



“CORBETT’S STANCE ON ISSUES IMPORTANT TO YOU”

October 20, 2009

I HAVE GIVEN MY HOMETOWN EVERYTHING I HAVE GETTING READY TO LEAD

I am prepared to lead my hometown. I am committed to listening then taking the actions necessary to make Bellaire the best it can be. The main issue in this election is simple, who is best qualified and most willing to work hard to ensure Bellaire remains a premium place to live. **This brochure gives my full understanding and analysis of the issues most discussed during my reaching out to Bellaire leaders and residents.**

PRIMARY JOB OF A COUNCILMAN

I believe the primary job responsibilities of a Bellaire Councilman are:

- (i) To listen and be responsive to the requests of citizens,
- (ii) To constantly reach out to residents asking how the city can do a better job, then be proactive in finding solutions, and
- (iii) To be prepared and as fully-informed as possible in every decision that is made.

Please send any questions to me at Campaign@corbettparker.com

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ECONOMIC ISSUES

Managing City's Budget During Economic Slowdown

Economic times are still tough with many families worried about their jobs, home values and quality of life. Residents are faced with a significant tax burden, and thus expect high quality public services that enhances the residential quality of life. However, it is imperative that Bellaire remains fiscally responsible and able to immediately respond to disasters like Hurricane Ike. Bellaire must have a budget that is tolerable for our city's financial security. I am committed to managing the city's budget in a fiscally responsible way during the current downturn while continuing to:

- 1) Maintain the city's provision of essential services Bellaire residents expect,
- 2) Provide capital improvements necessary to protect city's asset values, guaranty health & safety, and meet future needs
- 3) Ensure public safety departments have the resources they need to continue providing the superb services the Bellaire community enjoys, and

Budget Cuts If The Economy Gets Worst

I have met with city leaders discussing contingency planning if the economy gets appreciably worse. I have accumulated the knowledge and have built relationships necessary to make hard choices. The city has already cut its fiscal 2010 budget by about 10%.

Bellaire is a service organization, with over 76% of our General Fund dollars going to people between salaries and benefits. Before we lay anyone off, we must make sure we are as efficient and accountable as we can be. Although reducing city staff is not popular, further weakening of the economy could make it necessary for council to make the tough choice of reducing this large part of city's expenditures in a way that least affects the provisions of essential services, health and safety. Additionally, funding for certain wants and non-essential needs of the residents will have to be delayed or scaled down.

Property Tax Rate

As a comparison, Bellaire's current property tax rate is \$0.3759 per \$100, and West University's is \$0.3590. However, most Bellaire property owners pay a lower effective property tax rate due to Bellaire having a 20% homestead exemption that West University does not have. West University does allow for a larger senior exemption. I understand the desire to cut property taxes, I would love to do so in ideal world. However, the city will not have the revenue it needs to operate if we do so. I will work to not raise taxes, and will instead find ways Bellaire can live within its means just as our residents are making the hard choices to live within their means. The most important consideration is whether the tax rate allows Bellaire to have a budget that is tolerable for our financial security.

IMPLEMENTING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Satisfied, but Lots of Implementation to Come With the Comprehensive Plan

I have discussed the proposed Comprehensive Plan with current and former Chairs of Planning & Zoning, numerous members of council, business owners, and residents. I am thankful to those that worked hard to develop the Comprehensive Plan, and am pleased with its overall visioning. However, **I WILL BE ADAMANT THAT THE ACTIONABLE STEPS TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN** build consensus amongst community, **ENRICH THE RESIDENTIAL QUALITY OF LIFE** (not deplete our close-knit community feel) while also reducing our residential tax burden by increasing the commercial tax base. The Comprehensive Plan is a living document that provides a roadmap for city decision-makers to utilize when bringing progress to Bellaire. There are many discussions to be had with the private properties owners and nearby residents. Since the city does not own much of the property (outside of easements), the city must lead the conversation (as a facilitator) through zoning changes and other incentives that increase the property owners' return on equity, particularly with property owners living outside Bellaire with no emotional connection to it.

How I See Bellaire Downtown Being Developed.

Many longtime Bellaire business owners affected by proposed development are supporting and trust me to improve this area in a way that stays true to Bellaire. I am a proponent of having a town square that will serve as a central meeting place, increase the commercial tax base, and provide life cycle housing for younger families and mature residents wanting a scaled down presence in Bellaire with less upkeep and tax burden. I am not a proponent of having zoning that permits multi-unit developments that go over a couple stories, or allow for less desirable commercial activities. I am a strong proponent that it be designed with softscape that blends the commercial area into the residential neighborhood, and have had discussions

with business owners in favor of implementing a commercial landscape ordinance. Bellaire need more public space for community events and this is a great place to consider it.

