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## Division in Council Race Endorsements Mirrors Voting Records <sup>[1]</sup>

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**By:**

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*Above: The six candidates for City Council.*

With three East Lansing City Council members' terms ending next month, only two sitting Councilmembers are certain to remain: Ruth Beier and Susan Woods. Asked by ELi this week who they are endorsing in the City Council race, the two split, with no overlap:

Susan Woods is endorsing Shanna Draheim, Jermaine Ruffin, and Nathan Triplett.

Ruth Beier is endorsing Erik Altmann, Mark Meadows, and Steve Ross.

This split accords with the divided votes we have seen in Council this past year. On every major vote in which there was a split, Triplett and Woods voted in opposition to Beier. In all those cases, Triplett and Woods voted with outgoing Mayor Pro Tem Diane Goddeeris, and Beier voted with outgoing Councilmember Kathy Boyle.

For example, in each of the following cases, the votes went Triplett, Goddeeris, and Woods in favor; Beier and Boyle against:

- \$1.5 million tax increment financing plan for David Krause's 565 East Grand River Avenue: [read more](#) <sup>[2]</sup>.

- \$1.9 million tax increment financing plan for DTN's Gateway Project; read more <sup>[3]</sup>.
- \$1.2 million tax increment financing boost for Kevin McGraw's Trowbridge Plaza: read more <sup>[4]</sup>.
- Closure of the Bailey Community Center daycare, not allowing a parents' group to pursue a plan to transition to a third-party operation; read more <sup>[5]</sup>.
- Allowing a new downtown bar to stay open until 2 am; read more <sup>[6]</sup>.

This split also seems to be showing up in yard sign distribution. While there are some owner-occupied homes that cross the division (showing signs for both Altmann and Draheim, for example), rental properties' signage, such as those along Burcham Drive, display signs for Draheim and Ruffin. These include rental properties owned by DTN, the developer behind the Gateway Project and the City's preferred developer for another large Park District project.

As far as campaign finance, only Altmann, Draheim, Meadows, and Ross have elected to do voluntary early disclosure (read the details here <sup>[7]</sup>). So far, none of those individuals show any donations from major landlords or major developers with business in East Lansing. [UPDATE ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE, including donations from major developers, available here <sup>[8]</sup>.]

Triplett is the only Councilmember running for re-election, so the only other candidate for whom we have recent campaign contribution information. In his last campaign, Triplett accepted a \$200 contribution from Kevin McGraw, the developer of Trowbridge Plaza who received the \$1.2 million tax increment financing (TIF) boost noted above on top of an already-approved \$1.4 million TIF plan. Triplett also received \$200 from David Krause, developer of 565 East Grand River for which Triplett voted in favor of a \$1.5 million TIF plan, as noted above. (Read details <sup>[9]</sup> of his last campaign's financing.)

We'll know more about the financing all of the current campaigns, including something about Triplett's and Ruffin's, before the election. But as we've shown before, it is possible for candidates to take contributions on the last day of the election, effectively rendering those contributions invisible until after the election.

For example, 97% of the approximately \$9500 donated to Susan Woods' campaign for Council occurred too late to be reported in time for voters to see it before the election. A week before the election, Woods' campaign had collected only \$250 in donations. By the day of the election, it had \$9,079 more in donations, almost all from landlords, developers, and other local real estate-related business people. Significant contributions came from developers on whose tax increment financing plans Woods has voted favorably. (Read more. <sup>[10]</sup>) Woods maintains the money has not influenced her votes.

None of the six people running for Council have declared themselves to be part of a slate. Asked who they are endorsing for Council, the remaining members of the current City Council—Mayor Nathan Triplett, Mayor Pro Tem Diane Goddeeris, and Councilmember Kathy Boyle—declined to answer.

## Want to learn more about the upcoming election?

- To find out where you vote, how you can vote absentee, etc., click here [11].
- To read profiles of the six candidates, click here [12].
- To read how the candidates would have voted on a recent tax increment financing plan, click here [13].
- To read about the campaign financing of the six candidates, click here [14].
- To read about the recent candidate forum, click here [15].

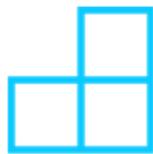
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