

Open Endorsement of Jim Graham

In the Ward 1 Council race, I have decided to endorse the incumbent, Councilmember Jim Graham. In making this decision it boiled down to one thing – in the race between Jim Graham and Brianne Nadeau, I believe Jim Graham’s experience and understanding of both the Ward and Georgia Avenue’s dynamics makes him the better candidate when it comes to representing the issues of our community and the future of lower Georgia Avenue.

As I often have had to do in my role as a community leader, I have given this decision much thought knowing full well that some in the community will disagree with it. Yet, above all I feel it is my duty to advocate in the best interests of the community. I believe this decision does that.

It has been my experience during my years of service that Councilmember Graham has provided much needed support to community priorities when it mattered most. A few of the many issues in our community I credit him with are:

- The opening of the Ward 1 Senior Wellness Center, a project that could have died or been built elsewhere in the Ward were it not for CM Graham’s advocacy;
- Bringing development and a new CVS to the corner of Georgia and New Hampshire avenues;
- His work on the land swap with the Gales School and the Central Union Mission, which led to the construction of *The Avenue*. Now, a building with 83 affordable units (27 set aside for public housing) exists where once a 150- to 175-bed men’s shelter was planned;
- His support for increasing the 2012 phase one modernization of the Park View School building from \$5.5M to \$8.4M, which allowed for far more of the building to be modernized than typically occurs during a normal phase one project;
- Continued support for improvements to the Park View Recreation Center. Due to Graham’s involvement, all of the outdoor spaces have been redone, and the main facility has had a renovation making it far more flexible and usable. His support for renovating the historic field house – which will begin this year – was also crucial;
- Graham’s support in creating a temporary park at the former Bruce-Monroe school site rather than allowing it to be converted to a parking lot. His work on this site is ongoing;
- The enhanced parking program, which reserves parking on one side of the street for the residents who actually live in the neighborhood; and,
- His outstanding constituent services and responsiveness to the many issues – large and small – that confront residents on a daily basis.

Against a backdrop where development has begun to take hold on Georgia Avenue, it is essential that our Councilmember for the next four year be someone who knows the dynamics of the corridor, be a proven and knowledgeable community advocate, and be someone who is truly interested in working with residents and community leaders on issues that directly impact them.

Washington is a city with many talented and intelligent people. I would count both candidates among them. However, in reviewing Ms. Nadeau's record I find it slim at best, even when compared to others who have had similar opportunities. As a community activist and leader who served on ANC 1B from 2007-2010, I expect more of her record than an ability to "bring people together around tough issues."

Within this context, I find Councilmember Graham to be the only real choice in the 2014 democratic primary race for Ward 1. I urge those who desire genuine, positive, and inclusive progress in our community to consider this when they vote on April 1st.

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