Discussion of RDD/METRO Light Rail

I have discussed this at great length with many of the planners and residents. I have taken the time to review this area from the top of the surgical center. I am a proponent of working with Houston, METRO, and nearby residents to develop this area in ways that compliment the proposed rail station, while also protecting the residential community by scaling down the development as it gets closer to existing community.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Recent Improvements

The accusations that Bellaire is (i) putting its residents or property values at risk by totally neglecting our infrastructure, and (ii) doing nothing to improve infrastructure are simply untrue and not supported by facts. The streets are ride able without major potholes, the sewer and drainage is vastly improved, and the city remains committed to continuing the ongoing bond programs. The city did not ignore previous warnings from consulting engineers, instead it directly responded through multiple bond projects. It is important to note that I am the only candidate that has taken the time to interview current and past chairs of Planning & Zoning committee, numerous members of current and previous councils, city staff directors, our city's chief engineering consultant, business owners, and residents.

Bond projects

- 1) Previous to Bellaire Millennium Renewal, a bond program was implemented that addressed sewer and water sanitation (under an order from EPA for deficiencies)

- 2) Pre-Allison, Bellaire Millennium Renewal project continued sewer replacement, caught up the streets that were in disrepair, and repaired the drainage (enlarging water distribution lines) to meet fire flows and has proved useful in Rebuild Bellaire Program

- 3) Rebuild Bellaire's focus has been on reconstruction of streets with the selection criteria heavily dependent on remaining drainage shortcomings.

In total, there has been extensive street reconstruction in every quadrant of city with almost 25% of city (or 14 miles) having been rebuilt, 80% of our streets can now survive a 100-year flood, and 92% of wastewater collection system is in good condition. Regardless of progress, the opportunity for improvements remain and Council must continue to listen to the residents that are very unhappy with the improvements in their areas and work to continue making improvements that are fiscally responsible.

Sidewalks

There are many strong feelings about the current state of sidewalks. As part of the Rebuild Bellaire street rehabilitation program, the city decided that a sidewalk would be incorporated on at least one side of every reconstructed street. Bellaire no longer requires residents to install a sidewalk when building a new home, but as homes are redeveloped, existing sidewalk segments are typically replaced. Due to residents' dissatisfaction with the discontinuity of the sidewalk network, and concerns over the impacts and designs (narrow vs. wide, which side of street, how save trees), City Council has regularly reviewed sidewalks being placed on various streets on case-by-case basis. I am a proponent of working towards a continuous sidewalk network, but do not feel it is fiscally responsible to immediately implement such a network. Installing sidewalks as we do street reconstructions makes sense economically since it costs about 50% less to construct sidewalks when also reconstructing the streets.

Total Street Reconstruction vs. Asphalt Overlay

While some residents are unhappy with the decision to use asphalt blacktopping instead of concrete due to the look, breakdown, high crowns, and pooling of water, it seems this is a better course of action than raising taxes or issuing \$180 Million in additional bonds.

I have been told that total reconstruction of a street (includes curb, gutter, new storm sewer) cost about \$750/foot or \$750,000 for average 1,000 foot block, and that in general asphalt costs about 10% that of concrete. About a decade ago, the city sought and received an estimate stating it would cost Bellaire about \$200 million total (or \$2 per \$100 valuation) to

rebuild Bellaire in similar manner to the way West University was doing so. Bellaire residents overwhelmingly stated they did not want this additional tax burden.

The majority of residents that I have talked to recently are not comfortable with the city spending the estimated \$180 Million (given by city's civil engineering firm at recent council meeting) to totally reconstruct all of Bellaire's streets. Our current economic uncertainty coupled with Bellaire's debt to equity ratio going from 29-34% (debt load forecasted to almost double in next decade) makes it imprudent to commit to such a project. Additionally, the city's civil engineering firm recently stated that even if money was not a concern, the city could only logistically double the current rate of reconstructing the streets.

I grew up and have great pride for Bellaire, and have heard first hand from many residents their level of frustration with the conditions on their particular block. While I do not feel that Bellaire's streets are in such bad shape that it is fiscally prudent to issue \$180 million in bonds (or raise taxes) to implement a comprehensive street reconstruction program, I will tirelessly work to improve current infrastructure deficiencies that create a risk of harm to residents or can easily be remediated with a little effort.

FYI - The Newcastle reconstruction is almost complete and the Baldwin project (METRO funds have been banked for awhile) is expected to start shortly after Newcastle's completion.

Evergreen Pool Upgrades and Hours of Operation

I have discussed this issue with many concerned residents, city staff (including Parks & Rec. Director). In comments to council I supported the requested upgrades to Evergreen pool that are needed, and was a proponent of keeping the therapy pool open during the Winter months since it is apparent that many residents greatly value the use of the therapy pool during the winter.

