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Place 3: Sour grapes?

By Katherine Gregor

Jennifer Kim's re-election campaign continues to attack challenger **Randi Shade** for accepting campaign contributions from "developers." Yet Kim's latest finance report shows she herself has accepted contributions from Austinites with development, legal, real estate, and architecture/construction firm ties. Examples include checks from the Carter & Burgess Political Committee, Steve Metcalfe, Brown McCarroll, Larry Warshaw, Pete Gasper, Taylor Andrews, Michael Casias, Kevin Burns, Juan Cotera, Jerry Harris, Tom, Lynn, and Will Meredith.

An invitation to a March 19 Kim fundraiser at Ranch 616 listed as co-hosts influential real estate attorneys Steve Drenner and Nikelle Meade, developer Perry Lorenz, Real Estate Council of Austin leader Diana Zuniga, and real estate/development players David Hartman, Richard Maier, Matt Mathias, Brad Schlosser, and Ron Thrower.

Not that there's anything wrong with that. Like all viable and reasonably well-funded Austin City Council candidates in history, both Kim and Shade have accepted contributions – capped this year at \$300 per individual or \$600 from a joint account – from Austinites with some form of business, Downtown, lobbyist, or development interests.

Which is why Shade calls foul on Kim for making her contributors a campaign issue. "More than 50 percent of my donations have come from people who have never before donated to a City Council race," asserts Shade. She characterized these checks as "the support of my friends – from UT, from business school, from CharityGift, from AmeriCorps days, from Ann Richards' staff, the Entrepreneurs Foundation, et cetera."

"I am not knocking Jennifer Kim for having the support of these folks in 2005, nor am I knocking her for soliciting these folks again in 2008," said Shade. "However, it seems incredibly hypocritical for Jennifer to attack me for having the support of folks who supported her in 2005." A case of sour grapes? The evidence indicates that Kim did not set a policy of refusing contributions from Austinites with development ties; rather, she simply lost the support of many of her 2005 contributors. The Shade campaign confirmed that former Kim contributors who are now contributing to Shade include Gary Farmer, Don Martin, Pete Winstead, and Paul Bury.

Elliott McFadden of Ignite Consulting has taken over as Kim's lead campaign strategist. On April 25, **Matt Hersch** announced he was stepping down as lead consultant to Kim, to spend more time with his family (citing his near-term pregnant wife).

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