



Summit News

November 2000

Election Forum Takes On Ballot Questions

On September 5th, a week before the primary election, the SNA presented Election Forum 2000. The association's biennial debate features candidates for local office. This year's event was expanded to include a discussion of the questions that will appear on the November ballot.

The three candidates for District 5 State Representative took the stage first. Incumbent Gordon Fox (D), Shannon Donahue (D) and Charles Smith (R) answered questions submitted by the SNA and members of the audience. The topics covered included health care, the PILOT program, casinos, education reform and the business climate in the state. Representative Fox prevailed over Ms. Donahue in the primary, and goes on to face Mr. Smith in the general election.

For the second half of the forum, the SNA invited speakers to present the case for or against each of the 7 ballot questions.

Question 1, Environmental Management Bonds, \$34M. Bob Ballou, Chief of Staff at the state Department of Environmental Management, spoke in support of the question, which would enable bonds to be used to acquire open space at both the state and municipal levels for preservation and recreation. No one spoke against the question.

Question 2, RI Clean Water Finance Agency - Water Quality Management Bonds \$60M. Mr. Ballou also spoke in favor of question 2, which would allow the state to issue \$60M in bonds

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SNA Opposes Miriam Renovation

Lifespan, parent company of Miriam Hospital, has applied to the Rhode Island Department of Health for a certificate of need (CON) for the renovation and relocation of the intensive and coronary care units (ICU/CCU) within the Miriam campus.

Miriam is a good hospital, but it has not always been a good neighbor. Over the years, Miriam has devoured land, housing stock and a school in our neighborhood, expanding outward in all directions. Wary of future expansion by the hospital, neighbors welcomed the institutional master plan section of the zoning

ordinance, which took effect in 1995. The law requires institutionally zoned schools and hospitals to submit to the City every five years a document describing their plans for land use, building and renovation.

Last year, Miriam submitted its first 5 year master plan. It was 4 years, 9 months late.

Master plans for the period 2000-2005 were due this past April. Despite assurances by Lifespan administrators that a public meeting would be held and a plan submitted on time, we have seen nothing.

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Art Work Aims At Neighborhood Divisions

Regular Hope Street travellers have recently noticed a change in the landscape. Ten large signs, spaced at regular intervals, hang from telephone poles on both sides of Hope from Doyle Avenue to Rochambeau Avenue. Invisible Borders, by artist Paul Badger, is part of the Convergence Art Festival, and was commissioned by the Providence Parks Department.

Each sign contains a quote by a local resident about the neighborhoods on both sides of Hope. In addition to the large signs, there are two smaller signs that identify the west side of Hope as "Mount Hope," and the east side as "Blackstone."



A sign is part of the Convergence Art Festival.

Urban residents everywhere are familiar with the arbitrary divisions that define neighborhoods within a city. Mr. Badger's work explores Hope Street as such a dividing line, through the words of those peering across the asphalt at the other side. He says,

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Election Forum

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to provide zero interest loans for projects including drinking water systems, sewer and waste water treatment throughout the state. A third of the funding would be directed to the Narraganset Bay Commission's Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) project, in the City of Providence. Greg Gerritt, a stakeholder in the CSO debate representing the Green Party of RI, spoke against the question. He argued that the CSO project is misguided, expensive and prone to cost overruns, adding that alternatives to the project such as reducing rainwater runoff were never examined, and that the NBC is mismanaged and untrustworthy. Though other projects the bonds would fund are worthwhile, Mr. Gerritt said it is a mistake to bundle the CSO project with them.

Question 3, Transportation Bonds, \$62.5M. RI Department of Transportation Director William Ankner spoke in favor of the question, which would enable the state to issue bonds to qualify the state for federal matching funds to improve highways, roads, bridges and mass transit. Barry Schiller, Transportation Chair of the RI Sierra Club, spoke against issuing the bonds, noting that a portion of the bond money is earmarked for the Providence River Bridge (I-195) relocation project and the Quonset Freeway project, both of which he opposes as ill-conceived. He noted that the bonds would not fully fund the projects, but would commit us to funding them in the long term.

Question 4, Higher Education Bonds, \$37M. Nancy Caruollo, Associate Commissioner for Program and Planning at the Department of Higher Education, spoke in favor of the question, which would enable funds to improve residence halls at URI and RIC, and to fund a new cam-

pus for CCRI in Newport. No one spoke against the question.

