



## CITY OF SAN JOSÉ, CALIFORNIA

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### SAN JOSÉ ELECTIONS COMMISSION

Thomas Mertens, Chair  
Fred de Funiak, Vice Chair  
Jang Badhesha  
April Lin Walsh

### SAN JOSÉ ELECTIONS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES November 16, 2006

#### Special Meeting

#### I CALL TO ORDER

The Members of the San José Elections Commission convened at 6:00 p.m. in the Multipurpose Room of Camden Community Center, 3369 Union Avenue, San José, CA 95124 to discuss the concept of public financing of city council and mayoral candidate campaigns.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS Badhesha, deFuniak, and Chair Mertens

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS Walsh

STAFF PRESENT: Consultant Alex Stuart  
Chief Deputy City Attorney Norm Sato  
Deputy City Clerk Michelle Estabillo

#### Public Comments:

- The internet allows the candidate to communicate with people.
- Internet will be tool in the future.
- Voluntary spending limits levels the field.
- Voluntary spending limits allows candidates to meet with voters (\$250 cap).
- If the cap was lower, it might mean the has to meet more people to raise money.
- Drawbacks with current system: voluntary spending limit without public financing, candidates need to concentrate on raising money than meeting voters, money being contributed can be obtained from outside of the district/city.
- Believes that diversity would go up because it is "easy" money.
- Consensus agreed that public financing would bring out a "diversity of point of view".

Public Comment (continued):

- Hard to determine quality of candidate because candidates are commercialized, carbon copy images of each other. There are no real debates on issues.
- Public would be more interested in how the candidates spend money.
- Money on phone calls and mailers will still be sent.
- Concern over how public money is spent i.e., content of ads, what is said, slanderous to other candidates?
- Would like limits put on how much businesses spend/contribute.
- Cannot stop independent expenditures with public financing.
- Raise signature requirement of 80 people higher.
- He ran against three incumbents for school board and still lost. If the city provided matching funds, the money would have been wasted.
- Consensus agreed with \$5 increments; limit public funding to qualified candidates, not gadflies.
- Small increment requirements allow a greater amount of people contributing as opposed to smaller number of people contributing a larger amount.
- \$5 and \$50 are easy to get from people.
- The qualification requirement doesn't level the playing field because someone with money can get 100 friends to donate money to his/her campaign.
- Some favored matching funds with some limitations.
- Create public financing similar to that of public education (like subsidies?) – gives candidates the opportunity to participate in the electoral process.
- Public financing allows more people to compete for public office.
- Public financing opens elections up to “fresh” candidates instead of candidates who think the same.
- Incumbents can use public financing to free up time.
- Incumbents have more name recognition than non-incumbents.
- Small increments.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

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THOMAS M. (TOM) MERTENS, CHAIR

ATTEST:

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LEE PRICE, MMC  
CITY CLERK and SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION

