

northwest

These Are the People in Your Neighborhood

Incumbent squares off against grassroots activist

by Sarah Dougher

Amanda Fritz's campaign office is not much to look at: a few hastily erected card tables and telephone wires snaking over industrial carpet.

But the furnishings tell a story: "I am not going to waste taxpayer money on a fancy office," she comments.

Her Web site also reports the source of her campaign financing. "I didn't take more than \$5 from any Portland citizen during the qualifying phase of this campaign, and I didn't accept any money at all from people who don't live in Portland. While serving on the Portland Planning Commission, I didn't let anyone buy me even a cup of coffee," she says.

Fritz, a 47-year-old native of England, has since qualified for public financing and is the first candidate to benefit from Portland's unique campaign finance system. Rather than depending on large donations, the program matches the candidate's fund raising to the tune of about 30 cents from each Portland resident.



Neighborhood activist Amanda Fritz is challenging City Commissioner Dan Saltzman.

Fritz has lived in Portland for more than 20 years and in that time has become involved with a variety of grassroots political efforts, from working on the planning commission to attending rallies supporting Senate Bill 1000, which would have legalized civil unions for same-sex couples in Oregon.

"I believe marriage is a wonderful institution, with huge emotional and social benefits as well as legal advantages. I've been married to my husband for almost 24 years, and I can only imagine how painful it would be if someone told me I could not be in my marriage. People who love each other should be allowed to commit to each other. I will do everything I can to help support the struggle for equal marriage rights for all."

When asked about her platform as it relates to the interests of the queer citizens of Portland, Fritz says, "One of the main reasons I'm running is because there are a lot of people who feel disenfranchised and not heard."

Fritz has supported the No on 9 campaigns in 1992 and 2000, attended rallies and demonstrations and been an active ally for the causes of queer rights in the city and in the state.

Fritz is unequivocal in her support for the Equal Benefits Ordinance introduced by City Commissioner Sam Adams. She sees the problems involved with city contracts and benefits as an issue affecting not only same-sex domestic partners. Larger issues of waste and accountability influence her thinking on the subject. "Sam's ordinance is a great start, but to me it is a bigger issue, and I think the gay and lesbian community can be part of this bigger picture of how we spend our money wisely."

Talking from his office, Dan Saltzman is fairly no-nonsense about the reasons he should be re-elected. Citing three issues, he says, "My re-election platform is about...making Portland a more family-friendly city, giving every child a shot at success." In addition, he is concerned with that elusive element of development, sustainability, as well as reducing the cost of

government.

Although the notion of sustainability has been bandied about by politicians and policy makers alike, Saltzman's definition is simply the idea of living more lightly on the land. "We have to preserve environmental quality and our natural environment and have economic prosperity without compromising the quality of our environment for future generations," he says.

In contrast to Fritz's highly empathetic approach to understanding of the queer citizens of Portland, Saltzman does not see his work as focused on queer citizens per se. "We serve families and youth without knowledge of what their sexual orientation is."

In characterizing the way he has met the needs of queer citizens of Portland, he says: "Queer citizens are citizens. I've been at the forefront of a lot of issues that have been important, including adoption of the city's nondiscrimination policy based on gender and sexual orientation, to working with [former] Mayor [Vera] Katz to adopt the domestic partnership registry and extending benefits to domestic partners in city government."

He has also been part of the city's comprehensive plan for the West End and led the effort to have the Burnside Triangle designated as the cultural heart of the gay and lesbian community.

Saltzman is not so forthcoming in his stance on the Equal Benefits Ordinance, noting: "I'm inclined to support it but need more opportunity for airing of it. It sounds like something I'd be supportive of. If there's one thing about me, it's that I can't commit myself to a position without hearing from all sides."

Citizen involvement is of paramount importance to Saltzman, whose decisions at times put him at odds with neighborhood associations. Although he doesn't think one can categorize neighborhood associations monolithically, he does acknowledge taking positions that are contrary to some of the neighborhood associations. But he



For City Commissioner Dan Saltzman, the election is about "kids, environment and reducing the cost of government."

does not disdain this involvement, saying, "Neighborhoods are an important form of representing citizens' interests before City Council and on many other issues."

Saltzman sees his job as being entrusted by the public to make decisions, and he recognizes that "generally at least half the people are unhappy with the decisions we make." Nevertheless, he sees a creative tension that exists between the City Council and neighborhoods as well as a high degree of collaboration.

Having served eight years on the City Council and five years with Multnomah County, Saltzman believes he will bring focus and resolve to his third term: "It's about kids, the environment and reducing the cost of government. If people share that focus and resolve, then I hope they will support me in my re-election effort." **10**

For more information about the candidates, visit www.amandafritzforcitycouncil.com and www.portlandonline.com/saltzman.



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