

Place 4 candidates give reasons for running

Three candidates so far seeking to replace Ueckert

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TJ Gilmore, Margie Rochelle and John Gorena have listed their reasons for wanting to replace Dean Ueckert in Place 4 on the Lewisville City Council. Ueckert is not seeking re-election to Place 4, but instead has filed as a candidate for mayor.

As of late Tuesday, Gilmore, Rochelle and Gorena were the only three candidates to have filed as candidates for Place 4 in the May 9 special city council election. Ueckert and Winston Edmondson Jr. were the only two candidates who have filed for the office of mayor, to replace Gene Carey who is not seeking re-election.

Place 2 Councilman David Thornhill is seeking re-election. As of late Tuesday, he had no opponent.

Deadline for filing as a candidate for mayor, Place 2 or Place 4 is March 9.

Gilmore, who filed Friday afternoon and is the latest to file, said, "In these economic times, we need an even hand that brings all the city's groups to the table to create unique ways to keep Lewisville strong."

He continued, "As a member of the Community Development Bloc Grant Advisory Committee for the last four years, and as it's current chairman, I've learned how to take limited resources and apply them in a way that best serves the goals of the city and the council, as can be seen by the council's record on accepting all of our recommendations for the past four years. As a member of the Irving Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors in 2003-2004, I also can address the needs of the business community as they relate to city services and legislative agendas."

"My experience working with service agencies, city departments, city staff, and council make me the logical choice to help solve city problems and judiciously work with the resources we have to come out of these times maintaining our status as a leading family-friendly city in the Metroplex; a place that my three children will be proud to call home," Gilmore said.

He added, "In the coming years, Lewisville faces several pressing concerns: First, the expansion of the I-35 Corridor. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create the impression that millions of travelers have of Lewisville. Being in sales and marketing for the past 13 years, making a good first impression is a large part of what makes individuals, groups, and cities successful. We will also have to work with existing property owners, businesses and governmental agencies to make sure we give every stakeholder their fair input in the process and build an impression that will keep Lewisville in the forefront of livable cities in the Metroplex. My experience as an instructor for Dale Carnegie gives me the tools to create a positive outcome for all parties."

"Secondly," he continued, "the city is developing a Neighborhood Revitalization Committee and strengthening its Neighborhood Watch programs. In today's times, knowing your neighbors and building relationships will keep our community vibrant and successful. This means having leaders who are approachable, and have the city's best interests at heart. Having served on the CDBG, I know the neighborhoods that need help, the organizations that can help, and have the communication and leadership skills necessary to bring those groups together. I believe the council exists to bring the community together, not to pull it apart. As a city we're heading in the right direction by creating a community that people want to be a part of, I believe I can add to that mix, not detract.

"Thirdly, Lewisville will be the beneficiary of light rail service through DCTA," he said.

"Having been a user of one of the country's largest bus services when I was in school in Tucson, as well as having lived outside of Boston and taken advantage of their historic light rail services, I know first hand the tremendous benefits light rail can bring to the community. With the recent

economic stimulus package, Lewisville could be at the epicenter of a new resurgence in rail travel in this country. As a user, and a fan, I believe the council has to stay involved with DCTA to ensure we reap the benefits of this tool over the next few years. Light Rail will be an economic boost for us for years to come, as long as we stay engaged with the process.”

Gilmore concluded, “I have the leadership, communication, and decision making skills to help Lewisville continue to grow and be successful.”

Rochelle said, “I am running for city council to represent all the citizens of Lewisville. I share their concerns and ideas, and I believe my 21 years of service to the city and its citizens provides me with an understanding of the community as a whole.”

She added, “The revitalization of Old Town Lewisville is a product of the hard work and dedication of the city council, city employees, its boards and many community volunteers. Old Town reflects who we are as a community, defines our character and who we are as a city. I’d like to see us broaden this concept to other areas of our city which are now in need of revitalization.”

“I support public transportation,” she continued. “I believe it is necessary and long overdue. I do, however, have concerns in how the new rail system will affect our public safety and environment.”

She also expressed other concerns about the environment.

“I would like to see our city go more green,” she said. “We currently have good active programs which address this issue. However, I would like to see additional programs such as neighborhood gardens, to enrich our environment. I would like to encourage citizens to grow local and buy local.”

She said she believes enforcing immigration laws is a federal responsibility, not a city responsibility.

“Immigration is a large and controversial issue affecting everyone,” she said. “I support our federal government in enforcing our immigration laws. We, as a city, do not have the resources to combat this problem alone. It would require additional staffing of police officers and jailers. These new employees would need to be bilingual, which are difficult to recruit. Even if we do detain illegal immigrants, it is still the federal government’s responsibility to process and deport them.”

“The employees of the city of Lewisville are great,” she said. “I can personally attest to the hard work, dedication and perseverance of its employees. Having served on several city committees, I have had the great joy and honor of serving with some of the most hard-working, sincere, compassionate and deserving people I have ever met. These are employees who want to work, want to do a good job and want to give 100 percent every day. I believe in providing these employees with the tools to do their jobs and I support the city in continuing to attract, train and retain quality employees.”

“I want to see pride in our city and our schools,” she continued. “I want people who travel through Lewisville to be pleased in what they see, and, hopefully think of our city as a place to return to for shopping or visiting.”

She concluded, “I have been, and will continue to, meet and visit with local citizens, parents, committees and boards to hear their concerns, needs and wants. We’ve got a lot of positives to build on, with some areas to work on, and I want to be a part of that building.”

Gorena, a former member of the Lewisville Transportation Board, has been active in politics for a few years. He has attended almost every council meeting and workshop sessions for almost two years, except those that take place out of town, such as the recent budget retreat in Fort Worth’s Worthington Hotel.

“I got involved because I did not like some of the decisions that were being made,” Gorena said. “I agree with a lot of things that they do, but some issues I just completely disagree with. Some tax abatements seem to be a bad choice. This group decided to build a day labor center and decided not to vote on a proclamation that Lewisville’s official language (to do business in) is English.”

“They later dropped their plans for a day labor center, because I brought attention to it, and then the land was not donated because of the controversy,” Gorena continued. “The facts are that they made such a bad decision in the first place. If the land had been donated, there would be an official one there. It’s bad enough that Lewisville has an unofficial day labor site now.” Although illegal immigrants in Lewisville are one of Gorena’s main concerns, he emphasizes that he is not a one-issue candidate.

“I would like to limit political signs, cut costs and work with the county to appraise property values more fairly and accurately,” he said. “Most people do not have the time to go and complain about their property appraisals.”