



Editorial: Incumbents in Moorpark

Mikos, Millhouse get nod

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The city of Moorpark faces many challenges in the coming year, most notably in dealing with the fallout from the state budget crisis. The state already has taken some \$400,000 in redevelopment agency funds, and it will take strong, experienced council members to keep more city funds from being raided by the state.

Four candidates are running for two council seats in Tuesday's general election: incumbents Keith Millhouse and Roseann Mikos, and challengers Robert Freeman and Jose Magdaleno.

Given the challenges facing the city, The Star recommends Councilman Millhouse and Councilwoman Mikos be returned to the Moorpark City Council for a third term each.

Ms. Mikos, 60, an independent consultant for training, education and grant development, is known for asking pointed questions and speaking her mind.

"I try to encourage debate in terms of the pros and cons of different things," she said at an Oct. 17 candidates' forum in Moorpark.

Despite the state taking redevelopment agency funds, Ms. Mikos told The Star Editorial Board that won't stop important projects, such as the Ruben Castro Human Services Center, a medical and social services complex planned in Moorpark.

Ms. Mikos said she believes the proposed movie studios in Moorpark will be a boon economically and benefit the High Street Arts Center. She said she will ensure traffic, access and lighting issues are addressed.

Ms. Mikos envisions a renaissance on High Street over the next two to four years with a mix of retail, restaurant and other uses. A post office also has been fast-tracked for the west side of High Street.

She said she hopes to have a formal visioning process take place. Her goal is to keep Moorpark a "small, safe and vibrant town."

She is a firm believer in getting the council to think green — such as developing guidelines for green buildings, including solar power and other renewable-energy sources.

Ms. Mikos voted against allowing the council to fill a vacant council seat by appointment, rather than special election. When Mayor Patrick Hunter decided not to seek re-election this year, Councilwoman Janice Parvin entered the mayor's race. Because no challengers emerged, she automatically becomes mayor Dec. 3, leaving her council seat open.

An ordinance that would have allowed the council to appoint a replacement initially passed by a 3-2 vote, but, after much debate, the council reversed itself and will now hold a special election in June to fill Ms. Parvin's vacant council seat.

Mr. Millhouse, 47, an environmental attorney, originally voted in favor of allowing appointment, but told The Star Editorial Board a day before the special meeting to discuss the issue that he would be listening carefully to the people. At that meeting, he reversed his vote.

Mr. Millhouse made headlines in July when he proposed making Moorpark the first city in Ventura County to ban plastic grocery bags.

Mr. Millhouse considers the widening of Highway 23 through Moorpark a significant achievement. He is proud of Moorpark's excellent safety reputation and said he hopes to continue the sense of community the city has — a real "down home" feeling. He said he will continue to work for acquisition of open space and regional solutions to transportation issues.

He said he agrees with Ms. Mikos that redeveloping the High Street area, while maintaining its charm and character, is a priority. He, too, looks forward to working to bring movie studios to the city.

As a councilman, Mr. Millhouse serves as vice chairman of the Southern California Regional Rail Authority, aka Metrolink. If re-elected, he would become chairman in January. That is a critical position as Metrolink works to improve the safety of the regional rail system, in the wake of the Sept. 12 crash that claimed the lives of 25 mostly Ventura County residents. He said he is committed to a "thorough, independent review of Metrolink" and of what went wrong Sept. 12.

Metrolink has had many problems and we hope that, as chairman, Mr. Millhouse will lead an effort to determine if the Rail Authority is equipped to oversee the rail system. The tragedy requires a thorough review of the organization and changes to ensure the safety of more than 46,000 passengers who ride the trains weekly.

On balance, Moorpark is a well-run city facing growth and budget issues. With Ms. Mikos and Mr. Millhouse re-elected, the council will continue to guide the city with an expert hand.

Hear candidates

To hear The Star Editorial Board's interviews with the Moorpark City Council candidates, click on to <http://cfapps.venturacountystar.com/elections/subitems.cfm?item=46> and then select a candidate to hear the recording.



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