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




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West St. Paul: Mayoral candidates have faced each other before

Two newcomers spar for Ward 1 seat

By Nick Ferraro

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West St. Paul Mayor John Zannmiller faces a familiar opponent in his bid for a fourth term.

Zannmiller, who was first elected mayor in 2004 after serving two years on the city council, faces off against Mary Jane Duchene, who ran for the city's top spot in 2004 but didn't make it out of the primary.

Duchene has a history of fighting the city over personal legal issues. In 1997, Duchene was given a misdemeanor public nuisance citation after an animal control officer reported "extreme buildup" of dog feces in her back yard.

The case was thrown out of Dakota County District Court after Judge Duane Harves concluded the city should have sought charges through a formal complaint.

"The city made all sorts of claims," Duchene said Tuesday. "But they lost in court."

Duchene was cited for a barking dog in August 2009. She was convicted of the misdemeanor offense this past June after a jury trial.

Zannmiller edged out Ward 2 city council member Ed Iago, 51 percent to 48 percent, in the 2008 mayor's race.

The narrow win came after the council censured Zannmiller over allegations that he had received a gift — a table made of fake deer antlers — from the former city manager.

Zannmiller was never charged in the case. Citing lack of evidence, the Dakota County attorney's office closed its investigation into allegations that Zannmiller violated a state law prohibiting city officials from accepting gifts.

For city council, the Ward 1 seat is up for

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grabs, since Aaron VanMoorlehem decided not to seek re-election. Candidates Patrick Armon and Edward Hansen are both political newcomers.

Meanwhile, Iago (Ward 2) and Dave Wright (Ward 3) are running unopposed.

Nick Ferraro can be reached at 651-228-2173.

Mayor / Mary Jane Duchene, 63

Family: Single

Education: Bachelor's degree from Minneapolis College of Art and Design; legal studies at Honorable Society of Gray's Inn, London, England

Occupation: Owner, OpusArts LLC; founder and community volunteer, Diabetics/Disabled Anonymous

Relevant experience: Community advocate and lecturer

If budget cuts were needed, what would you cut?
Continuing to spend big on city litigation as "the solution" for quality housing is a mistake and creates a hostile environment. An alternative is creating a multipurpose city charitable foundation that offers tax relief for contributions, actually achieves housing maintenance goals and allows

expansion art/culture for business and development.

Why vote for you? I will endeavor to stop enabling civil rights violations, such as the scandal with the Metro Strike Force. A salaried prosecutor committed to civil rights would be a blessing. Make better use of resources, including parks and recreation, and more, to enable creative, developmental and educational opportunities within the city.

Contact: angelfire.com/mn3/mj4mayor/election2010.html; MariJaynDuchene@aol.com

John Zannmiller, 43 (Incumbent)

Family: Wife, Laura; daughters, Jeanette, Elizabeth and Margaret

Education: Bachelor's degree from St. Cloud State University

Occupation: Probation/parole officer

Relevant experience: I have been fortunate to be a part of West St. Paul's city council since 2002. And my work assignment in Hennepin County has given me the opportunity to see how partnerships are formed, costs are contained and solutions are created.

If budget cuts were needed, what would you cut? I am advocating for a balanced approach to spending cuts if necessary. We cannot "rob Peter to pay Paul," but I also am a strong supporter of maintaining both core services and the quality and cost-effective delivery of services.

Why vote for you? Since 2004, I have given our city 110 percent. West St. Paul has emerged from the decline people lamented, and we've shown progress despite a tough economy. Voters should look at performance and be assured they'll get that same attention in the next two years.

Contact: Zammiter on Facebook, Mayor Zammiter ezgimier.com

City Council / Patrick Armon, 44

Family: Wife, Laurie; children Austin and Cassidy

Education: St. John's University graduate

Occupation: Business and community development representative at the Department of Employment and Economic Development

Relevant experience: I have 11 years experience in community development and served as a professional at the state Capitol for five years. I have held leadership positions with the Cub Scouts and Moreland PTA. I have also served on the city charter commission and economic development advisory group.

If budget cuts were needed, what would you cut? I support the city's long-range plan of budgeting without depending on state aid. I would consider deferring street, infrastructure and park maintenance. We should look at conducting business with less overtime, fewer seasonal workers and recruit volunteers to help. The volunteers would be recognized on the city website.

Why vote for you? I am listening to voters while campaigning and will act on their opinions. I have a history of getting things done through volunteering and retain several, important community development contacts to network with.

Contact: votearmon.com; 651-457-8214

Edward Hansen, 40

Family: Single

Education: St. Joseph's School in West St. Paul; Henry Sibley High School; graduate of Inver Hills Community College, where he served on the student council; Dakota County Technical College, photography degree

Occupation: Owner/operator of Rocco's Pizza in Little Canada since 2000

Relevant experience: I have no problem balancing my business and personal budgets and would like to help the city of West St. Paul get back in black by cutting red tape.

If budget cuts were needed, what would you cut? Labor is the greatest expense in the budget, and I think there are other things that could be cut and am open to suggestions. We live in times where we all need to cut back, and the government should not be asking the taxpayers to sacrifice any more tax dollars.

Why vote for you? I have a great idea to improve the city — cut off the welfare, i.e., Section 8. We need more people with something vested in the city, like homeowners, not freeloading parasites. I will do the will of the taxpaying majority.

Contact: 651-210-9729; edhansenusa@yahoo.com

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