

City Council Race or Mud Match?

by Richard Burton, Publisher

Unless you're one of the eighteen wheels on a diesel truck, you won't come prepared with your giant mud flap. Get your rain slicker and that old pair of rubber boots, they'll come in handy as the mud continues to fly into the last few days of the campaign for two of the three Bend City Council seats up for grabs.

Derek Stevens and Mark Capell are both running for the Council Position 5 seat being vacated by City Councilor Dave Malkin. Clint Chick and Wyvetta Wilson are running against Mayor Bill Friedman for Council Position 6 seat. Chris Telfer is the only uncontested candidate, running for the Council Position 7 seat.

Mud comes in many varieties. We're all familiar with muddy water, thick mud and the worst kind, sludge, otherwise known as sewer water. Most politicians are highly skilled at splattering muddy water and even thick mud if they're wearing their rubber boots, but Clint Chick should go out for Olympian style sludge tossing, if there were such a sport. He might win this type of competition. We all know what's in sewer water.

Chick was dealt some heavy criticism from the Friedman camp when he accepted \$20,000 in campaign contributions from political action committees associated with the Central Oregon Builders Association (COBA). Chick is Director of the COBA. And Chick has the gall to scrutinize Friedman's business partnership with fellow councilor, Linda Johnson? The two council members are joint owners of Cascade Bookkeeping, Inc. A portion of Cascade Bookkeeping manages homeowners associations in Central Oregon and Chick sees this as a conflict of interest. Clearly, the candidate is desperately reaching for something. Anything to get the focus off of the real conflict of interest here, a director of a building association, who is privy to votes regarding future campaign contributions. According to Chick, he didn't vote on those issues. Before becoming business partners, Friedman and Johnson spoke to legal advisors and peers. "We talked with city staff, with city councilors, with business people, with people in the media," Friedman said. "All of whom indicated in their opinions that it was both a smart business move and a non-starter issue as far as a conflict of interest is concerned."

It seems Chick likes to twist real issues and make issues out of non-issues or dwell on the past instead of planning and looking to the future. Like an ex-spouse, Chick refuses to talk about the issue at hand, bringing up mishandled Juniper Ridge, droning on and on about the mishandled negotiations and now questions the

need for a four-year university. Juniper Ridge is coming. It's the future of Bend. Talking about closed door meetings and what the council should have done or could have done is a mammoth waste of time. Where is this man's vision? We need someone who can see Bend thirty years from now, who will fight for our grandchildren's future. We need this university. We don't need a leader who will sit back moaning about the past, what ifs and could have beens when we have an experienced man like Bill Friedman. Friedman has admitted to the fact that Juniper Ridge could have been handled better, but there was a Memorandum of Understanding made public and now we need someone who can lead us into the building phase and deliver through, someone who is familiar with the vision for Juniper Ridge.

Chick is far too under qualified, lacking the real city leadership that Friedman can and does provide to the Bend City Council. His experience in the oil and gas industry, as an insurance underwriter and financial advisor just doesn't cut it for a seat on the Bend City Council. Mayor Friedman has been in office for four years and served nine years on the Bend City Council. He has been responsible for Farewell Bend Park, Bill Healy Memorial Bridge and developing roundabouts on the west side of Bend.

One of Chick's favorite words when tossing sludge Friedman's way is "micromanage". Once again, Chick is terribly ill informed or perhaps, just embarrassing. To accuse Friedman of micromanaging is ludicrous. To say this is a show of disrespect to the other council members. So, Chick thinks the rest of the Council is a sack of puppets? If Friedman were a micromanager, the rest of the Bend City Council would have wanted him gone long ago. Fellow councilors; Bruce Abernethy, Jim Clinton, John Hummel and Linda Johnson backed Mayor Friedman in a joint statement, describing him as "a voice of reason, vision, passion and creativity on the council."

Throwing sludge is what Chick does best. He has even found a way to blame Bend's phenomenal supernova like growth on Friedman, when Oregon law is responsible for the Urban Growth Boundary, which once established will also help with affordable housing, another one of Chick's gripes. It's easy to throw all the sludge on one man, when many, many factors come into play, but Chick's mind doesn't seem capable of grasping this concept. Anything to skirt around the real issue here, a truck load of campaign dollars dumped into Chick's campground. He's proud of this mountain of money, though he's the Director of COBA, but remember, he didn't vote on campaign contributions. He even said, "I'm not ashamed of any donations I took! They have bought into my agenda. I have not bought into theirs." Not a smart comment, but Chick seems to have "foot in mouth" disease lately. So, the COBA or their political action committees, make no mistake, it's coming from the same people, are they are a bunch of fools, too? They bought into Chick's agenda, but he hasn't bought into theirs? He said it, folks. He didn't buy into theirs. Well, maybe they should take the money back then. What is Clint Chick's agenda, except to throw sludge at well-respected members of the Bend City Council, reaching, reaching and then, finally grabbing some sludge instead?

