

Meet the Candidates for Austin City Council

On May 10, voters in Travis County will go to the polls to cast their ballots in the municipal elections. In the City of Austin voters will choose three council members to represent their interests at City Hall.

Two incumbents are running for a second term. Lee Leffingwell, the incumbent in Place 1, faces two opponents: Allen Demling and Jason Meeker. In the Place 3 seat, Council Member Jennifer Kim has two opponents: Randi Shade and Ken Weiss.

There will be a new council member chosen for Place 4. That seat is currently held by Betty Dunkerley, who is not seeking re-election. Vying for Place 4 are: Robin Cravey, Jennifer Gale, Cid Galindo, Laura Morrison, Sam Osemene and Ken Vasseau.

The Slaughter Creek Reporter invited all of the City Council candidates to participate in its Meet the Candidates feature.

Candidates were asked to provide a short bio and answer four questions. All candidates but Jennifer Gale and Ken Vasseau accepted our invitation with a response.

About the City Council

The City of Austin practices a Council-Manager form of government. The Mayor and Council appoint the City Manager, who serves as the Chief Administrator of the City orga-

nization. There are seven members on the Austin City Council: one Mayor and six Council Members. The entire Council is elected at large by the voters of the City. Each member serves a staggered three-year term. Thus, three of the members are voted on one year, with the remaining members, including the Mayor, elected the following year. The Mayor and Council Members may serve in their respective seat for a maximum of six years, or two consecutive terms.

The Austin City Council has regular weekly meetings each Thursday in the Council Chambers at City Hall, located at 301 W. 2nd Street. The meetings are open to the public. Throughout the year, there are some canceled meetings, so be sure to check ahead of time. Council agendas, transcripts from the meetings and approved minutes are all available on the City of Austin's website (www.ci.austin.tx.us/council). Council committee and subcommittee agendas can also be found there.

Austin City Council meetings are broadcast on municipal TV cable Channel 6 and is also simulcast on KAZI-88.7 FM radio starting at 1:30 p.m. Channel 6 also offers live streaming video of all City Council meetings. (Source: City of Austin)

**Know the issues
Know the candidates**

VOTE

Election Day is May 10

See Page 8 for a to find your polling location



Candidate for Place 1

Allen Demling

www.allendemling.org

Quick Bio:

I was born in Chicago, moved to Austin for grad school (MSME) and fell in love with this town. I currently work as an ME at technology firm National Instruments..

Why are you the best candidate for the City Council?

I am young and an active participant in many areas of what makes our city great. I know the problems and concerns that our citizenry are experiencing. Many of our council members are out of touch with the common man in this town.

Do you support the Single-Member District City Council Proposal? If so, what will you do to ensure far South Austin is fairly represented in such a plan?

I support the hybrid system being proposed. This system takes the advantages of both single-member and at-large system, and helps alleviate many negative aspects of each. To make it work, we would need to make sure that districts are updated regularly to reflect population changes, especially in South Austin.

What is your position on City subsidies to developers like the Domain shopping center? If you support such incentives, what will you offer locally-owned businesses in South Austin?

I only support such subsidies for locally owned businesses and businesses involved in emerging technologies. Money spent in local businesses is worth more to our economy than money spent in corporate chain stores. I would focus these incentives in businesses in all areas of Austin, which includes South Austin.

Far South Austin, and in particular the 78748 zip code, is growing very fast. What will you do to ensure that you will understand and consider the interests of the citizens in this part of Austin?

As Councilman, my door will always be open to any group who wishes to speak with me. The lack of citizen and public input is a common complaint I hear while campaigning. I vow to set up recurring meetings with citizen groups to hear and understand their concerns.



Candidate for Place 1

Lee Leffingwell

www.VoteLeffingwell.com

Quick Bio:

Austin Native; Commander, U.S. Navy, Retired; Captain, Delta Air Lines, Retired; Chair, Austin Environmental Board; Member, Austin City Council, Place 1, Elected 2005.