Water Plants

We have four water stations, but are currently operating on just one well. It was stated at a recent council meeting that the city would need two operating stations if Houston failed to provide us water, although we have significant water in reserve for short-term outages or disasters. It is imperative that the city proceed with its \$2.65 Million water system improvements, and I will support the projected \$2.35 million projected capital improvements over the next three fiscal years.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Keeping Bellaire Safe

To be a great city, you have to be a safe city. Safety is a quality of life issue and an economic one. Many new residents moved to Bellaire due to the great safety our fire, police and EMS provide. I have met with the leadership of police and fire departments ensuring they have the resources necessary to continue keeping Bellaire safe. **I am also the first Bellaire candidate to participate in a police ride around to get first hand understanding of the job they do.**

Concerns of City's Racial Profiling

This is a tough issue, but I have done much to be ready to analyze it in council decision-making. I have met with concerned citizens and city staff. I have engaged residents while blockwalking, and done a police ride around to directly address the recent perception that Bellaire is unfriendly to minority groups. I have read the criminal and civil complaints in the Tolan case. I have also consulted a Houston City Councilwoman who has addressed similar concerns with Houston's fire department.

I have experience directly addressing the importance of and need for diversity through my recent work within the Rotary organization in which I was instrumental in creating and leading a Diversifying Rotary Membership Conference for all 60 Greater-Houston Area clubs impressing upon attendees the enriching qualities diversity brings. Being an ambassador of goodwill as a Rotary scholar in The Netherlands (and also studying in Australia) enhanced my ability to connect to many different groups, which is illustrated in my being honored with a Paul Harris Fellow for being the Rotarian (out of over 3,000) that brought in the most new members last year. The Rotary Club I founded last year has 10 different countries represented in its membership. I feel that to sufficiently address this situation we must (i) ensure all city employees treat all residents with respect, (ii) expand the paths of communication between council and all residents in Bellaire before incidents occur, and (iii) work hard to make all groups feel involved and be involved in our great Bellaire community.

RECYCLING/TRASH

I am honored to have the support of the Chair of the Bellaire's recycling committee, and have learned much from discussions. Bellaire has made tremendous strides in recycling. Starting December 2008 residents may place anything except ceramics or porcelain unsorted. The curbside program (which pays for itself) has been so effective that some residents have requested having recycling picked up twice a week and trash once. However, the city must continue to set a good example through public recycling at the pools, parks, new fire station, and city hall. Additionally, many business owners have expressed frustration that the city does not pick up commercial trash or recycling, which city staff has stated is a cost-benefit and manpower issue. I will investigate whether trash and recycling pick up can be expanded commercially in a fiscally responsible manner. I agree with residents that have stated that the city spending \$100,000 per year to pass out trash bags to residents does not seem fiscally prudent. I also agree with residents that have stated Bellaire should enforce a policy of residents only placing trash and recycling at the street starting at midnight the day of such pickup in order to keep Bellaire beautiful and kept up.

Recognition of Green Builders

While the private market will continue to dictate the economies of building green, the city can certainly lead the way by recognizing those local builders that are being exemplary in the way they build sustainable homes. It is also important that we do a better job requiring builders to keep residential building sites cleaner and materials more secure at the end of each workday.

TREES

It is vital to Bellaire's residential quality of life and property values that we maintain our urban tree canopy. The city should enforce its policy of not taking down older trees if they are not in the footprint of construction, and ensure compliance that the protective fencing is not placed over roots in ways that hurt trees. Trees not only beautify the city, but act as a noise and pollution buffer, particularly near loop 610. I am a proponent of monument signs being used by businesses, so that business are more easily seen from the street, signs are less of the landscaping, and mature trees are not unnecessarily damaged. I will work with city staff to ensure we continue to properly trim our parks' trees and timely pick up dead limbs.

Commercial landscape ordinance

Many business owners have felt having a minimal requirement of landscaping in front of business would be beneficial to their bottom line and the quality of the clientele attracted. Business owners have stated they feel they would get their return on equity shortly after making such expenditures. Instituting a commercial landscape ordinance would create softscape that blends the commercial areas into residential areas, which is an objective under Comprehensive Plan. I will continue to investigate if this is in Bellaire's best interest.

PUBLIC ART

I am a proponent of both public art and balanced budgets. We must find a reasonable amount of money that residents tolerate budgeting towards art, while also educating on the non-quantifiable ways public art programs (that are implemented successfully) can enrich quality of life. It is in my opinion (shared by majority of residents I discussed this with) that the proposed \$200,000 in art at the new firehouse is a bit excessive.

IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITY AND ITS RESIDENTS

The city has made great progress in improving the functionality of its website and placing public documents like notices, ordinances and codes online. Additionally, the city has put the parks and recreation activities and registration and other city programs online, we remain behind other cities in common city services being accessible online such as automated inspections. We must continue to not only improve the residents' access to information, and ability to pay for / schedule city services via city's website, but also begin utilizing 21st century communication mediums. The easier it is for residents to remain informed of city business, the more likely they are to engage council, which only empowers council to make decisions with more complete input. This will also strengthen our city's image as a great place to live. I have talked to department heads that are excited about the opportunity to give residents short updates on operations, and discussed with Library Director and Bellaire High School the possibility of providing classes for those residents wanting to get up to speed.