Question 5, Heritage Harbor Museum Bonds, \$25M. Lisa Dady, curator with the RI Historical Society spoke in favor of the question. The bonds would help fund the proposed Heritage Harbor Museum. Ms. Dady noted that Rhode Island is the only state that does not have a state history museum, that a rise in the hotel tax will be used to repay the bonds, and that the project is also funded by private donations, for a total cost of \$59M. No one spoke against it.

Question 6, Question Proposed by the Governor, Co-equal Branches of Government. No speaker could be found to speak for or against this question.

City of Providence Bond Issue, \$50M. Tom Glavin, from the Department of Planning and Development, spoke in favor of the question, which would allow the city to borrow \$50M for capital improvements and redevelopment. A similar question was approved by voters in 1996, and the proceeds of that bond issue have been used to repave roads and sidewalks, improve parks, and fund a variety of other projects. Mr. Glavin said the new bond issue would be similar to the previous one. Grant Dulgarian, SNA board member, spoke against the question, noting that voters have a right to know how the money will be spent beforehand. He noted that unlike most other bond questions, this one does not identify the projects to be funded, and that the city itself does not yet know. He also noted that the 1996 obligation will not be paid off for 20 more years, and suggested that borrowing money is not the best way for a city to fund routine maintenance.

The SNA would like to thank the candidates and speakers, the League of Women Voters, Church of the Redeemer, and the volunteers who put it all together.

Miriam

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While the hospital is in violation of the zoning ordinance, it should not receive building permits or zoning variances. The City has been less than vigilant in this respect over the past 5 years. Beginning with the current proposed renovation, the SNA is asking Councilman Jackson, the Department of Planning and Development, and the Health Department to insist that Miriam comply with master plan regulations, and to deny them building permits and zoning variances until they do.

Summit News is the official newsletter of the Summit Neighborhood Association. It is published three or four times a year and distributed for free to households in the Greater Summit Area.

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Crime Up in Summit

Local police have confirmed a series of break-ins in the Summit neighborhood over the past two months that they believe have been perpetrated by the same thief, a young white man with a slight build. Three homes were broken into through doors and windows; one victim had a snow-blower stolen from their garage. Local residents are urging neighbors to take extra precautions.

Art Work

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“It is my hope that the signs will serve as a focus for discussion and dialogue between and among the two neighborhoods, and relate to a larger audience as well.”

Does Hope Street define a border between two worlds? There’s certainly a big transition from the grand homes off Blackstone Boulevard to the more modest dwellings, and incomes, closer to North Main Street. But a line could be drawn at Ivy or Morris or Camp or Elmgrove, depending on your perspective. Demographically, Summit must fall somewhere between those worlds - on Mr. Badger’s invisible border?

Business Scene

Another institution on Hope Street will soon close its doors. **Lad & Lassie** Shoe Store has been at 744 Hope Street for 50 years, but the present owners (for the past 26 years) feel it is time to call it quits.

Jay Downing has closed his bike shop, **Downing Bicycles**, at 795 Hope Street.

The **801 Gallery Cafe** has left 801 Hope Street and will soon open at 356 East Avenue, Pawtucket, just beyond the Modern Diner and the East Avenue Cafe.

Chez-Nous Salon has moved to 837 Hope Street, formerly occupied by Antonio’s Coiffure.

The former **Al’s Citgo Station** at 820 Hope Street is being renovated into a bakery.

Mount Sinai Memorial Chapel at 825 Hope Street has closed, and Max Sugarman Memorial Chapel at 458 Hope Street is now “Sugarman - Sinai Memorial Chapel.”

India Cafe will soon move from

its present location at 758 Hope Street to the former Bumblebee’s at 1060 Hope Street.

Jerry’s Sunoco station at 1101 Hope Street is now **Jerry’s Ser-**



Lad & Lassie closes its doors after 50 years.

vice, a Citgo station, and is run by Jerry’s son, Peter Bennett.

Down on North Main Street, the former Merit Station across from Brooks Drugs has become a **Hess Station**.

Regal Reptiles has moved from 685 North Main Street into the former Pilz Jewelry building at 891 North Main Street.

