

**Council Candidates on Tourist Advertising
Information & Perspective by Warren Woodward
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I was recently forwarded responses to a question that a resident asked all candidates for Sedona City Council. In response (or by not responding) to one simple question, the candidates revealed much about themselves that should help voters in determining for whom to vote in the election coming up on August 28th.

The question emailed to all candidates was this:

Hi, I see you are running for Sedona City Council. In order to help me make an informed decision, I would appreciate your answer to the following question. I know all the reasons both for and against, so please answer just YES or NO. If elected, would you support the City's long standing practice of financially supporting promotional advertising for Sedona tourism?

If no response was received after few days, then candidates were emailed this follow-up:

Hi, is there a reason why you have not replied to my question (below) that I emailed you the other day? If I don't get a response from you I can only assume that you don't care about my vote so I will not vote for you. Also, if you are non-responsive to voters I will recommend that my friends not vote for you either.

Hi, I see you are running for Sedona City Council. In order to help me make an informed decision, I would appreciate your answer to the following question. I know all the reasons both for and against, so please answer just YES or NO. If elected, would you support the City's long standing practice of financially supporting promotional advertising for Sedona tourism?

Remarkably, three candidates chose not to respond at all, even after being told they would automatically lose votes for being non-responsive. Janice Hudson and Jim Weiss, who are running for Council, and Pete Conrad, who is running for Mayor, could not be bothered to answer a simple Yes or No question and chose instead to be Missing In Action.

Responding, but essentially giving a non-response by not answering either Yes or No, were the following candidates:

Jessica Williamson: "I would be delighted to sit and talk with you. Please let me know when would be convenient for you."

Scott Jablow: "Thank you for writing me with your question. I find Emailing back and forth very impersonal so I would rather speak with you on the phone so we can discuss your question about Sedona tourism in more detail."

The question made it clear there is nothing to discuss. No sitting and talking. The only detail

requested was a Yes or a No. Simple question. Simple answer.

Three candidates answered Yes but could not do so simply.

While promising to be “super brief and respect your time,” Brock Delinsky took 331 words to say Yes.

Bill Chisholm's Yes answer ran 280 words. Chisholm claimed the City was obligated to advertise for tourists because “To follow Arizona law ARS 9-500.06 the city must spend the 0.5% bed tax increase Sedona City Council authorized starting 7/2/2014 for the ‘promotion of tourism’.”

Evidently it did not occur to Chisholm that if the City repealed the tax increase then the City would not have to spend a single dime on tourist advertising. Chisholm's largely equivocal response can be read in full at his largely equivocal website.

Usually windy, Mike Ward managed to keep his Yes to 66 words.

Out of twelve candidates, only three answered the question correctly with just a Yes or a No.

Tony Tonsich, the mayoral candidate, and Council candidates Noelle Julian and Sam Tardio responded with a clear and unequivocal No.

While only those three candidates were able to properly answer the question in just a word, at least the other candidates who responded basically understood the question – except for one candidate. Poor incumbent Mayor Sandy Moriarty, who is running for another term, was lost:

I appreciate your email, but I cannot answer yes or no until I understand the question. Please be specific about what you mean by “the City’s long standing practice of financially supporting promotional advertising for Sedona tourism”. Then perhaps I can answer yes or no. I would also be happy to meet with you to discuss the issue.

Since advertising commercial interests is not a proper function of government, and because it leads to cronyism, discrimination and other civic ills, I'll be voting for Tony Tonsich, Noelle Julian and Sam Tardio. Voters who want business as usual can pick from among the others.