Why are you the best candidate for the City Council?

I am the only candidate in my race a history of public service as a volunteer member of a City board or commission, having served on the City's Environmental Board for five years before being elected to the Council. I also offer a proven track record of accomplishment on Council.

Do you support the Single-Member District City Council Proposal? If so, what will you do to ensure far South Austin is fairly represented in such a plan?

I support a mixed system with district representatives and at-large representatives. A mixed system would give citizens in every part of our community - including South Austin - representatives with an intimate understanding of the concerns in their area, while also preserving a broader, city-wide perspective on the Council.

What is your position on City subsidies to developers like the Domain shopping center? If you support such incentives, what will you offer locally-owned businesses in South Austin?

I actually testified against the Domain incentives before being elected to the Council. I oppose retail incentives and authored a successful City resolution ending them, but I'm not categorically opposed to non-retail incentives - including for local businesses in South Austin - when there are clear, auditable performance goals.

Far South Austin, and in particular the 78748 zip code, is growing very fast. What will you do to ensure that you will understand and consider the interests of the citizens in this part of Austin?

I'll continue to do what I've done since I was elected three years ago - proactively seek out input from the community and work to involve concerned citizens in the City's decision-making process. Thanks for these good questions and I ask for your vote for re-election on May 10.



Candidate for Place 1

Jason Meeker

www.jasonforaustin.com

Quick Bio:

Husband, father, activist, RG4N spokesperson, UT grad, writer, north Austin resident, and ready to take on the insiders at city hall and give Austin citizens a more responsive city government.

Why are you the best candidate for the City Council?

I offer energy, leadership and more new ideas than any other candidate to solve problems and neutralize unnecessary conflicts. I stand out due to the civic leadership I demonstrated in relation to the contentious Northcross Wal-Mart. I am reliable and courageous, an effective advocate for neighborhoods, and a small businessman.

Do you support the Single-Member District City Council Proposal? If so, what will you do to ensure far South Austin is fairly represented in such a plan?

I support an at-large and single-member constitution for Austin. My initiatives to create an Office of Public Advocate and a Department of Neighborhoods will ensure more inclusion in decision-making and neighborhood preservation. I will work hard to give citizens the opportunity they deserve to improve their government.

What is your position on City subsidies to developers like the Domain shopping center? If you support such incentives, what will you offer locally-owned businesses in South Austin?

Incentives can be appropriate when the return to the public is clear and overwhelming. We must grow our job base. Regarding the disparity, I will seek to equalize it by working with leading economists to create an official economic strategy to ensure we prioritize small (and large) businesses.

Far South Austin, and in particular the 78748 zip code, is growing very fast. What will you do to ensure that you will understand and consider the interests of the citizens in this part of Austin?

I will create a Department of Neighborhoods to engage neighborhoods and their residents in civic participation. We must respect that different neighborhoods have different perspectives. I seek to involve all of Austin's residents in a more effective and purposeful civic discourse.



Candidate for Place 3

Jennifer Kim

www.standingupforaustin.com

Quick Bio:

Jennifer Kim was elected in 2005 to serve Austin as Place 3 Councilmember. Visit <http://www.standingupforaustin.com/about.asp> to read her background and to read about her many achievements while serving.

Why are you the best candidate for the City Council?

I have fought hard to protect what we love about Austin and to serve the community. My focus on the council has been and will continue to be keeping Austin affordable, livable, and economically vibrant. I have a strong record of being pro-neighborhood, pro-environment, and pro-small business.

Do you support the Single-Member District City Council Proposal? If so, what will you do to ensure far South Austin is fairly represented in such a plan?

This is a decision for the public to vote on after a careful process to determine the best system and to make sure all Austin neighborhoods are fairly represented with an appropriate number of districts. We also need to be certain that there is no dilution of minority representation.

What is your position on City subsidies to developers like the Domain shopping center? If you support such incentives, what will you offer locally-owned businesses in South Austin?

