

by william e. kelly

WARD SPOKE TO THE RAGE MONTHLY ON HIS THOUGHTS ABOUT RUNNING AND SOME OF HIS CAMPAIGN IDEOLOGIES:

Why do you believe that it's important District Three be represented by a LGBT candidate?

District Three has been supportive of the LGBT community, whether through sustaining our LGBT nonprofit service organizations, being firmly on the right side of ballot initiatives, or its affirmation of electing and re-electing LGBT leaders like Christine Kehoe, Toni Atkins, and Todd Gloria. What we want is the most well-rounded and prepared person to tackle the range of responsibilities expected of the office.

But, I do believe, there is importance to the LGBT community to have direct representation at legislative bodies from local to federal offices. Being at the table means that our issues and perspectives will be heard and respected. Equality California and the Victory Fund know this and I'm happy to have recently earned their endorsement. When that person happens to be one who is also openly LGBT, it creates a win-win for District Three and its proud synergy with San Diego's LGBT community.

Have your priorities evolved as you have met with the voters?

Solving core neighborhood challenges and creating opportunities to improve our quality of life, public safety, infrastructure and small business support on our main streets are still areas of focus. I am hearing more urgency from voters around homelessness and I see it myself, traversing just about every neighborhood in the district. Certainly the downtown homeless population has noticeably risen—it's up over 50 percent from four years ago and continues to climb.

More people are talking about Balboa Park and its own special set of infrastructure, economic and land use issues. The challenge of providing affordable housing, particularly for the booming senior population, is imperative. They do not want to have to leave the neighborhoods they have enjoyed for so long just to find affordability miles away, nor should they need to. That relates to the issues of density and development actively discussed in District Three, balancing with quality of life and neighborhood character perspectives that are important to many.

What are the realities of San Diego's infrastructure?

The reality is miles of deteriorating roads, water and sewer pipes, outdated public safety and emergency services equipment and facilities... putting homes, businesses and people at risk. The jewel

COULD SAN DIEGO CITY COUNCIL LOSE ITS ONLY LGBT MEMBER?

NOT IF **CHRIS WARD'S** CAMPAIGN



of San Diego, Balboa Park, is falling into disrepair. Fixes come with a price tag so huge, we know we can't possibly catch up in just a few years. My responsibility is to take the long view to prioritize voter approved project financing and put that to smart use. Couple that with development impact fees for future development and its cumulative infrastructure demands, working with our state delegation to reinstate local tools and benefits previously seen with Redevelopment Agencies and other possible solutions—I know we can get on the right path.

San Diego has long said it wants to be seen as a walkable, welcoming city for all ages. How would you support that vision?

When community development and urban design focuses on the needs of the oldest and youngest alike, we all benefit. The council can support that vision by implementing the community plans which I have been a part of forming for years and are about to be adopted: prioritizing transit, pedestrian and bicycle projects over freeway

expansions in our regional transportation agency decisions, making sure a range of residential affordability and mix of employment space is encouraged in all areas to keep people close to where they work, and of course, providing the funding for these objectives rather than wasting millions on boondoggles would be a great start.

Your campaign seems to clearly be resonating with constituents.

Our focus has been on voter engagement and a constituent-centered campaign that encourages community participation. They are excited about being a part of the vision and passion to address the challenges facing our neighborhoods. What is resonating is a policy of inclusion, experience managing the staff of a legislative office, work in the private sector as an urban and community planner and a history of leadership roles in community-based organizations in District Three.

Think About it!