



2018 CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

The El Segundo Chamber of Commerce asked the four City Council candidates questions related to business issues facing the city. Each candidate was given 100 words to answer each question. Candidates comments are printed as submitted. **ELECTION DAY IS APRIL 10, 2018.**



Maria Barden



Lance Giroux



Scot Nicol



Chris Pimentel

1. The business community generates the majority of city revenues. In order to retain and increase that source of revenue, what strategies would you support to retain and encourage business development?

BARDEN: I will work collaboratively with our business community to build trust and understand its needs in order to develop policies that maintain healthy growth. As a Council Member, I would survey existing businesses to determine what we can do better, invest in infrastructure and technology upgrades, and use data analysis to prepare for increased population and solve traffic and parking issues. I will also work with EDAC to advise on areas where our City can improve, and how we can differentiate El Segundo while promoting a city that is pro-business, healthy lifestyle, and safe.

GIROUX: El Segundo is ideal for businesses and consumers alike; close to LAX, Major Freeways, and the beach. As a central hub to Los Angeles County, we offer convenience and quality in an environment that is safe, secure, and relaxed. We possess some of the best real estate values, lowest tax rates and diverse corporate and creative workspaces in the area. We need to utilize our natural strengths and actively market El Segundo as a business destination. Marketing strategies can be conceptualized and developed as we work more closely with our current businesses and our Economic Development Advisory Council.

NICOL: I support much of what our EDAC committee recommends regarding growth and retention within our business community. The continued development of creative office space helps drive more companies to El Segundo, thereby growing city revenues. Our current policy of keeping business license tax reasonable and remaining committed to no gross receipts tax is key to business attraction and retention goals. As a Planning Commissioner I have seen the projects being developed and have a great understanding of

our business community. City staff needs to work creatively with our existing businesses to achieve their expansion goals within city limits.

PIMENTEL: Governments best serve private industry by setting conditions for it to succeed and making that success a priority. These conditions are physical, procedural, and cultural. We are catching up on deferred infrastructure items and need to ensure our IT architecture, roads, transit, power, etc. support growth. We must examine our approval processes so that businesses can expect reasonable, fair, decisions on reasonable timelines. Culturally, the city needs to inculcate a culture of guiding private industry in their planning and not issue blanket disapprovals. Council and staff need to value business as the oxygen of our economy.

2. El Segundo has a high concentration of Fortune 500 companies and has been recognized as "the most business friendly City." What policies do you propose to retain that distinction?

BARDEN: El Segundo is thriving and I am committed to strengthening our reputation as the most business friendly City. As a Council Member, I will bolster our outreach efforts to bring startups and established businesses here drawn to our highly skilled workforce, and institute policies that keep our business tax rates competitive. I'll also focus on properly staffed public safety departments and the environmental sustainability practices that younger employees are interested in. Future policies I'd like to consider include new smart city technologies, encouraging the next generation of innovators, and consideration of community services that add to a healthier lifestyle.

GIROUX: I believe we have the right policies in place that earned us this honorable distinction. To retain and elevate our reputation mandates we stay abreast of the latest trends



Maria Barden



Lance Giroux



Scot Nicol



Chris Pimentel

around business needs, and act on those trends. Staying up to date in industries that constantly shift can keep us ahead of the curve and proactive in implementing policies and programs that meet business needs and resident desires. We can do this by utilizing the resources around us to learn what current and prospective business owners, employees and consumers want and need to succeed both now and into the future.

NICOL: Being “the most business friendly City” is something I am very proud of as a resident and an involved citizen. To retain this designation we should continue to support staff and listen to their recommendations when it comes to code changes, zone text amendments, and creative ways of working within the code. The policies I would propose as a council person include approving a new draft of the Smoky Hollow Specific Plan. Our past is not our present and the code in the area needs to reflect our evolution from light manufacturing to mixed-use development and tax generating businesses.

PIMENTEL: Business friendliness is more than low taxes. It requires us to be as nimble as the modern economy. Attracting large-footprint corporations is wonderful but we must be mindful that it creates, naturally, city processes geared to large and slow development. We must also be able to more quickly evaluate, adapt for, and approve/disapprove our mid-cap and small businesses. This is the largest complaint that I hear from business owners or prospective owners – approvals and adaptations are not on competitive timelines. Structuring our processes around fast, efficient, service to business is more valuable than parking for tomorrow’s economy.

3. Is there additional information regarding your background and vision for El Segundo that you would like to share with our Chamber Members?

BARDEN: My vision is to promote El Segundo as a “role model city” and recognized as the Most Business Friendly City in LA County Award for a third time. I have previously

worked in the El Segundo aerospace industry and I currently work in healthcare IT, areas that together give me the perfect background of where El Segundo began and where it is going in the future. I also have experience in marketing that I will draw upon as I promote El Segundo as the best place to choose to do business.

GIROUX: My professional career has spanned 28 years and includes time spent with consumer giant Procter & Gamble, international experience in China and Mexico in the footwear industry, and for the last 20 years in smaller family owned businesses operated by entrepreneurs. This has given me a wealth of experience to draw upon in all aspects of business. This combined with my 18 years of experience in the El Segundo community gives me a unique perspective. El Segundo has tremendous potential and I’m excited to be part of developing a revenue plan that will help secure our future.

NICOL: As a graduate of ESHS and small business owner in El Segundo I carry with me first hand experience of the what it is to be a part of this community. I have seen our town evolve and I have weathered a recession as a business owner. El Segundo is very unique and requires a strong chamber of commerce in order to thrive. The Sepulveda corridor has seen great growth in the past decade and some of downtown has seen the negative effects of that growth. As a Council Member I will work to bring attention back to Main St.

PIMENTEL: I work every day with companies that seek or grow business in new locations. El Segundo has so many advantages over its peers: superior location, schools, services, and people. We must not let these advantages make us blind to the impediments that we can inadvertently pose to businesses. We must be a city that offers clear, discernable, rules; a city that makes fast, explainable, decisions; and a city that adapts, thoughtfully, its regulations as the economy evolves. Our city approved, powered, policed and taxed, trains, refineries and aerospace plants fast enough to lead the economy – we can lead again.