

District 9 candidates certainly not 2 peas in pod

Submitted by Staff on Fri, 04/24/2009 - 1:55am.

- [News](#)



Although many of their views on city issues were similar, the differences between two of the three candidates seeking the District 9 council seat came across loud and clear during a forum in Stone Oak Wednesday night.

A native of San Antonio, the fast-talking Weston Martinez offered big plans but few details, while insisting his role on the council would be of one who can lobby for the needs of this district. “My job is to lead and be the tip of the sword,” he said, later adding, “I know the city of San Antonio and I know the issues in San Antonio.”

The soft-spoken Elisa Chan, on the other hand, was more cautious and reminded voters solutions to city issues are not always black and white. As councilwoman, Chan added, she will offer realistic answers. “At the end of the day, talk is great, but action is better,” she said. Born in Taiwan, Chan moved to the U.S. in 1988 and became an American citizen 10 years ago. “My story is a story of an immigrant who came to this country for a better life,” she said. “The reason I’m running is because San Antonio is home. I care about this beautiful city that has been good to me in every way.”

William Davidson, the third candidate for District 9, was expected to attend Wednesday’s forum, but had to bow out at the last minute due to a friend’s medical emergency.

Hosted by the Stone Oak Communities of Mutual Amenities (SOCOMA), the forum allowed both candidates equal time to answer questions posed by those in the audience. Almost immediately, Chan and Martinez were asked to tackle the Hwy 281 toll road controversy. Both candidates relayed their opposition to the project, although Martinez said he believes money for 281 overpasses is already available, while Chan stressed the need to find funding sources for transportation projects that will be fair for everyone.

If 281 has to be tolled, Chan added, the project should not be led by a private industry and the roads should become freeways as soon as construction costs are paid off. While Martinez reminded voters of the effect increasing congestion will have on area property values, which will impact the city as a whole. “If property values drop, guess what? You are going to have [city] services that will begin to wane.”

As owner of Unitech, a structural and civil engineering design and consulting firm, Chan was questioned whether she would have conflicts of interest if elected. While admitting she will complete the city projects her company committed to before she entered the District 9 race, Chan also insisted Unitech has declined all city contracts since May of 2008.

“I have no potential for future conflicts,” she said. “I don’t believe I have a conflict of interest and I am [running for city council] because I really care for the city...I am certainly not looking to be unethical.”

Martinez’s job as a manager with AT&T was questioned as well when one voter asked if the candidate could work full-time and still fulfill the time-consuming duties required of the city council. Although reminding the audience he is one of 400,000 employees, Martinez said any employment decisions will be made after the election. “My job is to be accessible and tell people the truth and make sure I am the last person you need to talk to.”

Chan, who started Unitech with her husband in 1992, said she is fortunate in that she will be able to step away from day-to-day operations at her company if elected. “I take this job very, very seriously,” she said of the city council seat, which she called a full-time position “if you want to do it right.

“I will be accessible to you, that’s my commitment to you.”

Current District 9 Councilman Louis Rowe was also present at Wednesday’s forum, which drew roughly 50 people. Rowe and representatives for SOCOMA are not endorsing any District 9 candidate. Election Day is Saturday, May 9.