I oppose incentives for retail business. Any benefits given to a business, small or large, must reach the entire community, should be environmentally sound, should make some contribution to the affordability of Austin, either in housing or in helping local businesses, and companies should pay a living wage.

Far South Austin, and in particular the 78748 zip code, is growing very fast. What will you do to ensure that you will understand and consider the interests of the citizens in this part of Austin?

I held a townhall meeting in Oak Hill to better understand their needs and to discuss projects in the budget and bond initiative that would benefit their neighborhood. I would like to do the same in Far South Austin should I be re-elected to the council.



Candidate for Place 3

Randi Shade

www.randishade.com

Quick Bio:

Austin resident 18+ years. Founder of internet company Charitygift. Former Director of the Austin Entrepreneurs Foundation and the Texas Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service. Honors graduate of UT-Austin; MBA - Harvard Business School.

Why are you the best candidate for the City Council?

I offer a unique background of leadership in the public, private and non-profit sectors. I have a history of working on issues important to our community, including economic development and environmental protection. I build strong relationships, I am accessible and accountable, and I bring people together to get results.

Do you support the Single-Member District City Council Proposal? If so, what will you do to ensure far South Austin is fairly represented in such a plan?

I support a system of representation that incorporates both single-member districts and at-large districts. This would help ensure that every part of Austin has adequate representation, while still offering more accountable, accessible and possibly more diverse representation than we have now.

What is your position on City subsidies to developers like the Domain shopping center? If you support such incentives, what will you offer locally-owned businesses in South Austin?

I am not opposed to City incentives, including for locally owned businesses, if they provide clear, direct, significant economic benefit to local residents at every income level. But there must be transparency to ensure that all performance requirements are being met before any incentive is received.

Far South Austin, and in particular the 78748 zip code, is growing very fast. What will you do to ensure that you will understand and consider the interests of the citizens in this part of Austin?

The primary reason I am running against the incumbent is her reputation for inaccessibility. If elected, I will be a leader who proactively seeks input from every part of the community and translates that input into real action and meaningful solutions. I ask for your vote.



Candidate for Place 3

Ken Weiss

weissforplace3.com

Quick Bio:

I have lived in Austin for over 38 years, operated two family businesses, served in the Texas National guard, received my education here, and have been married almost 6 years.

Why are you the best candidate for the City Council?

I can directly relate my 20 years as a business member and being an Army Officer to being your next city council member. I don't have big business, told road lobbyist, big developers or special interest groups in my pocket. I come to City Hall completely neutral.

Do you support the Single-Member District City Council Proposal? If so, what will you do to ensure far South Austin is fairly represented in such a plan?

I support placing single member districts on the ballot and letting the citizens decide. Government should not tell the citizens what type of government we should have. Please visit my website under issues and single member districts for more information.

What is your position on City subsidies to developers like the Domain shopping center? If you support such incentives, what will you offer locally-owned businesses in South Austin?

No, subsidies for Big Businesses, I support the Stop the Domain Subsidies initiative. I also support small businesses and want to make sure they have an equal opportunity to conduct business in Austin and be competitive for city contracts.

Far South Austin, and in particular the 78748 zip code, is growing very fast. What will you do to ensure that you will understand and consider the interests of the citizens in this part of Austin?

I am always willing to listen to the neighborhoods. I believe that they should have the say on what developments are proposed in their neighborhoods. Please see my website under issues of neighbor planning.



Candidate for Place 4

Robin Cravey

www.RobinCravey.com

Quick Bio:

I am an environmentalist, poet, attorney, and Democrat. I've been a Planning Commissioner, City Council Aide, and president of the Zilker Neighborhood Association and PTA, and Friends of Barton Springs Pool.

Why are you the best candidate for the City Council?

I have been actively involved in the community since I moved here in 1969 to attend UT. I am the only environmentalist in the race with city hall experience and I will work hard to keep Austin Green, bring back affordability, and make the city more walkable and bikeable.

