

Primal Scream--Marti Brown Speaks Out--7/14/09

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By Marti Brown--Candidate for Vallejo City Council

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Over the past few days I've read several comments regarding my position on affordable housing and redevelopment, and it seemed relevant that I weigh in on the discussion.

First, given the City's current problems, affordable housing in the City of Vallejo is a very low priority at this time. When I'm elected to office, it will not be one of my public policy priorities (please see my campaign platform:

www.martibrown.com

Second, the City's affordable housing dollars have been pretty much spent for the next several years, so I think this discussion is a moot point for at least the next four to five years.

Third, I am not supportive of instituting anymore Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly known as Section 8) in the City of Vallejo nor have I ever advocated that position. I am not supportive of any more affordable housing in the Downtown, Waterfront or within close proximity to these areas other than affordable senior housing (because seniors should have easy access to public transportation and neighborhood serving businesses). In fact, I wrote a "My Turn" in

the Times Herald in early June stating that we may need to consider removing some of our more problematic affordable housing projects in the Downtown in order to move forward with the Downtown Plan.

Fourth, my position on affordable housing is to look for the best practices and solutions that address the systemic and underlying problems that poor people face—not just housing. We should develop and establish affordable housing policy that provide supportive services, addresses wider community concerns, and avert further lawsuits by affordable housing advocates (e.g., the Buchongo Settlement) and the State.

As for redevelopment, there's no doubt that there are numerous examples of redevelopment abuse (through out the State and country). I can also show you examples of redevelopment that have positively changed the face of a neighborhood and community—it's no different than private development, there are good and bad examples of both. From my experience, the difference between good and bad redevelopment is the difference between a majority of enlightened elected officials and a highly visible and transparent public process—two things that I think most of us can agree are sorely lacking in Vallejo!

Finally, affordable housing and redevelopment policies are both fairly complex and really do not lend themselves to a blog format. I am more than happy to engage anyone in conversation about these two topics. Please feel free to email me at marti@martibrown.com and we can meet in person to discuss these issues further.

Great discussion! Thanks, Marti.