

David C. Strong

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CITIZENS OF WINTER PARK

As a concerned citizen of Winter Park, I want to clarify issues regarding my contributions to the City Commission race. My wife and I, as well as several companies I own, have supported Beth Dillaha's campaign, in full compliance with Florida law. Some have questioned the ethics of these contributions. I wish to clarify my position in this regard.

In 2006, I was pleased to have been elected Mayor by a considerable majority. I was elected because Winter Park citizens were frustrated with a City Commission that ignored their voiced concerns; specifically, the scale of new development in the City, the favorable treatment of special interests, and questionable ethics. Since being elected, I have consistently been in the minority (3-2) on important votes that have come before the City Commission, with the majority continuing to ignore the wishes of the citizenry.

The most flagrant example was the firing of City Manager, Jim Williams. Despite hundreds of calls and e-mails in support of Jim Williams and 100% support of attendees (including four former Mayors), the City Commission voted 3-2 to terminate Mr. Williams. In the process, a \$600,000 - \$4,000,000 severance obligation was incurred which is currently the subject of a lawsuit against the City.

Similarly, the City Commission voted on the recommendations of its Ethics Task Force, including strict limitations on political campaign contributions. I voted to adopt these restrictions, but again, I was outvoted 3-2.

Beth Dillaha and I will not agree on every issue. However, we share several values, most importantly, listening to citizens of Winter Park. I support Beth. She will serve the City well, independent of the influence of any special interest, including me. Let it be clear that Beth will never have to vote on any matter which affects any of my business interests. In contrast, her opponent would be required to vote on matters which would have a direct bearing on the business interests of several of her major campaign contributors.

I have every intention of making my opinions known and utilizing my personal resources to support what I believe to be in the best interest of Winter Park. Winter Park has a bright future and I look forward to working with fellow Commissioners who share that vision.

