

OPINION

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OUR VIEW

Jones for Astoria mayor

The city of Astoria is poised to elect only its third mayor in 27 years on Nov. 6, following in the footsteps of Willis Van Dusen and Arline LaMear.

Fortunately, voters have two exceptional candidates to choose from — Bruce Jones and Dulcye Taylor.

Both are intelligent, personable, articulate and highly engaged in the community. Either would represent the city very well.

They offer very different qualifications and personalities, however. And in Jones, we have the opportunity to select a proven leader of the highest caliber.

As a Coast Guard officer, Jones rose through the ranks from officer candidate school to command Sector Columbia River and serve as chief of strategic planning for the entire service. One does not achieve such lofty responsibility without extraordinary competence, problem-solving skills and the ability to collaborate effectively.

The Coast Guard is the largest employer in our area. Jones understands the vital economic importance of its operations to the community. (As an aside, he knows the service's decision-making processes and may be in a unique position to help the city compete for the new cutters to be built in the next few years.)

Most importantly, he commanded Air Station New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina in 2005. He has dealt with life-and-death emergencies, and knows the importance of preparing for a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami. One of the first things he wants to do is bring key regional players together for a tabletop exercise to examine scenarios and brainstorm solutions.

"I promise we will be better prepared in four years," he said.

We are also impressed with the specific ideas Jones has to address the housing shortage and jobs, among other issues.

The city could create incentives to encourage developers to build more vertical, high-density housing, perhaps using vacant city land, he said. He would make sure that community efforts



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

From left, Bruce Jones, Michael 'Sasha' Miller and Dulcye Taylor participate in a candidate forum earlier this month at Clatsop Community College.



Bruce Jones



Dulcye Taylor



Michael Miller

to alleviate the plight of the homeless, such as the Astoria Warming Center and Helping Hands, are fully supported. He would like to see new apartments rather than hotels, even at market rate, to free up homes in town for occupancy. He would dedicate resources to enforcing the city's short-term rental regulations.

And he would support economic development efforts that don't involve tourism, to diversify the economic base, he said. The activity going on at Tongue Point is an excellent example of how to bring in family-wage jobs.

Taylor would be excellent, too

In an election without Jones in the race, Taylor would have our wholehearted endorsement.

Her experience as owner of a down-

town business — Old Town Framing Co. — and as board president of the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association give her valuable insights into the needs of the downtown core and the business community.

She is active in many organizations and has served on citizens advisory committees for the Garden of Surging Waves, Astoria Parks and Recreation comprehensive master plan and the Astoria Diversity Project.

Taylor and Jones are not far apart on the issues of housing and homelessness — both mentioned the pressing need for boarding-house style living arrangements, for example. They also agree that the city should amend zoning codes as necessary to achieve its goals.

She would like to rehab the city's

existing buildings, rather than build 45-foot-high hotels. She would also like to revisit the conversation about development at Heritage Square. She promises to fight to make the town's economy sustainable throughout the year, balancing the needs of businesses and residents.

She also promises to bring passion to the job.

"I'm notorious for crazy ideas that sometimes work," she laughed.

Wait — what about Miller?

Yes, there is a third mayoral candidate — Michael "Sasha" Miller.

We believe he means well, is passionate and cares deeply about Astoria. But his campaign is long on outlandish statements and short on specific ideas to get things done. We don't think his candidacy should be taken seriously.

We also don't think standing naked with a sign on Marine Drive, even for a noble cause — to protest the treatment of a mentally ill homeless man — is the type of behavior we desire in the next mayor.

Miller declined an interview with The Daily Astorian's editorial board, citing the newspaper's publication of an op-ed arguing that bad forest management, not climate change, is causing California's record-breaking wildfires. It was paired with another op-ed arguing that climate change is indeed responsible.

We accept and respect that decision. However, it calls into question how tolerant he would be of points of view other than his own. That's a disqualifying shortcoming in someone who wants to lead Astoria. The city is chock full of citizens with widely diverse opinions on just about everything and who aren't hesitant to express them.

Declining the interview also allowed him to avoid fielding direct, specific questions on local issues — questions that Jones and Taylor happily and enthusiastically answered.

"Both Dulcye Taylor and Bruce Jones are excellent people, one of them can have your endorsement," he wrote.

Wish granted.

GUEST COLUMN

Vote 'yes' for Sunset Empire recreation bond

We are so fortunate to live in a truly special and beautiful pocket of this country, which provides each of us with an opportunity to contribute civically and contribute to the democratic process. By now, many of you have already received and perhaps cast your ballots for the upcoming Nov. 6 election.

This election features a string of important decisions for voters throughout our community as they cast their ballots for their preferred candidates for mayor, city councilors, county commissioner and governor. There are also several important measures both locally and throughout our state.

Regardless of your political party or leanings, it's the opportunity to participate in a truly equitable system that is most amazing.

As you probably know, the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District strives to serve our entire community throughout South County with high-quality recreation programs and facilities. The motivations for issuing the request to our residents to support bond Measure 4-196 are many, and I would like to highlight our rationale below.

- The expansion, if approved by voters, would include the building components most sought after and most necessary for our community — indoor walking track, gymnasium space, fitness space and expanded youth program space.

- The expansion would also allow SEPRD to discontinue renting space for current programs, bringing the entire program offering in-house and offer more robust opportunities for a greater audience.

- We need more spaces in our community to play, particularly when it is wet, windy, cold or dark. Our county features some of the



Opsis Architecture

Street view of proposed Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District building expansion.

most beautiful places in the world, but it also features double the precipitation and a higher obesity rate than the state or national averages. Where do people go to get their exercise, particularly in the winter months?

- The children in our community need safe spaces to grow, exercise and flourish. It's not just adults who are heavier than ever before. It's also our children — who, because of chronic diseases associated with obesity, will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.

- Park and Recreation facilities, just like other public spaces, improve the quality of life for all residents and make the community more livable and viable. Facilities also increase property value, serving as a good investment for a community to make.

- The building would also allow the district to host more programs which are economically beneficial and produce more revenue, which would make SEPRD more self-sustaining.

- The district explored the possibility of acquiring the soon-to-be-vacated Broadway Middle School property, but the acquisition and remodel costs of that project far exceeded the \$20 million project contained in Measure 4-196. Therefore, the district is moving forward with this route, the more economical of the options.

- The Sunset Pool would be almost completely untouched in this expansion. The expansion would, however, provide dryland fitness opportunities to complement the pool offerings.

- The district would be able to add multiple additional family changing rooms to accommodate the large number of families served, as well as meeting important inclusive needs for all of our users.

- If approved, the expansion would increase the average property taxes of district residents by less than \$10 a month. The bond would expire in 20 years and construction would be completed by 2021 or 2022.

SEPRD will host its final community forum on at 5 p.m. Oct. 29 at the Bob Chisholm Community Center. I encourage you to come and find out more information about this project, which could transform this community and our overall health.

Skyler Archibald is executive director of the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District.