Do you support the Single-Member District City Council Proposal? If so, what will you do to ensure far South Austin is fairly represented in such a plan?

I support a mixed system of councilmembers elected at-large and by district. Being the only candidate who lives in South Austin (for over 30 years) I understand your concerns. I will work hard to ensure that all members of our community are represented in a new comprehensive plan.

What is your position on City subsidies to developers like the Domain shopping center? If you support such incentives, what will you offer locally-owned businesses in South Austin?

I support stopping tax rebates to large corporations. Austin is a very desirable place to live, and we should not have to pay people to come here. These types of subsidies violate the principle of fair and equal taxation. We should provide programs to level the playing field for local businesses.

Far South Austin, and in particular the 78748 zip code, is growing very fast. What will you do to ensure that you will understand and consider the interests of the citizens in this part of Austin?

We as a city need to ensure that the growth we experience is channeled in directions that are positive for our community. The city needs a new comprehensive plan for growth. If elected I plan to implement a new comprehensive planning process which will involve input from neighborhoods, stakeholders, and citizens.



Candidate for Place 4

Cid Galindo

www.cidgalindo.com

Quick Bio:

Urban planner and small business owner with a background in economics and business analysis. Served on the City of Austin Planning Commission for four years.

Why are you the best candidate for the City Council?

I am the only candidate in this race with a plan to reduce sprawl and the traffic congestion it causes. I developed the plan during the four years I served on the Planning Commission. It has been published by the Congress for the New Urbanism and is on my website.

Do you support the Single-Member District City Council Proposal? If so, what will you do to ensure far South Austin is fairly represented in such a plan?

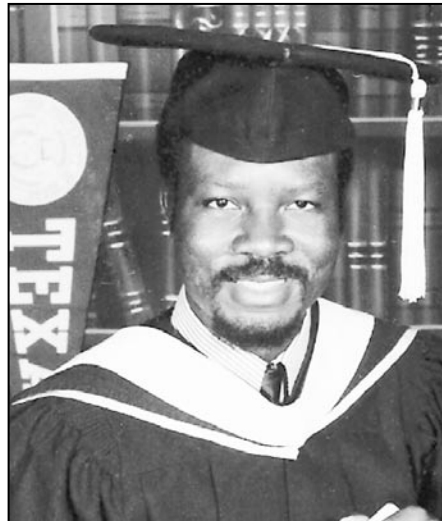
Outlying neighborhoods deserve more responsive city government, and single member districts are one way to get there. Another is to implement the sector-based management plan for all city departments that I have proposed. Each sector would have a single representative accountable for resident requests.

What is your position on City subsidies to developers like the Domain shopping center? If you support such incentives, what will you offer locally-owned businesses in South Austin?

Public/private partnerships are necessary to create town centers like the one I will promote for Oak Hill. However, in the case of retail, they should be used sparingly and the benefits should extend to small local businesses in the form of initial rent discounts or build out allowances.

Far South Austin, and in particular the 78748 zip code, is growing very fast. What will you do to ensure that you will understand and consider the interests of the citizens in this part of Austin?

78748 is the fastest growing zip code in the city, and I will immediately prioritize needed infrastructure improvements such as Davis Lane and the intersections of Slaughter/Manchaca and Slaughter/Brodie. I will also work to establish a major mixed-use town center in the area to provide more employment, real action and meaningful solutions. I ask for your vote.



Candidate for Place 4

Sam Osemene

www.vote4alongsouth.com

Quick Bio:

Austin resident for almost 20 years. Served in the United States Navy. B.A in Political Science from UT-Austin. In May 2008, he will earn a Masters Degree In Political Science. Works for the Texas Department Of Criminal Justice as a parole officer.

Why are you the best candidate for the City Council?

I'm the best candidate because of my beliefs that we need tax cuts, fiscal responsibility, rule of law, single member districts, and limited government. I propose a freeze on property taxes and transparency in government. I oppose corporate subsidies but support economic growth by cutting taxes and regulation. I am tough on crime.

