

MINUTES
NBCA Candidate's Forum – Las Brisas
October 10, 2024 - 6 PM

QUESTION FOR CANDIDATES: If elected, which North Beach public improvement would you champion and how would you accomplish that goal?

CITY COUNCIL AT-LARGE CANDIDATES: Jim Klein (incumbent), Jennifer Gracia, Sylvia Tryon, Mark Scott, Larry Elizondo, and Carolyn Vaughn.

Carolyn Vaughn – I'm concerned about how much money the city is spending and how much in debt we are. We're spending on our wants and our needs. I've served on Council and as County Commissioner. Working on the roads is good.

Drainage – I would love to see them build the roads and the lots up higher. Y'all need a fire station over here, but you are not on the list. You're close enough that they can get there.

Larry Elizondo – lifelong CC resident, served on Council before, went to Houston (at Citgo) for work. I'm running because I'm concerned about taxes being out of control. Critical issue with water. We need to deal with it and take action. Supports desal.

The Mobility Plan on the Island needs to be implemented here as well. I've been on the boards of Lexington and Aquarium – lots of traffic coming this way. Focus on **roads and sidewalks** on North Beach. With the most recent fire, we should be laser focused on how we're going to respond to emergencies. Want to make sure ambulances can get here quickly.

Mark Scott – from Kingsville. In my 20s, I helped develop TAMUCC into a 4-year university. Got a master's degree MBA. Orchestrated Vision 2000, a citizen-based planning process. I was on City Council for years, reduced employees, consolidated costs, lowered tax rate. I've been involved in desal for years.

Priority for NB – **History Plaza**, big proponent. Big proponent of the **Breakwaters**. #6 on the ballot. Work with other Council members to get things done.

Sylvia Tryon – native Corpus Christian. 9 siblings. Grassroots. Lived in New Jersey, came back. I worked with seniors, the underserved, homeless, those with disabilities. I serve on the Hospital Board to care for the indigent. Let's have consistent talks and find consensus.

Beach Erosion is my issue. Compromise.

Jennifer Gracia #4 on the ballot – from CC – I have experience with federal advocacy – Wings of Texas. Put on the Juneteenth Festival at Water's Edge Park. LBJ Public Policy school national program – I recently graduated. I've worked with Sen Cruz, Cornyn, Cloud – I can work across the aisle. I can be a bulldog. My mom was president of the local union. My mother has passed away last month. But I'm still here. My loyalty is to the people. Harbor Bridge is not the only bridge that needs improving. We need to bridge gaps in our community.

Jim Klein – City Council At-Large incumbent – Ran in 2020 (didn't win), ran again in 2022 (won). I see a lot of decisions are made to benefit the few instead of everyone. Backroom deals still going on. Need to reestablish trust. That will gain the advantage of the expertise available in the public through public input. Allow the public to weigh in.

Main issue is **seawater desal**. It would bring more heavy industry. Could be good, but industry should be paying for it, rather than the public. Concerned about environmental consequences for CC Bay. We haven't done our homework. I'm a professor of history at Del Mar College. I'm trying to make government more accessible. Supposed to be a partnership.

Javid Motagi (Chad McGill speaking for him) – 37 years old. We want to make sure he has a place in leadership. Graduated with a finance degree at TAMUCC. Started a business. Father of 2. He's at his daughter's volleyball game right now. I'm helping him run for Council. He's doing it to make CC a better place for his kids.

Need a **fire station**. City has the land at Kiwanis Park. TIRZ #4 – I wrote it because the city didn't have the money to hire someone to do it. I have a deep connection to this community. Please vote for Javid.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 1 CANDIDATES - Eli McKay, Everett Roy, Billy Lerma, Anthony Aquino, John Garcia (left early)

Eli McKay – I was a candidate in 2020. I'm running again in 2024. **Inner Harbor desal plant** could hurt our fishing and environment. I want to make sure we do all the studies to make sure we're not going to impact future generations. I volunteer to work with the homeless community. I'd like to develop a plan to decrease homelessness to help both the unhoused and the communities.

North Beach is historic, important. I see that you had more priorities before and that you scaled them down. **Police/fire substation** most important for quality of life. The condo fire should have been put out earlier. Need to make sure this community is protected and response times are low. I would like to see a **NB grocery store** so you don't have to drive so far for groceries. I love coming over here.

Billy Lerma – Born and raised in Annville area. I was District 1 Council rep 2020-2022. You had lots of issues. One of your top priorities was a canal, parks, streets. When I got elected I found out they were put on a backburner and I wondered why, since you have so many visitors here. I talked to the City Manager and we were able to bring it back to life. We weren't able to get a "Cadillac" canal but we did get the **Linear Park canal**. We didn't have funding. We got \$5 million (from federal CARES act) . I want to make sure that the funding is there for the whole project. I decided to run because I was getting calls about the spending of the Council. We have a 5-4 vote on a lot of issues. Council needs a common vision and be united and try to accomplish that. I'm against desal in the Inner Harbor. I'm not against desal. The Ed Rachel

Foundation wants to put some oyster farms (on **breakwaters**) here to clean up the water. We have a City Manager that has gotten out of hand and nobody there to rein him in.

