

The one candidate who stands out: Kari Birdseye

By Judith Sullivan, November 3, 2018 at 6:09 am

The one candidate who stands out most for integrity in the Benicia City Council race is Kari Birdseye. She is the only one running an honest, transparent campaign in the respect that she does not denigrate any of her opponents, current city council members nor the city mayor in her bid for election. Instead, she stands on her own vast record of leadership accomplishments along with her specific objectives for our fair city.

Her deeper understandings of our city's complex history, budget concerns, current needs and ways to meet them have been honed through 18 years of residency and service in a variety of roles including PTA President of Matthew Turner School, member of Benicia Human Services Board, and other positions of community service, currently serving as the Chair for the Benicia Planning Commission. She's a doer. An open-minded collaborator. One whom we have witnessed having researched issues thoroughly before coming to decisions. Stated facts rather than supposition or personal opinion are used as her rationale for choices made.

She understands the benefits of being a good listener as well as a presenter of ideas. Although she has been described by the opposition as being wed to the mayor and city councilman Steve Young, she has a well-developed mind capable of coming to her own conclusions based on what she feels is best after considering all options available.

Environmental sustainability is one of her cherished goals for our city with a particular focus on clean air and water, the latter sought at the most feasibly affordable price for our citizens. Honoring the health and safety of our community while at the same time increasing its economic and artistic creative viability are also high priorities.

Unfortunately, aggressive, negative forces have come out strongly against her through corporate and PAC Funds. These far exceed our city's legally stipulated allowance for individual reception of campaign funding by over \$120,000. Money from these sources financed Push Polls promoting their candidates, Lionel Largaespada and Christina Strawbridge, while fraudulently smearing Kari's campaign and character. Now they are printing attack ads portraying her as "Bad for Benicia," a "killer of jobs," which are being posted on Internet Sites such as EVITE. These ads are the ludicrous, unsubstantiated scare tactics employed by the Valero Corporation and certain Labor Unions PACS in the attempt to discredit their noble, highly skilled opponent. It's very disturbing to have outside money play such a despicable role in our city's elections. It gives our election process an unwarranted black eye.

A similar scenario happened in Richmond a few years ago when Chevron tried to buy three city council seats to the tune of over three million dollars. It didn't work. Benicians beware. We deserve better than this.

Take the time to research our city council candidates with an open mind. Exercise your right to vote. Much is at stake. I highly recommend Kari Birdseye for her courage under pressure, strong heart-centered way of being, intelligence and strong leadership abilities.

— **Judith S. Sullivan/38-year Benicia resident**