



## Thoughts .....

### Ramblings Forums, Elections, and the Y in the Road

If you have been reading the paper, looking at Facebook, reading campaign literature and attending the numerous forums you should have a pretty good idea of how the seven candidates view the role of Manhattan City Government. Pool all the information provided and you end up with a very easy method of categorizing the candidates – they are either leaning left or right or have the rudder hard over. The City is at Y road junction. The choice is do we want to go right or left? It takes three votes to move left and one or more to move right. The point here is that the City Commission cannot accomplish anything without a quorum of three votes. So any voting equation must consider the hold over commissioners. Consider the left right scale:

**Hold Over  
Commissioners**

Nuss    Reddi    McCulloh    Jankovich    Strawn    Hogan    Ball    Butler    Matta



All of the candidates lean either left or right, no one is a moderate. Debbie Nuss, Usha Reddi and Karen McCulloh are far to the left. Rich Jankovich has proven to vote more with the left than the right and Bob Strawn has shown a leaning toward the right in his previous term on the City Commission. Dan Hogan and John Ball are clearly on the right; as are the two hold over commissioners.



It is easy to differentiate between left and right. The left will find any excuse to spend your tax dollars and the right will husband resources for core projects and services.

We are a few days from the election and advanced voting has already begun. I am too big to vote as my fat fingers cannot push the keys. So all I can do is stand on the side lines. As I absorbed the litany of

sometimes conflicting comments provided by the candidates in letters and forums, I rejected three outright. The reason for the rejection was simple .....

In the case of Debbie Nuss, she clearly stated that taxes were about right, she wished to support MAIG, Rental Inspection, mass transit and increase social service spending to 2% of the general fund – basically she is all about taxing and spending. Not my cup of tea, she is out to lower quality of life by digging deep into our collective wallets.

Karen McCulloh keeps billing herself as a fiscal conservative, but has not voted to substantiate that claim on the RCPD Law Board, the County Commission or during her past term on the City Commission. She is a *fiscal conservative* that thinks a 268 million dollar debt is manageable, that supports a bus system that loses 96 cents on the dollar (aTa), favors tax support of social services over efforts to increase donations and is for a government run rental inspection program. I am not sure what her definition of fiscal conservative might be, but it does not fit into my vocabulary. At one of the Forums Karen even suggested that we should be more like California, a really scary goal.

Usha Reddi was a candidate that I knew little about. She was a blank slate. After listening to seven forums she was still a blank slate. Almost all questions were answered with the phrase, I will listen, we should educate and I do not know the details right now. Two comments put Usha clearly in my no column. The first was her support for tax abatement for economic development. The second was her comment at the DMI Forum that the election this year was about gender. She essentially stated that people should vote for the woman not the men, because the city was not properly represented by five white men; seems a bit biased for a person that supposedly is going to represent all the people. I wonder what Usha's quota for white men on the commission might be?

What remained were four possible choices for City Commission. All men, but selected based on their government philosophy and intended or planned policy decisions.

Bob Strawn has a previous four year track record. He served on a very left leaning commission and was normally outvoted. He leans to the right, but not so far as to disband all social services. He even likes the arts and might fund a roundabout statue. He gets the debt picture and stated that he would not support a needless library expansion or the unnecessary day care operation at the city zoo.

John Ball has a very impressive resume having served as a garrison commander. That experience means he fully understands how a city functions. He is clear as to his view on debt, growth, and core services. He meets the bill of a true fiscal conservative.

Daniel Hogan did not spend much time on the campaign trail. He was only able to attend one forum, but we do have his responses to the Mercury and the Our Manhattan Voters guide. Dan also meets the bill of fiscal conservative, though his comments on city dog and gun control ordinances seem to be out of the mainstream in terms of campaign issues.

Rich Jankovich has a two year track record on the commission. He supported slowing of the debt, but did not go the extra mile to help achieve a zero mil levy growth last year. He voted for rental inspection,

mass transit and the human rights board/LGBT ordinance; those actions indicates that he is more a leftist than the moderate he claims to be.

The city is at the **Y**, Left or Right is the choice? Clearly a gender biased all woman vote will put the city on a heavily debt ridden left track. A vote for two of the woman and a quota of one white man; Rich Jankovich; will also put the city on the left track, but with not as much debt. A vote for any combination of the four men will put the city on the Right Track, for debt, quality of life, equal opportunity and responsible growth.

Head out and vote between now and April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Make a choice left or right. If you go left I guess we will have to replace my statue with one of **Mrs. Kaw** – unless the credit cards are so maxed out that the construction is delayed by bankruptcy court.

**Mr. K**