it comes from. Be a part of a solution. Yes, it's time to begin the process of changing leadership at the top of the City food chain. A Transition can, and should, be made in a professional and dignified manner. I'll support suggestions to that end.

And to the point of transparency, I want to welcome John C. Scott back to the radio. Consider this a "soft announcement," his station and he will be doing the hard marketing of the new station and time slot in the very near future. His show has been missed.

Centennial Birthday

While the City Manager's office is on topic, a few brief thoughts on the Best Fest celebration that I've written about recently. This is the Arizona Birthday celebration that is being promoted in Prescott, Phoenix and in Tucson. The trouble is that their original dates directly conflicted with numerous other previously scheduled events in our downtown area.

In order to ensure that nobody's event would be stepping on any others, I have been asking the City Managers Office to get our local event organizers directly involved in the conversation. The short message is that finally, they're now engaged and that the Best Fest event has moved its date into January. But there's still the issue of them competing with our local event organizers for the small-ish pool of sponsorship dollars needed to fund events such as Tucson Meet Yourself (TMY) and others. For example, TMY has been declined sponsorship by at least one major sponsor who is now funding the Centennial Celebration. That is of course the decision of the individual sponsors, but our local event (TMY) is still in need of finding at least \$30,000 more to cover their expenses for the 2011 festival. I cannot say the degree to which being brought to the table late in the game played a role, but it certainly didn't help and it certainly raised the ire of numerous other local event promoters who felt similarly out of the loop.

While the Best Fest is a nice idea and nice event, it is one-time and to the extent that it is poaching sponsorship dollars away from those who are heavily invested in our own on-going local events, more coordination and conversation needs to occur. Those dollars belong in Tucson, not Maricopa County. The City Manager's office should be proactive, and inclusive of our local event promoters in achieving that end.

Cox Cable License

At the next Mayor and Council meeting we will hold a public hearing on the renewal of the Cox Communications cable license agreement. The primary sticking point in the discussion will be how we allocate the City Channels. The number we have to work with is prescribed by a new State law. We cannot compel Cox to exceed that number. We are not in a position, even if we wanted to, to declare Cox in breach of their contract. And due to the need to stay competitive in the marketplace, Cox is not going to sell us an extra Tier 1 channel to add to our mix.

So what is in front of us will be a decision on which non-premium channels to allocate. One should certainly be the City's own Channel 12. That leaves several competing for the remaining basic channel. All I've been hearing from are the supporters of Access Television. Failing some competing voice, why would I suggest that we do otherwise?

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Cox is a major player in the community. They financially support hundreds of civic, cultural, educational, environmental and human services events and service providers. They are direct supporters of numerous events that are particularly meaningful to our Hispanic heritage: Chicanos Por La Causa's Esperanza Awards, Hispanic Heritage Month, Tucson International Mariachi Conference, LULAC Educators Awards, and more. Their support of Primavera Foundation, a nomination for Diverse Corporation of the Year by the United Latino Business Coalition, receipt of two recent awards for Excellence in Multi-Cultural Marketing, and having been named Best Operator for Women all speak to how they are invested in what makes our community rich in who we are.

Understand that for Cox to continue to grow and be able to make long term commitments to investors, it needs a commitment from the City as well. Given that, I would support a 15 year license agreement with Cox. Realize that the license agreement is non-exclusive, but if a company in this field is going to be able to coax dollars into a heavily infrastructure dependent business model, it needs to be able to show that it's here for the long haul. There may be some who will suggest the City take the time to conduct a Community Needs Assessment at a cost of over \$500,000. It is my belief that we know enough about the product our partner provides to make that unnecessary. It will come down to how we allocate the channels. The rest is pretty much driven by statute.

9-1-1 update. Better news for a change.

The long-in-coming switch to TFD management of the operation has already borne fruit. Northwest Fire and command staffs from Avra Valley, Picture Rocks, Three Points, and Golder Ranch have had the opportunity to meet with the new management staff. Those who were able to attend have offered very favorable reviews.

Future meetings and discussions are being planned and the agencies are very confident in the new action plan and collaborative efforts with front line staff and cooperating agencies.

The Consortium membership has also been invited to attend the next 911 Manager's group meeting that's being set up by Sheila Blevins, 911 Administrator for Marana, and the person who was elected to take over for the COT as head of that group back in June. Both she, the other Pima County 911 managers, as well as the State 911 office have extended educational outreach opportunities, support and other resources for the new TFD Management team. Those offers have been well received by Tucson Fire authorities.

