

## CIELO VISTA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Meeting Minutes March 9, 2017

The meeting was called to order by Pres. Mike Adjamean at 6:00 PM. All present, including many visitors, introduced themselves. Then the panel of candidates for District 3 was introduced. The minutes of the February 9<sup>th</sup> meeting were introduced and accepted. The treasurer reported that we have a balance of \$1374 in our bank account.

The program for the meeting was limited to introductory speeches by each candidate followed by a question and answer period. The order of speaking was determined by the drawing of numbers.

The first candidate to speak was Elias Camacho. He told us that he was born in El Paso and raised in the Fox Plaza area. He graduated from Jefferson High School, joined the Navy, and served four tours in Vietnam. He was a policeman for 22 years. His three main concerns are: Public Safety, Utility Bills, and Streets. He questioned why it takes five to seven years after a bond issue passes before some of the improvements are started. He mentioned that Palo Verde has not led to reduced bills that our police force is understaffed, and police vehicles are in a deplorable condition.

The second speaker was Cassandra Hernandez Brown. She commented that she was one of five children born to her mother before her mother was 21. She was a strong mother who pushed education. The family relied on every program available to help them escape poverty. She graduated from Bel Air in 2005, is now 30 years old, and resides in the Rosedale area. She was on track to become a teen-age mother, but went to the University of Texas at El Paso. She was guided to work with a city councilman. She worked with department heads and saw first hand city departments in action. Her duties included helping 11,000 people find employment, overseeing Department of Labor funds, and distributing federal money. She has the temperament, experience, and ideas for the job. She will work to lower taxes by increasing the tax base.

Jaime Barceleau was the third speaker. He was raised in the San Juan area and began working when he was seven or eight running errands. The money he earned he gave to his mother who was raising her family as a very young single mother. He worked cleaning up in a Circle K. In 1973 he joined the Army and soon became a platoon leader. In 1980 he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and retired as a lieutenant Colonel. He worked nights but obtained a degree as a social worker. He has two adult daughters. He works as a community volunteer in many areas. As a result of his volunteer work he learned about Cielo Vista and CVNA and this knowledge influenced him to buy a home in Cielo Vista.

The next speaker was Antonio Williams. He was raised in the Cielo Vista neighborhood, attending Cielo Vista Elementary, MacArthur Middle School and Silva Magnet. He studied speech and debate at El Paso Community College, where he was helped and encouraged by Mr. Williams. He is now a lawyer. His purpose is to help others, so he went to the University of Texas at El Paso, and then to Texas Tech where he earned his Doctor of Jurisprudence. In order to make ideas become realities one needs to understand how things are done. Promises made never materialize. Why? We need to take a look at how we make decisions and include accountability. The City Manager's position should have a limited contract, or term limits. He could run for re-election.

Williams's platform is based on accountability. We should ask ourselves if our elected officials are getting the job done. We should serve people in need.

Louis Pellicano spoke next. He is a native El Pasoan and wants to serve his community on City Council. He has grandchildren and wants to be sure they grow up in a well run city.

After the candidates had spoken a question and answer period began. The first question concerned continuing our present form of governance, with a City Council and a City Manager. Jaime Barceleau supports the City Council/City Manager form we now have. Cassandra Brown also supported the City Manager form, saying that the mayor and Council do not micromanage. Professional department heads manage the departments. She said that the city has evolved and she supports the city manager concept.

Antonio William said that many citizens do not support the city manager, saying that he has too much power for an appointee. We need to increase accountability and permit the removal of department heads if a majority of council agrees. City manager only has to gain the approval of a majority of City Council to retain his position. The construction of The Children's Museum was approved in 2012 and the city still hasn't broken ground.

A question was posed concerning constantly rising taxes and if the candidate would hold the line. Cassandra said that we already have a number of Certificates of Obligation which we must pay off. Most money spent goes to public safety. Street repairs are costly. New quality of life projects must wait.

Camacho wants the city to find other sources of money besides taxing citizens. Pellicano questioned why our streets are repaired and are in bad shape within weeks or months. Williams said that we want improvements without any ideas about how to fund the improvements. He would have a phone line for citizens to ask questions and make suggestions. We do not have the resources to properly investigate problems. For example, pot whole material is dumped without proper follow up. We need controls. Our Police Department should be solving crimes.

Jaime Barceleau noted that people want to spend, but they don't want to pay taxes. We should pay off debts already incurred before taking on new debt. Let's complete old projects already approved before agreeing to new projects requiring new taxes.

Other issues touched on concerned our local police and their involvement in enforcing immigration laws, Border Patrol, health care limitations, how our consulates work together on border issues, Mexico's faltering economy, and our need to have Mexicans spend money in El Paso.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00.

Submitted by Genevieve Harkins, Secretary