Everett Roy – Current incumbent District 1 Council member. I replaced Carolyn Vaughn in 2017. I've heard some of the candidates talk about the budget. I have been intimately involved in NB for 2 years. We had an issue with the **nonstructural fill dirt**. We met with staff and ironed through it to improve drainage and achieve elevation. Allowing this dirt through a new ordinance will help with that. Worked with Councilmen Pusley and Klein. We're still working on that. My work's not done. Code compliance. I brought the officers to visit with NBCA. As a result, we've gotten some of the issues taken care of. I helped bring the **TIRZ** to NB. I spend a lot of time here. I brought Peter Zanoni to **Surfside Park**, put it on Bond 2020, got it built. We're planning the drainage. There is money available. I believe in **desal**. I believe that the TCEQ, EPA will tell us if it's not safe, if there's a problem. We have to look at all of the sources of water and all of the possible locations, including Harbor Island. We need to look at all the water sources instead of just the lakes before moving to Phase 3. This Council has spent \$550 million on streets. Skim coating is a new thing. I'm proud of what we have done and we have more to do.

Anthony Aquino – Pastor of Calallen Baptist. My main issues are the roads and infrastructure. I was an ELS teacher for 7 years. As a minister you have to work with everyone. Do unto others. I will take care of your roads, just like I would for my roads. I moved here from Houston. I'm shocked at the neglect of our roads, esp the residential ones. It's time to make the streets of CC unholy. There are many dangerous potholes. I've sat on church school boards – tax dollars should be spent like a donation. I think you need a **police/fire station** on NB. Having access to first responders. Hold meetings with stakeholders, once a month, once a quarter. I have a bachelor's of science in public science.

John Garcia was here – had to go.

MAYORAL CANDIDATES - Isabel Ariza, Michael Hunter

Isabel Araiza – #2 on the ballot – went to Carroll High School, Del Mar, TAMUCC, PhD in sociology with focus on education and aging. Taught at TAMUCC for 20 years, moved to Del Mar CC – teach sociology. Doing research on water and the socio economic connection between water quality and health. I'm smart and I know numbers. I am running because of the **desal issue**. Desal is for industrial use. They accelerated their decision making. I ran because someone needs to ensure that the public is involved in the decision making.

Drainage issue is important – we don't take advantage of the talent at the university and available grants for funding projects, we could apply for grants to address issues for drainage and flooding without taking money from the taxpayer.

Paulette Guajardo (incumbent) – Former Fire Chief Robert Rocha talking for her. There are plans for a **public safety facility** where the old CCISD “North Beach Elementary School” was at Kiwanis Park. Mayor wants to address drainage, hold govt accountable,

Drainage – on a monthly basis the stormwater inlet team blasts each line to clear them. Operations are satisfactory. Linear Canal is in the design phase, amending the design to include the Eco Park and Beach/Gulfspray elevated streets. Elevating roadways, installing pumps.

Breakwaters to protect the shoreline.

Michael Hunter – if she [Paulette] cared so much about you, why did she send someone else? We have the best response times getting from **Fire Station 1** to NB but that will change with the new bridge. There’s a lot of big issues on NB. When did NB start getting attention? 2015-2016, Chad McGill and I were on Council. We started with the canal. We ended with the **TIRZ**. The canal got demoted 3 times, even though we passed it 4 times. New Bridge broke ground on 8-8-16. We made a decision to improve roads that feed into the bridge thru Bond 2016.

Beachwalk needs to be repaired. Unfortunately, it’s not a priority. NB has a lot of issues because it’s been neglected. Y’all are a community association and we’ve been listening to you.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 1

Mike Pusley – I’ve been serving on the City Council and we accomplished a great deal. Now I’m running for the Commissioner’s Court because it suits me better. I was elected as a County Commissioner in 2009. Carrie called me right away and talked about some playground equipment that needed refurbished. I went to Judge Neal and replaced the rusted out playground equipment at Dolphin Park. When I came over here, the city was not answering your calls. The last 5 years, the city has invested over \$21 million on NB. The 2 sales tax reauthorizations – I had them change the language on the “seawall” one to add “**breakwater**” -- Prop F, so please vote for Prop F.

I have been a huge fan of NB for most of my life. My father used to come here to the skating rink, boxing rink – during the Depression. When I started working with Carrie and the other members of NBCA, the Eco Park – Carrie and I put that idea together. Would like to see that completed.

What is the role of the County? Sheriff’s Dept, Jail, District Judges, County Court at Law, Parks. We learn to be very frugal. We had a grants dept at the County. When I got on Council, I got the city manager to hire a grant writer for the city. NB is a diamond in the rough. We are starting to see the polished edges to that diamond.

DISTRICT JUDGE - Michael McCauley – District Judge for Nueces County. Judicial races are important. He’s running for 28th District Court. Was a prosecutor for DA in Nueces County. My opponent was not efficient. \$83/day to keep someone in jail. My opponent has been a politician while I’ve been in the trenches.

APPROVE MINUTES – Sept 2024 – Chuck Anderson, Michael Hunter – motion approved.