

# Four Questions for the Candidates

The Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council asked candidates in the special election for the 15th council district to answer four questions on issues affecting our area. All but three (John Delgado, Jr., Candice Graham and Frank Pereyda) responded.

The election to fill the vacancy created when Janice Hahn was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives is set for Tuesday, November 8. If no one receives 50 percent of the vote, there will be a runoff between the two with the highest vote totals. That election will be held Tuesday, January 17.

The Harbor Alliance of Neighborhood Councils, area chambers of commerce, Rotary, and Los Angeles Harbor College are presenting a candidate forum on Saturday, October 22.

**What actions, if any, should the City take related to the Rancho Holding Company butane storage operations on North Gaffey Street?**

**JUSTIN BRIMMER** This concern falls under one of my four priority points, to Restrengthen our Communities! Despite Amerigas abiding by “all the rules”, I believe the explosive threat of Amerigas is too great for the community to bear! The butane storage facilities make San Pedro an even larger target for terrorist attacks. Therefore, I will reinstate the City’s Relocation Task Force, but also demand Homeland Security to join the discussions. I will look into the possibility of beginning the condemnation proceedings DAY 1, while simultaneously finding outside funds from Homeland Security, Federal grant programs and Private Foundations to ensure a zero-burden to the General Fund.

**JOE BUSCAINO** The City should take all measures to force Rancho Holding Company to allow public access to its safety and maintenance records. If they insist upon staying in the district, they need to be an accountable and transparent neighbor.

**REBECCA CHAMBLISS** The city should not support Rancho in being able to continue to store and transport LPG in the current location on N. Gaffey St. The city apparently allows Rancho to utilize city a city owned railway; in my opinion this should be disallowed. Evidence points to the tanks becoming the source of a major disaster in the future. I think the city has a responsibility to work diligently to protect the community and find a solution to remove the tanks from their current location.

**WARREN FURUTANI** The City should take an active role in any operations that impact the safety of the community. I would be a strong advocate for the residents who are impacted by the Rancho Holding Company butane storage operation. I will work with partners such as the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, and the Air Quality Management District (AQMD) to ensure that the safety, environmental standards and emergency management plan for the area are up to date and in line with the best available technology.

**PAT McOSKER** Unfortunately, the butane storage is on private property and has been operating for some time. My personal belief is that since this gas is a by-product of the refinery, it should be stored somewhere on the refinery property. It would appear that Valero has plenty of room on their site. I would support an eminent domain action that would have the City acquire the property to enhance the public safety of the neighborhood. Otherwise, the City and the Port need to find other ways to incentivize Rancho to relocate to a location far away from residential neighborhoods. I support previous efforts to end their pipeline lease and access to Berth 120, and using Port leverage to force Rancho to the negotiating table.

**RUDY SVORINICH, JR.** As Councilman, my office was, and will be, proactive in making sure our communities were as safe as they could be in regard to industrial business operations. The City of Los Angeles should continue, through its Fire and Building and Safety Departments, to routinely inspect and monitor all energy facilities for safety compliance as it pertains to the city’s jurisdiction on behalf of local residents, neighboring businesses, and their workforce. Eight other governmental offices and agencies are responsible for this facility’s safe operation since the facility is an integral part of the petroleum refining (gasoline production) industry in Southern California.

**GORDON TEUBER** I understand the concerns about the safety of this facility. Initially, the new ownership was making strides toward more transparent communication with local stakeholders. This seems to have taken a step backwards recently. Rancho has not done an adequate job of communicating with the general public, specifically with the immediate neighbors. If the products being stored are as safe as Rancho states that they are, then there is no reason why they cannot communicate more openly and frequently with their neighbors. I would support a new EIR due to the removal of the pipeline to the Port. Changing the zoning will not benefit the community at this time. I encourage the opponents of this site to consider litigation against Plains, the City, or the Port.

