

# **ADDRESS**

**OF CANDIDATE, MARK VENZKE,  
TO CAMPAIGN SUPPORTERS AND MEDIA**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE VOTERS OF GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA  
HAVING REJECTED HIM AS A FINALIST IN THE RUNOFF ELECTION  
FOR THE OFFICE OF CITY COMMISSIONER AT LARGE SEAT 1**

**Tuesday, January 31, 2012**

My Fellow Citizens Of Gainesville,

Thank you for your support and for your votes that have placed me eighth in the field of eight candidates.

I appreciate your kind, encouraging and supportive words and actions over the past nine weeks of our campaign.

While we did not place in the finalists who will run in the runoff on February 28, we presented to the voters of Gainesville the most fully developed platform that covered the most critical issues that our city faces and a candidate who is caring, deliberative, temperate, articulate and determined to address the concerns of this city.

I congratulate Lauren Poe and Nathan Skop (finalists in runoff election) for their wins tonight, and I thank our other, fellow candidates for their mostly constructive participation in this demanding campaign. I encourage our fellow non-finalist candidates to continue their involvement in civic life. Indeed, at least one intends to participate in an energy policy examination panel that I expect to convene in the coming weeks to examine our biomass plant arrangement and the entire energy policy of Gainesville.

Please join me in recognizing the commitment to this campaign of all those who have financially supported it, who have allowed us to emplace yard signs on their properties and who have spread the word through many means about the vision and plans of this campaign for our city. Our financial contributors include:

- University Of Florida librarian, Chris McHale
- Ahrens Auto Service Center owner, Don Ahrens
- Akira Wood architectural woodwork fabrication company owner, Hoch Shitama
- electrical engineer, Barry Magrill

- redeveloper, John Arana
- redevelopers, Phillip and Nannette Arana
- Re-User, used building material supply, manager, Johnathan Burrill
- Best Jewelry & Pawn, pawn shop, owner and fellow candidate in the at large seat 1 race, Richard Selwach (believe it or not!)
- retired railroad man, Charles Peck
- Florida Department Of Environmental Protection wildlife biologist, Dana Moller and
- Capital City Bank branch manager and sustainability advocate, Don Davis

Six of those twelve contributors either live in the Near South Neighborhood, my neighborhood in which I have been leading revitalization efforts, or run businesses there. Surprisingly, Richard Selwach, one of my fellow candidates and a Republican, contributed \$50 because he told me, “I love what you're doing in your neighborhood.”

Our city has many outstanding qualities, qualities that have garnered for it many recognitions for high quality of life, qualities that have drawn and kept many of us and our fellow residents here. Our city has an exciting, vibrant and emerging technology sector. It has a world-class university and other institutions of higher learning. It has a regionally serving healthcare industry. It has a fantastic climate. (Well, summers are pretty hot and humid.) It has wonderful natural and cultural resources.

Unfortunately, our city has serious deficiencies and challenges. It has surprisingly high unemployment and poverty rates. It has relatively high and potentially higher energy prices. It has a dependence on dirty, dangerous and destructive sources of energy. It has a water supply imperiled by potential chemical contamination. It has surface and subsurface waters with low and declining flows and levels. It has fair recycling and poor hazardous waste management. It has congested traffic during commuting times. These are unacceptable, but together, with our new commissioners who we shall select in the runoff election and with many other concerned and involved citizens we can resolve those problems.

While I shall not have as much time to dedicate to influence civic affairs as I would have had had the voters of Gainesville ultimately elected me their commissioner, I intend to continue learning about issues and opportunities with which we are presented and to continue doing what I can to address them well. I intend to continue leading efforts to revitalize my Near South Neighborhood, to scrutinize our energy policy and advocate for any changes to it that appear necessary. I also intend to support the work of others who will be leading efforts to address most of the remaining governance objectives of our campaign. I shall also continue working on my business plan for the first environmentally friendly cab company in Gainesville.

This entire campaign has been a predominantly positive experience for me. I feel like I was born for campaigning. As you probably know, this has been the first time that I have pursued

public office. I have enjoyed preparing and presenting my understandings and views. I have enjoyed participating in candidate fora and debates. I have enjoyed talking with voters. I would not be surprised if I were to run for public office again.

From my early adulthood, I have complained during most campaigns that too few candidates have run for public offices because I have been unable to find suitable candidates among the limited choices. In this, the first race in which I have entered, eight candidates have run. I can not complain despite having had many competitors. The presentation to voters of many candidates is more important than candidates having many competitors. I hope that our at large seat 1 race sets a precedent and that all future races continue to attract large fields of candidates.

My participation in this campaign has provided me the chance to become quite familiar with my fellow candidates and their positions on issues. From that familiarity, I recommend that voters vote for Nathan Skop in the runoff election for the at large seat one race.

Please join me in continuing to keep informed of public issues and in working as citizens to effect good public policies.

Thank you all again for your support.

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**936 words 5.9 minutes (without recognition of additional campaign supporters and without ovations)**