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From:
Sent: Wednesday, September 28, 2022 7:57 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: District 3 Councilperson Selection Consideration

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To the esteemed members of the Pasadena City Council,

I am a Pasadena native and resident of District 3.

I began working with Councilmember Kennedy in the summer 2012 at the start of preparation for his first campaign for City Council. Once he was elected, I worked with him on numerous projects and initiatives. The first project was serving as part of a four person team that interviewed candidates for his Liaison and resulted in his selection of two Liaisons. Additionally, I attended over 90% of his community meetings as well as many other events over the years.

I along with almost 59% of the voters in District 3 voted for Councilmember Kennedy this year for a third term. I hope that very recent strong expression of support by District 3 voters plays a significant role in the consideration of his successor. Voters voiced their approval of Councilmember Kennedy's priorities, his constituent services, and his unyielding advocacy for the less fortunate.

District 3 faces several issues that also happen to be citywide issues. I had conversations with John about these issues, and he considered each of these to be of significant importance. In my estimation, the foremost issue to him was affordable housing. His highly public advocacy for the construction of 1,000 (later increased to 3,000) affordable housing units in Pasadena clearly indicated a top priority. He adamantly believed that rent control was not the best way to protect vulnerable renters, the supply of affordable units, and mom and pop landlords.

A second major issue is the reclamation of the 710 Stub, a small portion of which forms the western boundary of District 3. With his keen awareness of the history of Pasadena, portions of which are far from admirable, Councilmember Kennedy was aware of the demographics of the residents who were forced to leave their homes in southwest Pasadena for the construction of the 710 stub. He also was aware of the "coincidence" that the mostly Black neighborhood decimated by the 710 stud had a southern boundary of California Boulevard. Accordingly, he wanted to ensure those historic realities were incorporated into the consideration of potential uses for the 65 acres in the heart of a built out city – truly an unprecedented opportunity.

An additional issue that extends not only beyond the city boundaries, but also extends to much of the southwestern quadrant of the continental United States is water. Similar to the way that Pasadena "punches above its weight" in so many areas due to resources like the Rose Bowl/Rose Parade and Caltech/JPL, Pasadena has access to water, however modest, via the Arroyo Seco and potentially to a lesser extent via Eaton Canyon that most cities lack. John wanted the city to take steps to maximize the capture of water in the face of the ongoing current drought and likely future ones.

As District 3 and the entire city grapple with these issues and many others, foreseeable or not, the skills of someone like Councilmember John Kennedy will be sorely needed. Selecting a successor who possesses as many as possible of John's numerous skills and attributes will not only honor his memory, but also serve well District 3 and the entire city.

09/29/2022
Item 3

Councilmember Kennedy's successor should have experience working collaboratively with people from all walks of life. The preferred candidate should have extensive relationships with all the stakeholders who live, work, and play in District 3 – residents, local businesses, local nonprofits, the local faith community, and government officials. The preferred candidate should understand how local government functions and the role it plays in the lives of stakeholders – particularly those less fortunate who so frequently lack a voice or seat at decision-making tables.

Some of the desired attributes follow. Although a bit repetitious, I think the importance of understanding and prioritizing the interests of the less fortunate cannot be emphasized enough. An appreciation for the Pasadena history that brought us to today is important. Given the need to quickly hit the ground running to serve constituents, the preferred candidate needs to be intelligent and a quick learner. The preferred candidate should have extensive relationships and connections in District 3. While it may sound a bit like faint praise or an irrelevant consideration, a pleasant personality is important – especially in light of the challenges of gathering the needed five votes to pass initiatives. The type of persistence that Councilperson Kennedy demonstrated via his multi-year advocacy for police oversight will also be helpful. Integrity and a strong sense of right and wrong that will fuel the determination to take unpopular, but principled stands is desirable.

I would like to add some personal observations. I have known Lucious Smith since we were 11 years old and playing in Central Pasadena Little League. I was one year ahead of him at Wilson Junior High School and at Muir High School. I have always known Lucious to be a smart, pleasant person who gets along with everyone. Well-connected in District 3, he is levelheaded and community minded. I am aware of how he took his time to consider whether he should apply for the position. His decision was well thought and not made in haste.

I know Justin Jones through volunteering with Councilmember Kennedy. I have observed Justin to be quite smart and hardworking. I think he would also be an asset to District 3.

I do not know Brandon Lamar very well. I have observed him in a few settings – some somewhat official and others less formal.

In light of the above recommended considerations as well as my personal interactions, I rank the candidates as follows.

1. Lucious Smith
2. Justin Jones (not a distant 2nd, but nevertheless 2nd)
3. Brandon Lamar

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Danny Parker