



2022 City Council Candidate Questions

EXPERIENCE

What type of campaign finance reform, if any, would you support?

ALEX COMSA

It is ridiculous that previous CC candidates raised around \$100k to run a small political campaign. This year, 2-3 candidates are heading that route based on current funding efforts, and I feel the pressure to match that to compete for expensive marketing efforts. One single mailer, to all Palo Alto voters, is in the range of \$15k, so three of those would be \$45k. This is just a waste of money, and yes, I would support a campaign finance reform as follows:

Individual contributions (monetary and non-monetary) to be capped at \$500 (\$1000 for joint accounts)

Contributions from business entities or similar organizations to be capped at \$1000.

Total CAMPAIGN budget (monetary and non-monetary) to be capped at \$20,000.

Forums and debates like PAN are wonderful ways to actually get candidates exposed to voters in general, and this is a very efficient and cost-effective way for the candidates to share their platforms with the public. Kudos to PAN for taking the lead on this effort.

LISA FORSELL

I would support reasonable donation limits (eg, \$500 or \$1000) or spending limits (eg, \$30,000), or both. I have limited donations to \$2000 and would gladly lower this limit if all candidates faced the same restriction.

BRIAN HAMACHEK

I would be in favor of significant campaign finance reform. I believe that individual contributions should be capped at \$250. This would ensure that the candidates with broad community support are able to have their voices heard.

ED LAUING

The basis of local campaign financing should be full transparency of donors and a tally of the percentage of donors who are Palo Alto residents – not out of town interests. Candidates should be required to list this information on their website at agreed-to intervals along with total amount raised.

Marketing for candidates by independent expenditure committees or political parties should be reported to candidates and tallied as in-kind donations. It is not difficult to price the value of candidate mailers (\$10,000+) and currently they are not accounted for.

JULIE LYTHCOTT-HAIMS

For our campaign, I set a contribution limit of \$1000 per individual (well below the \$4900 maximum allowed). This ensures that I'm not relying on only a few wealthy donors to support my campaign; in fact, as of the June 30th filing deadline we lead the way in fundraising among potential candidates,

and we have raised even more since then. This demonstrates that I have broad grassroots support throughout our community. While campaign finance reform is not a priority in this election (although I was glad to see the PA League of Women Voters recently take on this issue), I believe that setting a city-wide limit lower than the \$4900 limit imposed by the State on cities that have no limit would ensure that other candidates are also widely supported throughout the community

DORIA SUMMA

I support limiting personal contributions as long as in-kind contributions (so-called “dark money”) is equally limited.

VICKI VEENKER

I would support mandatory campaign finance contribution limits in local races as well as commonsense policy that increases the transparency around independent expenditures unaffiliated with candidates. While the contribution limit in this race is \$4900, I have taken a voluntary contribution cap of \$1,000.