**JAYME WILSON** The Council Office, City of Los Angeles and the Harbor Department should immediately begin the work to relocate the storage tanks away from the homes, schools, parks and businesses on North Gaffey. The location of the tanks may have been appropriate when the area was dairy farm and a Navy fuel depot, but not now. Understanding that this product is needed for the refinery industry, it is important to relocate this facility to an appropriate industrial site.

**What level and type of development would you support on the Ponte Vista property on Western Avenue? What factors would you consider in making your decision?**

**JUSTIN BRIMMER** This concern also falls under one of my four priority points, to Restrengthen our Communities! I will support a single-family development that is low density with minimum traffic impacts. I believe San Pedro has more than enough apartments, with vacant signs on almost every block! What our residents and future residents need, is access to homeownership. Young professionals, first-time homebuyers, and new residents deserve a chance and access to the AMERICAN DREAM! 66% of CD15, including my family and I, are renters, and most of us are not renters by choice, but due to lack of homes at reasonable prices. Ponte Vista provides an opportunity to increase our stock of single-family homes, but most of all could open doors to the blessing of homeownership!

**JOE BUSCAINO** There are many developments I want to make on Western Avenue, including a robust beautification process that will improve the business climate and property values. I support the development of the Ponte Vista property so long as the zoning status remains R1 and capped at the unit number proposed by the city planning department.

**REBECCA CHAMBLISS** Simply put, R-1. It was purchased as an R-1 development and should remain as such. Anything more would further impact surrounding property values and I don’t believe we have the infrastructure to support more than R-1 in that location.

**WARREN FURUTANI** First and foremost, developments must be a partnership between local residents, the City and the developer. As demonstrated by the strong community opposition to the original Ponte Vista proposal and the more recent proposals, it is clear that neighborhoods must come first. Therefore for any future development proposal for Ponte Vista, I will consult with the neighborhood council and residents to discuss how it will impact the quality of life in the neighborhood. As I have done throughout my career, I will work to bring parties together to find common ground so that we can find developments that benefit our neighborhoods, create jobs and improve our local economy.

**PAT McOSKER** I believe that residential housing should be built at the Ponte Vista site. The existing blight leaves a terrible impression as one enters San Pedro. I would like to see a project similar in size and density as that of the Gardens. I am in favor of a mixed-use project that does not exceed 900 units, which is substantially lower than the 2300 units originally proposed. This project will bring new developer-financed traffic mitigations on Western Avenue, including left turn signals, right turn pockets into existing businesses, and commercial shuttle buses. Any project approved for the site must include dedicated access to and from Mary Star of the Sea High School so that Taper Avenue is not the only entrance to the school.

**RUDY SVORINICH, JR.** As the Council Housing Committee Chairman for 4 years, I knew then, and know now, the challenges of first time home-buyers and seniors wanting to downsize. The eventual Ponte Vista development (which is now many years away due to the condition of the housing market) should be comprised of various housing stock -some single family homes, some townhomes, some condominiums and a senior housing component. No “for rent” units should be allowed as condos or apartments. The current proposal touts 400 “for rent” apartments which I do not support. Traffic would be a factor in considering the project. Only an experienced councilman with housing policy and development knowledge can steer this project down the right path for our community.

**GORDON TEUBER** I would support a density level in line with the former Department of City Planning recommendation of 775-885 units. The housing types should include as many detached homes and town-homes as possible. Any apartments should be built to condominium specifications.

I do not support multiple housing developments behind one common private gate. The main road structure from John Montgomery Drive and Avenida Aprenda should be public roads dedicated to the city.

I strongly support creating another access point from Fitness Drive.

The Ponte Vista developer and the Fitness Drive residents need to work together to find a solution.

The developer should provide Quimby funds for Recreation and Parks development.