Do you support the Single-Member District City Council Proposal? If so, what will you do to ensure South Austin is fairly represented in such a plan?

I fully support Single Member Districts. Single Member Districts reduces the influence of money in politics, proportional representation, accountability, and transparency. The reason the City of Austin marginalized your neighborhood is because they don't want you to have a voice. I will change that when I'm elected.

What is your position on City subsidies to developers like the Domain shopping center? If you support such incentives, what will you offer locally-owned businesses in South Austin?

I'm against corporate welfare. The City of Austin has not done enough to encourage and support local businesses. I will focus my attention on reducing taxes, red tape and ordinances that attack free enterprise. With me, local businesses will have a friend at City Hall.

Far South Austin, and in particular the 78748 zip code, is growing very fast. What will you do to ensure that you will understand and consider the interests of the citizens in this part of Austin?

I will have neighborhood meetings in every part of the city. An elected official should go to every neighborhood in this city to hear and know what the issues and concerns are.



Candidate for Place 4

Laura Morrison

www.lauraforaustin.com

Quick Bio:

Austinite since 1981; married to UT physics professor and mother of two grown sons. Previously, engineer (Lockheed); Masters in Mathematics and Public Health Graduate Certificate in Disaster Management.

Why are you the best candidate for the City Council?

My community, professional and educational background prepared me to serve, including my work as President of the Austin Neighborhoods Council, the HousingWorks Policy Committee on affordable housing, and Community Action Network. I have a successful record in building coalitions, finding consensus and advocating for an open, inclusive city government.

Do you support the Single-Member District City Council Proposal? If so, what will you do to ensure far South Austin is fairly represented in such a plan?

The present system of choosing council members has led to under representation for some parts of our community including Onion Creek. It's time to look toward a single member district/hybrid system to bring the Council closer to the community and result in more effective governance of the city.

What is your position on City subsidies to developers like the Domain shopping center? If you support such incentives, what will you offer locally-owned businesses in South Austin?

We must level the playing field. Retail incentives make sense only in special circumstances. They often only move economic activity from one area to another and drain our budget resources. The Domain incentives result in unfair market competition with businesses that do not have public tax subsidies.

Far South Austin, and in particular the 78748 zip code, is growing very fast. What will you do to ensure that you will understand and consider the interests of the citizens in this part of Austin?

My campaign is about Making Austin Work for All of Us. That includes the people of Far South Austin. My record as President of the Austin Neighborhoods Council demonstrates my commitment to inclusiveness. I pledge to continue that record as your Council member.

Early voting starts April 28

Early voting for the May 10, 2008 General Municipal Election begins April 28 and continues through May 6, 2008.

The May 10 ballot asks voters to decide on AISD bond proposals; ACC and AISD trustee positions and city and MUD elections for area municipalities including the City of Austin.

To see a sample of the ballot visit www.co.travis.tx.us/county_clerk/election/20080510/sample.asp.

Early voting polls are generally

open from 7 a.m. - 7 p.m., Monday - Saturday and from noon - 6 p.m. on Sundays.

In the Slaughter Creek Reporter readership area, voters can cast early ballots at:

Randall's Grocery Store, located at 6600 South MoPac & William Cannon; **Randalls Grocery Store**, located at 9911 Brodie Lane and Slaughter Lane; and the **ACC Pinnacle Campus** located at 7748 Highway 290 West.

AISD trustees ask voters to approve three bond proposals totaling \$343.7 million

By Ken Vargas

Growth in Southern Travis County has already pushed enrollment at Bowie and Akins High Schools to near full capacity, and demographers know it will probably be just a few years before AISD will have to build a new high school.

Now AISD wants voters to approve spending up to \$32 million to purchase land for a new high school in Southern Travis County.

In February, AISD Trustees voted to put three bond propositions totaling \$343.7 million before the voters on May 10.

