

Kurzeja from page 1A

from the council and audience to the candidates.

Kurzeja and candidates Barry Brickner, Richard Corey, Dennis Fitzgerald and Soronen fielded the questions confidently. Former Mayor Ben Marks could not attend due to the flu.

Brickner, an attorney who has been active in local politics and subdivision association business, cited his ability as a businessman, expertise in computer technology and ability to work with people to resolve disputes as strong points.

"I have expertise in computer technology," he said. "I'm an author on the subject. I'm the attorney computer nerd of Oakland County."

Corey, who has served on the zoning board of appeals, economic development commission, Year 2000 Committee and others, said he would keep an open mind, but saw traffic as the top issue the city faces.

"I think being able to listen to people is half of the battle in business," said the business consultant.

Fitzgerald, who emphasized looking at increasing revenues rather than just cutting spending to contain the budget, said business expertise is not essential for a council member, but is an advantage.

"You can learn," he said. "But the learning curve can cost the city money."

Soronen, who is executive director of the Chamber of Commerce, said she would not seek re-election in August, when by charter, the appointed council seat would be up for election.

"I would be delighted to serve for the next 8 1/2 months," said the former mayor and 12-year councilwoman. "I think should someone run again the appointment would give them a leg up."

Marks, who cited 28 years of community service in his application for the post, cited wise use of the city's remaining vacant land as the key issue.

But Kurzeja, who has been active in working to improve the Grand River corridor, carried the day.

"The success of our city is dependent on the involvement of its residents," she said. "I've had 30 years of involvement at the grass roots level."

Mayor Vagnozzi and Council members Vicki Barnett, Cheryl Oliverio and Terry Sever voted for Kurzeja. Mayor Pro Tem Jon Grand and Councilwoman Nancy Bates voted for Soronen.

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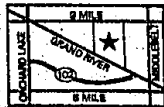


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