**JAYME WILSON** The site is R-1 and that is the appropriate development.

# Four Questions for the Candidates

**The budget for the City of Los Angeles presents numerous challenges including a projected deficit for the current fiscal year of nearly \$200 million. What are your priorities for balancing the budget?**

**JUSTIN BRIMMER** A balanced budget falls under one of my four priority points, to Reclaim City Services! If the City does not reduce our fees, fines, or taxes than they do not have the right to reduce our essential City Services. Trimming trees, repaving our streets, fixing potholes, and we must FIX these damn sidewalks, are just as important as police and fire. What benefit will hiring 1 million police officers have, if we have trees falling on cars and sidewalks causing our seniors to become injured? As your Councilmember, I will not forget my obligations to both public safety and essential public services; there is a way to balance both!

**JOE BUSCAINO** My priorities for the budget include getting a better handle on the city's pension obligations, holding city managers accountable for their respective departments, and ensuring that essential city services become more efficient and that our district gets its fair share of city services. I will take an active role in the budget process to ensure we are not wasting any other money because we simply cannot afford to.

**REBECCA CHAMBLISS** Public safety would be number 1. Since the 40 police officers were sent out of the Harbor District (into other districts) a few years ago, our district has become the leader in property crime in all of Los Angeles, murder in the area is also way up. We need more police officers in our district. I also don't believe Fire stations should be "browned out." I am a huge advocate of public private partnerships and would work with private groups to stretch public money so that residents receive the services they pay for and deserve.

**WARREN FURUTANI** My first priority for balancing the budget is to continue to find ways where the city can save money. We can do this by reducing administrative costs, increasing efficiency in city departments, and introducing further pension reforms, which I have spearheaded at the State level. Our number one priority has to be sparking economic development locally that makes sense and creating jobs so that we can improve our local economy. I was proud to have helped in bringing the USS Iowa to San Pedro, which will generate local jobs, bring new tourism to the area and help to rejuvenate the waterfront. All of this will generate new revenue for the City so that we can start investing in our neighborhoods again.

**PAT McOSKER** As President of United Firefighters of Los Angeles City, I have seen first hand that the City's budget has been cut to dangerous levels. The only way to ensure a safe and balanced budget is to increase the City's revenues, and this requires robust economic growth. LA needs to reinvent itself as being business friendly and help new businesses, in properly planned locations, bring needed jobs and increase our tax base. The 15th Council District can do its part by finally completing the San Pedro Waterfront plan from bridge to breakwater. It is time to take advantage of the City's greatest asset, demolish Ports O' Call, and create a commercial attraction that will bring tourists, diners, and shoppers from all over southern California.

**RUDY SVORINICH, JR.** As one of the fiscal watchdogs of the City Council, as Councilman, I believed then, and believe now, that budget priorities should be public safety, sanitation, and other essential services. Priorities should be established through zero-based budgeting whereby every department would need to justify their entire budget beginning at zero each fiscal year with the council then prioritizing which essential services are fully funded first. Cutting fraud, waste and abuse and imposing strict departmental operating efficiencies would save hundreds of millions of dollars a year. In regard to these issues, there no substitute for experience.

**GORDON TEUBER** Pensions should be based on a blended average of the last five years, not on the last year of an employee's pay scale. Reduce overtime compensation, eliminate all city cell phones. Employees are contributing 7% of health care costs, they should contribute more. The plan I had as a city employee would have cost me over \$1,200 per month. The city should consolidate or eliminate non-essential departments. Furlough and 9/80 scheduling. The city should look at fully shutting down two Friday's per month to improve efficiency. We should investigate what cost savings could result from a streamlined schedule. Eliminate all cars for Council offices, and trim the city car fleet by at least 20%. De-link City Council member compensation from Superior Court Judge pay-scale.