The 2008 Bond Referendum will have three propositions.

Proposition one calls for \$187.8 million to relieve overcrowding and growth while spending \$125 million for science labs and technology upgrades.

Proposition two asks for \$73.9 million for health, safety and renovation needs including \$826,000 to improve the internal roadway at Manchaca Elementary School.

Manchaca's principal John Rocha says the internal road would relieve congestion caused at the start and end of the school day. Buses and cars often have trouble getting onto Manchaca Road or FM 1626.

Proposition three calls for \$82 million to buy land and build a central Performing Arts Center. That amount includes \$32 million in bond money to acquire land for a future South Austin high school.

If passed, all three bond proposals would increase tax rates for property owners in AISD by 1.7 cents per \$100 valuation.

Notice of General Election Village of San Leanna, Texas

The Village of San Leanna will hold a General Election on May 10, 2008 to elect three (3) Aldermen. The polling place for all voters registered in San Leanna will be at the Community Center located at 11906 Sleepy Hollow Ln., Manchaca, TX, where voting will take place between the hours of 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Early voting is available at 611 Old Manchaca Rd., Austin, TX beginning April 28th through May 6th between the hours of 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., except on April 28th and May 5th when the hours will be between 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Please call 280-3898 for further information.

Election Day Polling Locations in Far South Travis County

The list of Election Day Polling Places below is a list for locations near voters who live in the Slaughter Creek Reporter readership area. For other polling places, visit the Travis County Clerk's web site at www.co.travis.tx.us/county_clerk/election or call 854-9188.

Precinct No.	Location	Zip Code
406 & 413	St. Alban's Episcopal Church • 11819 IH35 South	78652
302	Bailey Middle School • 4020 Lost Oasis Hollow	78739
304 & 367.	Kiker Elementary School • 5913 LaCross Avenue	78739
410	Pleasant Hill Elementary School • 6405 Circle S Road	78745
412	Joslin Elementary School • 4500 Manchaca Road	78745
446	St. Elmo Elementary School • 600 West St. Elmo Road	78745
447	Odom Elementary School • 1010 Turtle Creek Blvd.	78745
448	Langford Elementary School • 2206 Blue Meadow Drive	78745
451	Bedichek Middle School • 6800 Bill Hughes Road	78745
454	Joslin Elementary School • 4500 Manchaca Road	78745
455	Cunningham Elementary School • 2200 Berkeley Ave	78745
458	Mockingbird Post Office NEW • 7310 Manchaca Road	78745
460	ACC South Austin Campus • 1820 W. Stassney Lane	78745
463	Williams Elementary School • 500 Mairo Lane	78745
404	Pleasant Valley Baptist Church • 11224 Thaxton Road	78747
309	Kocurek Elementary School • 9800 Curlew Drive	78748
310	Manchaca Elementary School • 12120 Manchaca Road	78748
315	Villages Amenities Center • 12006 Gatling Gun	78748
321	Jackie's Performing Arts School • 11530 Manchaca Rd	78748
323	Texas Oaks Baptist Church • 9910 Bilbrook Place	78748
350	Cowan Elementary School • 2817 Kentish Drive	78748
355	Southwest Church of Christ • 8900 Manchaca Road	78748
356	Casey Elementary School • 9400 Texas Oaks Drive	78748
411	Charles Akins High School • 10701 South 1st Street	78748
339	Oak Hill Elementary School • 6101 Patton Ranch Road	78749
351	Patton Elementary School • 6001 Westcreek Drive	78749
352	Covington Middle School • 3700 Convict Hill Road	78749
358	Boone Elementary School • 8101 Croftwood Drive	78749
360	Bowie High School • 4103 West Slaughter Lane	78749
362	Austin Public Library (Hampton) • 5125 Convict Hill Rd	78749
363	Shepherd of the Hills Church • 5226 W. William Cannon	78749
366	Mills Elementary School • 6200 Davis Lane	78749