Frederick J. “Rick” Harkins, an investment representative with Edward Jones, Inc, will soon be moving to 247 Rochambeau Ave.

Join The Summit Neighborhood Association

Complete this form and mail it to: *Summit Neighborhood Association
Box 41092, Providence, RI 02940.*

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Enclosed is \$10.00 for **2001** Individual Family Membership

(Make checks payable to *Summit Neighborhood Association*).

I am concerned and would like to help with SNA activities. I am particularly interested in working on the following:

I can leaflet _____

SNA Voter's Guide

Question 1

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BONDS, \$34M.

APPROVE

It's mom, baseball and apple pie. These bonds will help protect and preserve open space for environmental and recreational purposes. We can't think of a reason to oppose it.

Question 2

RHODE ISLAND CLEAN WATER FINANCE AGENCY - WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT BONDS, \$60M.

REJECT

These bonds would fund a variety of projects around the State including protecting drinking water supplies, improving sewage treatment, and the Combined Sewage Overflow (CSO) project. Most of these projects are good ones, but the way the Narragansett Bay Commission is approaching the CSO project is extremely troubling, and therefore a good reason to reject the bond issue. The NBC has dragged its feet on looking at alternatives to the big tunnel it proposes, and now it is trying to set sewer rates in such a way as to eliminate incentives for water conservation and rainwater runoff reduction. Only by stopping these bonds can we get the NBC to act more responsibly, so even though many of the smaller projects included here are good ones, we recommend rejecting the question.

Question 3

TRANSPORTATION BONDS, \$62.5M.

REJECT

Everyone wants our roads and bridges fixed, but too much of this bond issue will be spent on large, questionable projects like the Providence River Bridge (I-195) relocation and the Quonset Freeway, and very little will be spent on rapid transit, which would help reduce traffic on our highways. It is true that the state cannot receive federal highway funds to which it is entitled without allocating funds to match, but this bond issue is not the only opportunity the state will have, and those funds can be better spent.

Question 4

HIGHER EDUCATION FACILITIES BONDS, \$37M.

APPROVE

This bond issue will fund needed improvements to the infrastructure of the state's institutions of higher learning, and we support it.

Question 5

HERITAGE HARBOR MUSEUM BONDS, \$25M.

APPROVE

We question the wisdom of providing public money to a private, not-for-profit organization, and the precedent that this sets. But the Heritage Harbor Museum is a worthwhile project, and will be a great asset to the city and the state, so we support it.

Question 6

QUESTION PROPOSED BY THE GOVERNOR - CO-EQUAL BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

APPROVE

This question is an advisory referendum, which means that the results will have no effect except to stir up political debate.

We support a constitutional convention charged with enhancing the separation and equalization of power among the branches of government. We also note that the convention is not limited to addressing the issues for which it is called, but may offer voters any revisions or amendments to the state constitution that they see fit.

CITY OF PROVIDENCE REDEVELOPMENT AND/OR CAPITOL IMPROVEMENTS, \$50M.

REJECT

Most of us do not use our credit cards to pay our bills. We pay our bills from our paycheck and use credit for big purchases. The capitol improvements that this and the previous city bond issues pay for are the bills that come due for big cities: repairing an aging infrastructure. Other cities repave their streets and sidewalks on an annual basis from a capitol improvements budget. Providence borrows the money. Not only that, it borrows a lot of money, with no idea of what it will do with it. The City gets money from bonds that must be repaid over 25 years and treats it like a windfall - spending it without an overall plan or strategy, and without reviewing the quality, efficacy or efficiency of the result. Last time, we asked how the City would pay for improvements after the money ran out with 20 years of debt remained to be paid. It appears the answer is to borrow more money. Reject this question.

Tree Planting Scheduled for Fourth Street

Want to be part of beautifying and reforesting Fourth Street? You can! It's as easy as agreeing to plant and tend free street trees that will be delivered next spring. Competition for tree grants from the Providence Neighborhood Planting Program (PNPP) is high and the chances of getting the 10-15' trees increases with the number of trees requested so come join the fun! If you live on or near Fourth Street, call Andrea Mainardi, group leader, at 831-4539 to join the planting. The grant application is due by December 1st so we need neighbors to commit to participating by November 15th.

To organize a planting on your street, call the PNPP at 351-5802.