Chick has also criticized Friedman, blaming him personally for not hiring enough police officers and instead, hiring a consultant for \$70,000. Clearly this man has no idea how city government is run. Bill Friedman cannot put an ad in the newspaper and just hire a police officer himself. The Mayor defended himself by saying, "As you know, the department heads, including the police department, the fire department, public works, and all others, make requests, to the City Manager for staffing and funding. The City manager, in turn, makes an overall recommendation to the 14-member city budget committee. For each of the past two years, the city manager has recommended five additional police positions, as well as small additions in other departments. The budget committee reviewed and accepted those recommendations. I know the fire department would like additional EMTs; public works would like additional employees for road maintenance, sweeping and snow removal, and the police department for additional officers. But, all this must be done within the available funding and with the knowledge that it must be funded every year into the future. I am trusting the city staff, the City manager, the budget committee and the Council to complete each year's budget process in a responsible manner and within the resources of the city." He also defended himself well simply by explaining the workings of government to clueless Chick by saying,

"The Juniper Ridge consultant, approved by the entire Council, is paid for by the Master Developer and the sale of property in Juniper Ridge. None of the expense comes from city taxpayers. And, of course, the consultant is critical to the process of developing a plan for a major university presence in Bend. A presence that I see as critical to the future of our city." We really need this university in Juniper Ridge so Chick can enroll for government and business classes.

Bend residents are far too intelligent to vote for Clint Chick and most will certainly be put off by his lack of experience and knowledge in city government alone, not to mention his shady, unethical, sludgy campaign practices. Friedman said it best when he said, "My belief is that the voters in the city of Bend could see through that kind of campaign very easily and would be offended by it." Even with a heavy coat of sludge, the message is crystal clear. Chick's agenda is not an agenda with Bend's best interests at heart. We need a strong leader with vision and that person is Bill Friedman.

It's easy to lose sight of Wyvetta Wilson, the other candidate running for the Seat 6 Position. A clear minded woman with enough vision and more experience than Chick, but not a strong enough leader for Bend. Wilson said when asked about the race, "If I don't win, so what. It will be fun." This isn't a game. These are real people running for an important seat on the Bend City Council, a seat that can and will effect the lives of thousands of Bend residents. Wilson takes the role a tad too lightly, but at least she's willing to help clear out the mud slinging with her chants of "Keep it clean, please." at the last debate.

Mark Capell has been slinging some pretty thick mud towards Derek Stevens in the race for Position 5 seat. "I

have a concern about the judgment of my opponent, who on a Net chat room sexually harassed a young lady, then dismissed it as "fluff" to The Bulletin," Capell said. Fluff or not, do we really want someone sitting in on city meetings who may be daydreaming instead about an online conversation when he should be making important decisions about Bend's future? Capell brought up a valid point and also shares a strong vision for Juniper Ridge where Stevens wants to rehash old issues and has strong doubts about a university in Bend. Bend is growing by leaps and bounds. We need strong leaders that will fight for the future of our children, making the university a reality. We don't need doubtful council members like Stevens on board.

The uncontested candidate, Chris Telfer is clean for the time being. Rarely does mud land on her. Telfer is a strong leader, but often thought of as the minority in the council. "That is what I bring to council," Telfer said. "That is what is important, all the perspectives represented so the final decision is better thought out, a better representation of all of the citizens of Bend." Though she is said to be polarizing to the Council to some degree, it is Telfer's clear and honest opinions that oftentimes reflect the opinions and needs of the citizens of Bend. She is a good balance and another supporter of Juniper Ridge, which will bring an influx of dollars and jobs to Bend.

Bend is a rapidly growing city. We need strong leaders to carry us into 2007, to finish Juniper Ridge, increase affordable housing and make smart decisions that will effect thousands of good citizens. When you cast your ballot on November 7, project your mind into the future and make the best decision for Bend, for our children, for our future and hopefully by November 8, the mud will dry up.