

OUR OPINION

Halloway, Fernandez And Knapp
For Temple Terrace Council

Temple Terrace City Council has stumbled in its efforts to redevelop downtown since voters last year turned down a tax increase to fund the transformation of a decrepit 35-acre shopping center into town homes, businesses and parks.

Citizens want a more forceful and decisive council, one that understands there is no room for error in the redevelopment.

The city has an annual budget of \$49 million and is carrying almost \$22 million in debt on properties it purchased in the redevelopment area. Unless the city can sell the property to a developer, the first loan payment of \$5.9 million is due in 2008.

Incumbents Ken Halloway, Linda Shattles and Glenda Venable are being challenged by businessman Ken Tozier; civic leader Alison Fernandez and developer and former councilman Mark Knapp. The top three vote-getters will serve four-year terms.

Halloway was among the early visionaries who raised concerns about the city's decaying business core. If the New Urbanism vision he promotes is realized, Temple Terrace will become a unique community, not just another suburb.

On another key issue – the disappointing performance at four of the area's five public schools – Halloway has studied other cities' efforts to bolster school performance and would launch similar efforts in Temple Terrace. The Tribune endorses **Ken Halloway**.

Fernandez, who grew up in Temple Terrace and returned to raise her young family, is president of the Temple Terrace Junior Woman's Club, an important civic organization. She reflects the concerns of families who want to protect the quality of life and improve the schools.

Fernandez is a former accountant with well-honed auditing skills. She has an eye for detecting wasteful spending and finding efficiencies. The Tribune endorses **Alison Fernandez**.

Knapp's strength is his understanding of development deals and how to negotiate one. He knows when a developer will be telling the council "what it wants to hear" to win the deal and will be an able watchdog for taxpayers. Knapp has been



Fernandez



Halloway



Knapp

criticized for missing meetings in his previous terms; he counters that he was trying to balance family responsibilities and his children are now older. The Tribune endorses **Mark Knapp**.

Shattles has served the community well and has represented Temple Terrace at the Florida League of Cities and on various boards. Shattles is a good candidate, but the others are stronger.

Tozier, a former mayoral candidate, is the owner of a successful mapping software company and a whip-smart businessman. But he has been a combative and polarizing presence in a city that needs consensus-building.

Venable has the city's best interests at heart but at times appears to be disconnected on details of the development deal. She deserves kudos for opposing the construction of a nearby Wal-Mart, but citizens need a more forceful presence on the council.

We believe Halloway, Fernandez and Knapp would provide it.

Last on the ballot are two charter amendments worth note – one changing the way vacancies are filled on the city council and a second conforming the mayoral election to that of the city council.

The amendments call for council to fill vacancies with an interim member who would serve no more than 180 days or until the next election. The mayor would be chosen by the most votes instead of a majority – more practical in multicandidate elections. Voters should say **yes** to both.

A CHANCE TO RESPOND

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