

SPLITSVILLE

Don't listen to what they say, look at how they vote.

By Alan Pittman

The best way to judge a politician is not by what they say — they'll often say anything to get elected — but how they vote.

With that in mind, *Eugene Weekly* analyzed 47 key votes over the past five years. Voting records show Councilors Bonny Bettman, Betty Taylor and David Kelly on the progressive or liberal side and Councilors Scott Meisner, Nancy Nathanson, Gary Papé and Jennifer Solomon and Mayor Jim Torrey on the conservative side.

For the analysis, we subjectively chose the 47 key votes as revealing of how the council splits on important issues. We didn't choose the council's frequent unanimous votes because they don't provide comparative information. Not every current councilor voted on every issue. Some were absent or not yet in office. Mayor Torrey only votes in case of a tie.

With the council often closely split, a single vote can be crucial on vital issues. Councilor Meisner's swing vote to conservatives resulted in the city continuing to pursue the \$130 million West Eugene Parkway through wetlands. Another Meisner swing vote to conservatives resulted in the council adopting a Chamber of Commerce plan to gerrymander Eugene council wards to help secure a conservative majority for the next decade. Nancy Nathanson handed Hynix an additional \$1.8 million in tax breaks when she swung a key vote to conservatives. In another swing vote, Nathanson gave sprawl developers a continuing subsidy on road fees.

Council voting records could be particularly important for those seeking re-election. Nathanson is running for mayor and Councilors Bettman, Taylor and Meisner are campaigning to hold their seats.

Here's a look at how individual councilors land on the issues:

BONNY BETTMAN — Central Eugene, Ward 1

Bettman has the highest progressive voting record on the council, 98 percent. Only once did she vote with conservatives to rip out the Broadway pedestrian mall for cars.

BETTY TAYLOR — South Eugene, Ward 2

Taylor has a 96 percent progressive voting record. She voted with conservatives only twice: on the renaming of Centennial Boulevard after Martin Luther King Jr. and on removing human rights protections for transgender people.

DAVID KELLY — East Eugene, Ward 3

Kelly has a 87 percent progressive voting record. Kelly voted with conservatives on the transgender and pedestrian mall issues, on regressive road taxes, on urban renewal diverting taxes to developers and on a vote to expand the urban growth boundary five years ago.

GEORGE POLING — Northeast Eugene, Ward 4

Poling has a 0 percent progressive voting record, voting with conservatives every time since he took office in January 2003.

GARY PAPÉ — Northwest Eugene, Ward 5

Papé has a 4 percent progressive voting record. He voted with progressives only twice: to fund forest management in Hendricks Park and to support local schools with city taxes.

JENNIFER SOLOMON — Bethel, Ward 6

Solomon has a 0 percent progressive voting record, voting with conservatives every time since she took office in January 2003.

SCOTT MEISNER — Whiteaker/River Road, Ward 7

Meisner has a 26 percent progressive voting record. He has scored best on controlling urban sprawl (60 percent) and the environment (30 percent). But Meisner has rarely voted with progressives on fairness, fiscal, livability and poverty issues.

NANCY NATHANSON — West Eugene, Ward 8

Nathanson votes with progressives only 17 percent of the time. On poverty and fiscal issues, she voted with conservatives every time. She scored better on environment (27 percent) and livability (40 percent) issues.

MAYOR JIM TORREY

In 12 cases where he broke tie votes over the last five years, Torrey always took the conservative position on fairness, environment, fiscal, poverty and sprawl issues.



Progressive Voting Record

	Bettman	Taylor	Kelly	Poling	Papé	Solomon	Meisner	Nathanson	Torrey
Overall	98%	96%	87%	0%	4%	0%	26%	17%	0%
Fairness	100%	67%	83%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%	0%
Environment	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	9%	30%	27%	NA
Fiscal	100%	100%	63%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%	0%
Livability	75%	100%	80%	0%	20%	0%	20%	40%	NA
Poverty	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	0%
Sprawl	100%	100%	90%	0%	0%	0%	60%	20%	0%

Source: EW Analysis of city recorded votes.