**JAYME WILSON** I am the only City Council candidate who is refusing public funds for my political gain. The City spends \$8,000,000 each election cycle for politicians, that is wrong. I am the only candidate who will not drive a City car. Elected officials should lead by example. Working with the Neighborhood councils, I will advocate for the programs that best serve our community. The true public servants are the volunteers who toll hours and hours working to improve our community, not the politicians who respond only to the special interests who finance their campaigns and spend thousands of dollars on 'independent expenditures', supporting their election. Complete transparency throughout the budget process is required. The City faces many challenges in the coming years and I will use transparency and common sense to ensure that our community's interests are served.

**Do you believe the Department of Water and Power has justified the proposed increased rates? Why or why not?**

**JUSTIN BRIMMER** DWP rates and potential rate increases fall under one of my four priority points as well, to Reclaim City Services! DWP must remember they are not a privately owned company with responsibility to shareholders, they must be held accountable to us, the residents of Los Angeles. When DWP received their first rate increase, not too long after their employees received a raised...and that is unacceptable! I support the quick creation and hiring of the Ratepayer Advocate who will serve as the people's watchdog to monitor DWP. I believe DWP is not transparent enough for the City to truly investigate and dissect their inner workings; therefore, as your Councilmember I will seek to change that! The people of CD15, including my household, cannot afford more rate increases of any sort.

**JOE BUSCAINO** I don't believe the DWP has provided a good case for rate increases, especially in light of the rate increases being proposed before the hiring of the ratepayer advocate and the threats of a higher rate increase unless the proposed one is agreed to. One of my top priorities as Councilmember will be holding DWP accountable.

**REBECCA CHAMBLISS** I do not believe the proposed increases are justified. Infrastructure has been part of the plan and it isn't new information that infrastructure has to be maintained. I don't believe any increase should be considered at this point. A Ratepayers advocate should be in place and have enough time to get to know his/her way around prior to discussion of a rate increase.

**WARREN FURUTANI** While I support increased investments in cleaner energy and the goal of ending the use of coal-generated electricity, I strongly believe that it should not be solely on the backs of ratepayers alone. It should be a balance of departmental reform measures, investments from the City and if necessary a gradual rate increase that could further support the overall investment of making Los Angeles a more energy efficient city.

**PAT McOSKER** The DWP has articulated various reasons for a rate increase, including the condition of the infrastructure, requirements for renewable energy and increasing costs for production of electricity and delivery of water. However, without the ratepayer advocate in place to represent the interests of residents and businesses, those justifications cannot be adequately scrutinized. No rate increase should be considered until the advocate is in place.

**RUDY SVORINICH, JR.** The DWP has not justified their increases to rate payers. The moniker "Department of Wasteful Practices" (for DWP) is not far off the mark. Greater accountability and efficiencies need to be implemented prior to any serious consideration of a rate increase. As the Council's Vice-Chairman overseeing the DWP for eight years, I was diligent in overseeing the DWP and made sure they ran a tight ship. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case. Only a councilman who has the experience in managing the DWP can bring positive change to this department for the benefit of ratepayers.

**GORDON TEUBER** The ratepayer cannot afford dramatic rate increases. DWP has committed to goals which are not achievable in the time frame allotted. We need to slow the pace of this transition. LADWP faces some of the most difficult mandates of any public utility in the nation. They need to be implementing management techniques and streamline procedures in their internal operations to keep pace with the radical changes that are approaching quickly. DWP was once the shining star of the public utility industry. Management must restore a culture of excellence to this vital city asset. Good management and improved customer service should result in improved efficiency.

**JAYME WILSON** Rate increases for the DWP should not be considered until the Rate Payer Advocate has been selected, and has the sufficient staff and resources to evaluate any proposed increases.

City of Los Angeles 15th Council District

**CANDIDATE FORUM**

**Saturday, October 22**

**Candidate 'Meet and Greet' 12:00 noon  
Candidate 'Questions & Answers' 1:00 p.m.**

**Straw Poll voting 2:45 p.m.**

**Los Angeles Harbor College**

**Seahawk Center, Second Floor**

**1111 Figueroa Place, Wilmington CA 90744**

**Free parking in Lot 6**