

Upcoming Fairfax City Elections, November 2024

Friends of Fairfax City Environment – July 20, 2024

It might be easy for our local elections to get overlooked, especially with all the alarm bells going off seemingly daily at the national level. However, our local elections are critical for guiding the decisions that will affect us here in the City and we desperately need a council and mayor who will be thoughtful, responsive and open-minded. As the city's election season gets underway, and candidates start knocking on doors across the city, please consider asking them their position on the issues that are uppermost in this group's interests such as:

- the conversion of woods to bike trails issue,
- protecting our remaining woodlands,
- supporting our wildlife,
- pollinators,
- reducing light and noise pollution and
- making our streets safer for all users.

I hope you will encourage your neighbors and friends to help elevate these topics across the city. The more that candidates hear the questions, the more they will realize these are important issues in the city. Let's make these issues front and center! We succeeded in bringing a spotlight to environmental stewardship as a core value that the current City Council should (and did) write into their Council goals. We pulled the George Snyder Trail from the "done deal" pile, and still have a chance of limiting its scope if not completely canceling it. We managed to convince council to shelve the John Mason trail.

We can continue to effect change by talking to the candidates and supporting the candidates like Sue, Kate, and Tom, who will commit to protecting our natural resources and view other decisions with an eye to limiting impacts on our woodlands and streams. And they need to know we have their back when they make courageous stands, as Kate has done so brilliantly on the GST. If you can support them with a small donation, great! A little goes a long way in these local elections. If you can volunteer some time, especially during the early voting days at City Hall, wonderful! Your help is very much needed and will make a difference. If you have an interest in helping them out with social media engagement or in other ways please, please get in touch.

As I said before, I don't know the other new candidates, and there are quite a few! And I don't yet feel confident to say who else running will put the City's goal of protecting our environment at the forefront. I am hopeful that the candidates who have committed to an independent and nonpartisan election will be allies. The nonpartisan commitment is important for many reasons, but one critical reason is that we don't need partisan national or regional politics preventing our mayor and council from making good decisions for our city. When backed by larger party structures, the endorsed candidates will always have an ear tuned to those voices and clearly in the case of the GST this meant that the leaders supported by the local Democratic party seem to be listening to their party leadership rather than Fairfax City residents. When I mentioned above that the current council added environmental stewardship to their goals, I should add that was not put forward by the Democrats on council. That was spearheaded by Kate, who is firmly committed to local nonpartisan leadership.

There are many other reasons to bolster the independence of our local elections, including that federal employees cannot be affiliated with partisan groups or materials and would risk their employment if engaged in partisan politics. The local democratic party decided to endorse local candidates last election but even if you sympathize with the particular circumstances of that election, there is clearly no call for endorsing candidates this time around and personally I am disappointed the party decided to do this, as it opens the door to needless rancor. (For Chap Peterson's take on the issue you can read more at <https://www.tfinews.press/articles/editorial/180/>).

I look forward to learning about each prospective council member and asking for their views and goals, and I'm sure you will as well. Here are the candidates who have committed to a nonpartisan campaign and council along with their websites.

Mayor

- Sue Kuiler <https://kuiler4fairfax.com/>

Council Candidates

- Thomas D. “Tom” Peterson <https://www.tom4fairfax.org/>
- Kate G. Doyle Feingold* <https://kateforfairfaxcity.com/>
- Stacy R. Hall <https://stacyforfairfax.com/>
- Rachel M. McQuillen <https://www.independentfairfaxcity.com/rachel-mcquillen>
- Jeffrey C. Greenfield* <https://jeffgreenfield.org/>
- Anthony T. Amos <https://www.anthonytamos.org/>

Thanks for staying engaged,