

CANDIDATES

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important topics in the town: homelessness, internet connectivity, housing and the city's growth.

Davis vs. Linton

Davis spoke of her experience on the council, having won her seat in 2010. Her priorities, she said, include capital improvement projects, the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, youth activities, the police department and broadband internet service. After seeing the city work for years on solving its homelessness problem, she said it must forge partnerships with the county.

She also praised the city for its growth. New infrastructure, she said, was important to encouraging housing development. She said she wants to continue working on these projects.

Linton spoke on her desire to improve veterans' services, mental health, housing and job training. Hermiston, she said, faces some difficult days ahead, but it can meet the



Kathy Aney/Hermiston Herald

Hermiston City Council candidates express their views at a candidates forum April 12, 2022, at the Hermiston Community Center.

needs of its residents if it remains committed to caring for people in need. In addition, she said, the town can use four new police officers.

Both candidates spoke of their involvement in the city. Each serves on city boards and volunteers. Linton is a frequent visitor and speaker at city council meetings.

Barron vs. Stradley

A special education teacher, Barron said he is driven to serve others. He was first appointed to his seat in 2018 and won his first election in 2019. He said he has learned much in the last few years. Funding the police and working with Umatilla

County on homelessness are a couple of his priorities, he said. And he stated he wants to see more public and private partnerships, as what is being done currently in Hermiston.

"Hermiston is a town — but one that is transitioning," he said.

He added it should continue to grow, though it should maintain its small-town feel.

Stradley, former Umatilla County Housing Authority executive director, retired in 2019, said housing is an important issue. We must, he said, draw in developers and work on making affordable housing.

"There are ways to do it," he said. "I have the experience."

In addition, he spoke on mental health and drug recovery services.

Spicerkuhn vs. McCarthy

Spicerkuhn was first appointed to the council and then won an uncontested special election in March 2021 to retain his seat. At the forum, he spoke of his community involvement and his work as a lawyer. His background in law, he said, is helpful to the council. Also, he said he is interested in helping small businesses grow in Hermiston.

The incumbent pointed out that Nike is in the Portland area because it started there and grew. The next big Hermiston company,

he said, could be one that starts small, becomes successful and expands. For that reason, the city should find ways to help its small businesses.

McCarthy, a past city councilor, spoke of his community involvement and volunteer work. A sales manager for local radio station KOHU, he is someone, he said, who loves his town and wants to see it thrive.

McCarthy spoke of his interest to improve walkability in Hermiston, as well as boosting internet, attracting apartment and house developers, adding new infrastructure and developing the city's relationship with the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce.

The mayor's assessment

David Drotzmann, Hermiston mayor, was among the attendees at the forum and afterward said he was impressed with the candidates. Looking around at the crowd of around 70 people, Drotzmann remarked that it was good to see so much public involvement, too. In all, he spoke of it as a very positive evening.

FOOD

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was sorry, but we weren't going to do that."

Such a situation, he said, would have made things worse for both customers and vendors.

He said that his goal is to create fun. A Hermiston resident, Hunt said he wished for the pod to be a lively place for people — kids and families, in particular, to gather. Music plays, and banners wave. The pod, he said, is an attraction for people who might not have anything else to do.

"If we can play music and have a place for people to go, maybe they won't get into so much trouble," he said.

Customers enjoy pod

Rosa Alonzo, Umatilla resident, made a special trip to eat at the food pod on Friday. She said, though she likes Magui's, one of the nine trucks, the best, she will choose different restaurants when she arrives. While she eats at one, the people who accompany her often get food from different places before sitting down at one of the benches at the pod.

"We come out here quite a bit," she said. "We enjoy the variety of foods."

Hermiston residents Shay Godden and James Wiggins were at another table on Friday. They heard of the Filipino food at the pod. Though they only rarely came to the

pod previously, they dined there on Friday to try lumpia.

While there, they said they were enjoying the atmosphere.

"It's kind of like the fair," Godden said. Wiggins, who has worked at various fairs, agreed. Like the fair, the pod is lively, they said.

Vendors stories

Godden and Wiggins obtained their Filipino food from Maureen Dickens, owner of Twisted Filipino Variety Cuisine.