We continue to have staffing and compensation issues that will need to be overcome. We continue to hope for resolution to the lingering technical issues, and for better feedback from the vendors involved. But for now, it's a good news report as far as communications with front line employees and with surrounding agencies is concerned. The previous "Meridian Committee" (the dispatcher group that was supposed to be meeting with supervisors after the 911 issue was brought out of the closet) has been renamed the "Call Flow Solutions" group. Battalion Chief Mike Garcia and Captain Carl Mare were TFD personnel present at their most recent meeting. Century Link (Qwest) was not present. They need to be at every meeting but were not given sufficient notice of the meet-

ing by the person who booked it. That's unacceptable. That person is now tasked with scheduling the meetings a month in advance. They will be meeting weekly until the issues are resolved and then will transition to meet monthly and eventually we will meet quarterly.

One lesson learned and applied. There was to be a roll out of a new Computer Aided Dispatch system that has now been pushed back in order to allow for an appropriate vetting and testing methodology to be conducted. In comparison to the manner in which the roll-out of the new dispatch system was conducted, the plan being put into place for the CAD system will allow us to ensure that any bugs can be worked out in the test environment, not a live one.

Los Descendientes

Finally, I felt very honored to have been invited to keynote this year's Los Descendientes del Presidio de Tucson's 236th Tucson birthday celebration. In case you don't know about the group, their primary mission is to help to preserve Tucson's Spanish and Mexican culture, linguistic and architectural heritage. Given the richness of that all over the valley, what they're up to is a very full time job.

I thank Hector Soza for including me and I wish to also thank Miguel Ortega for his very gracious remarks while serving as emcee for the evening. Congratulations are in order to Bill DuPont for being honored for his role in the Mission Gardens work. Through his efforts, and that of his Board, they have raised over \$115K in private donations to keep the work alive in that project.

The special guests of the evening were families and victims of the January 8 shootings. Daniel Hernandez was specifically honored by the group. Ron Barber was there, as were Judge Roll's family members. Each of them was very kind in their comments to me after I spoke. They are reflective of the quality of people with whom Gabby surrounds herself. I know you join me in wishing each of the people and families involved a full and continued healing, in all the ways that term applies.

For me, the stars of the night were Las Doñas de Tucson. In speaking with several of these ladies throughout the evening, I'm certain that they're the juice that makes this organization go. This year's "Doña de Tucson" is Martha Elias. The rest are:

Estela Jacome	Esther don Tang
Dorothy Finley	Genevieve Whelan
Joana Damos	Anna Jolivet
Edith Auslander	Patricia Arida
Laura Almquist	Nelba Chavez
Sally Drachman Salvatore	

We're fortunate to have this group of people among us. Our community would not be what it is without them. They're in the process of updating their website to include video of this year's celebration, including a video of my remarks. I'll be sure to include that link as soon as they've gotten that done.

...Ok, there's no graceful way to transition into this topic, but it's important. The Humane Society is in need of all sorts of dog, cat, puppy and kitten food. Spectrum Printing is help-

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ing them to collect what they need. There are several participating businesses scattered around town and you can also drop off donations at the Ward 6 Council office. To get a complete listing, go to SpecPrintTucson.com. I love dogs and can't resist making that pitch.

This Saturday starts the 2011-2012 home football season for the UA. Of course, I want you to support the program and the student-athletes. What goes hand in hand with that though is that if you tailgate, please do it responsibly and respect the property of the homeowners in the surrounding Rincon Heights and Sam Hughes neighborhoods. And for a great post-game review, you can join in person Coach Stoops at Sir Vezas (Swan and Speedway) every Tuesday at 7pm.

Sincerely,



Steve Kozachik
Council Member, Ward 6
www.tucsonaz.gov/ward6

Congress Street Entertainment District Events

Playing this week in the venues on and near Congress Street in Downtown Tucson. . . .

Rialto Theatre, 318 E. Congress St.

www.RialtoTheatre.com

Wednesday, August 31, The 2011 Tammies (Tucson Area Music Awards) (free admission)

Thursday, September 1, 8:00pm. Explosions in the Sky (indie rock), with Twin Sister. All ages, \$20/\$22

Friday, September 2, HocoFest Night Two: Sargent Garcia. (salsa-reggae) 21+, \$20/\$25

Fox Theatre, 17 W. Congress St.

www.FoxTucsonTheatre.org

Friday, September 2, 7:30pm. "Chinatown" (1974 film, nominated for 11 Academy Awards). \$8, or \$6 for students, seniors, and military.

The Screening Room, 127 E. Congress St.

www.azmac.org/scroom

No events this week.

Beowulf Alley Theatre, 11 S. 6th Ave.

www.BeowulfAlley.org

Tuesday, September 6, 7:00pm. Old Time Radio Theatre: "Raising Junior" and "The Dark Tower". \$8/\$10