Dickens said she is from the Philippines, where her family operated restaurants. It gave her experiences with food and a love of the restaurant business.

"Ever since I was little, we had a restaurant," she said.

Three weeks in business, she said this is her first restaurant in the U.S. She offers foods from her native country, Hawaii, America and more.

Her American offerings, she said, include chicken tenders, which are popular.

Her husband, she said, is retired, and she is semi-retired, which is why she said she prefers food truck work over opening a regular restaurant. It is easier, though still hard, she said.

Tim Wilson, Krack Burger owner, was taping a menu to his truck on Friday, his first day of operations. Foods, such as burgers, hotdogs, shakes and ice cream, were all on that menu.

"I'm new to the food truck industry, but not to the restaurant business," Wilson said.

He said he had a restaurant in the Tri-Cities that was bought out by his ex-wife.

"She didn't want a partner, and I totally understand," he said.

Now a Hermiston resident, he said he is excited for this business venture. Restaurants are fun, he said, and food trucks are booming. He said he expects to do well.

Berenice Rodriguez, of Alma's Express, said she is optimistic, too. She serves smoothies, nachos, burgers, biscuits and gravy, breakfast burritos and more, and she said business is good.

"We wanted to have our

own business and not work for anybody else," she said. Having worked for others at restaurants and other trucks, she said she has long wanted to have her own business and not be beholden to someone else.

Kalani Morales, a worker at Bobablastic, offers orange chicken, churros, boba tea and more. She said that this business is good for her. She has a job at Panda Express in Hermiston. By also working at the pod, she can earn extra income while enjoying herself, too.

"I like it, I really do," she said. "It's fun."

Dalene Hadley, of the Grizzly Grill, offers grilled cheese sandwiches, corn dogs, fries and more. She said she has been operat-

ing this business for around 10 years, but has frequently moved during that time. Now, she said, she plans to stay still, with the exception of a few upcoming events.

"I like it," she said. "The people here are really good, and it's less work." Being in a fixed location, she does not have to bother much with hooking and unhooking utilities.

Throughout the renovations, one truck was able to stay open because it operates on the other side of a short fence from the other restaurants.

Tacos Garcia is the restaurant. The owner is Rigoberto Garcia.

Garcia said he is happy to see a filled pod. Yes, they are within a short distance of

his food truck. And, yes, he said, some customers may choose to eat at other food trucks instead of his. Still, according to Garcia, the pod attracts many customers, bringing many diners to his truck for his wide selection of tacos, burritos and more.

"There's enough for all of us," he said of the customers. "And I like my neighbors. There's business for everybody."

More changes to the pod are coming, Hunt said. According to Hunt, live bands will perform starting in the middle of May.

The pod is open seven days a week, 11 a.m. to around 7 p.m., though not all vendors are open each day. Some vendors might expand to offer breakfast, Hunt said.

McCANN

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"He was beloved by all, probably one of the best mayors I've ever served around," Burgener said. "He loved the city, got involved and did everything he could for the city."

This death was unexpected, Burgener said. McCann had heart issues, he added, but he and others were shocked by his passing and were not ready for it. This is hitting Stanfield very hard, he said.

Jerry Carlson, Stanfield finance director, said he is among the people affected by this loss.

"I started a little bit after he started with the city in 1979, when he was police chief and I was hired to be city recorder," Carlson said.

He said McCann was a hard worker, who would "dive in and do what was necessary" to complete a task.

"When they city was flooded, it required people

to stay up all night," Carlson said. McCann was one of those people who was up all night, only to work the next day.

Also, Carlson spoke of other times, when McCann went the extra mile. When the city was short various officials, Carlson said, McCann stepped in to perform extra work.

"He was never shy about helping out," Carlson said.

He added that he will miss his friend, but that the rest of the town will miss him, too.

Burgener said that the Stanfield City Council would discuss options for selecting a new mayor at a city council meeting Tuesday, April 19.

According to Burgener, the council would discuss whether to appoint a fellow councilor to fill the role or select a different person from their community.

The city council meeting came after the Herald went to press. Please visit www.hermistonherald.com for updated information.



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