

Originally Posted Online: Feb. 17, 2011, 7:21 pm
Last Updated: Feb. 17, 2011, 11:12 pm

Incumbents face challenges in 2 Silvis wards

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By Seth Kabala, correspondent@qconline.com



Photo:
Kathryn (Kathy) Hall



Photo:
Chuck Reese III

At a time when all Silvis residents face ever-increasing prices and rising income taxes, four residents seek to better the city by vying for Democratic nominations for city council in Wards 2 and 4 in the Feb. 22 primary election.

The candidates elected in the primary will run unopposed in the municipal election on April 5.

Ald. Barbara Fox, 2nd Ward, who also has served as Silvis city clerk, is being challenged by Kathy Hall, a retired Rock Island Arsenal management analyst.

Ald. Caryn Unsicker, 4th Ward, is being challenged by Chuck Reese III, a volunteer Silvis firefighter.

Ald. Fox believes experienced servants are the best choice for voters.

"I would like the opportunity to serve the residents for another term, to be a part of the forward direction we have taken in the city of Silvis," she said. "I believe my (20 years') experience in municipal finances will benefit the residents and enable us, as a council, to continue practicing fiscal responsibility."

Government operates best when power changes hands, said Ms. Hall, a Silvis resident of 45 years.

"I can bring a fresh voice for 2nd Ward residents," she said. "I want to truly represent the residents, listen to their comments, answer any questions and try to alleviate and solve their problems," she said, adding that her AFSCME endorsement will make her an advocate for city workers.

Ald. Unsicker holds "green" issues, employment stability and social order as top issues in the city.

"I want us to keep our focus on environmentally friendly and responsible residential and business growth, to address the issue of whether we still want to burn leaves, to start a systematic program to get rid of the ditches on residential streets, to protect our employees' job security in uncertain times, and to hire additional police officers to reflect our growth as a community," she said.

Mr. Reese said the freedom of retirement puts him in a unique position to serve.

"Since being retired, I have time to better represent the 4th Ward," he said. "The 4th Ward is



Photo:
Caryn Unsicker

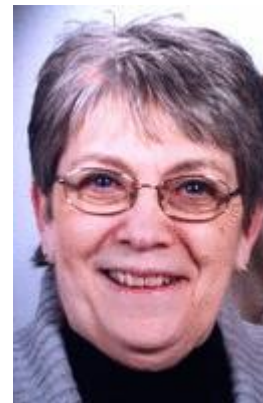


Photo:
Barb Fox

growing in leaps and bounds and needs someone to be around full time."

Each candidate has a unique set of goals.

Though she has overseen the completion of several projects as finance chairman, including the start of construction on a new 10th Street fire station, Ald. Fox believes Silvis still has room to grow.

"I believe we need to pursue further commercial development in the city and I can be of assistance in securing that development," she said, adding her experience and track-record speak for themselves.

Government can always do things better, Ms. Hall said. She feels public safety is paramount and also wants to "help implement more efficiency within the city that will both save operating costs and improve service to residents," she said.

Ms. Hall also would like the police and fire departments to have new facilities, possibly with space for training employees and holding meetings.

As head of the public service committee, Ald. Unsicker said she is proud of Silvis' increased recycling participation, going from about 70 percent to more than 95 percent.

She wants "Silvis to continue to attract responsible businesses that are committed to giving back to our community and that are stewards of our environment," Ald. Unsicker said.

Mr. Reese said his primary objective, if elected, would be to strengthen Silvis' business presence along the Interstate 5/John Deere Road corridor.

"Silvis needs to approach numerous business that will complement what we now (have) in place," he said. "I can see offering help with sewer and water hookups, building permits, etc.," which "could draw in maybe a new steak house or another large box department store."

There will be roadblocks to success in Silvis, the candidates agreed.

Ald. Fox isn't blind to problems, she said.

"The chief issue facing Silvis is the financial situation we find ourselves in," she said. Illinois is approximately \$200,000 behind on income tax payments to Silvis, she said. "In order to solve the financial situation we must continue to hold the line on spending."

Ms. Hall thinks infrastructure improvements to storm water drainage, streets, sidewalks and lighting are vital to improving Silvis' economic presence and its population.

Silvis officials have made good financial decisions, but "the slow economic recovery has

forced us to hunker down and make many cuts within department budgets," Ald. Unsicker said. "We need to continue to be vigilant about managing our resources in a responsible manner as the economic recovery takes place."

Mr. Reese sees constant vigilance with city finances as paramount to maintaining residents' trust. Elected officials should know "how to properly spend the tax dollar[s] Silvis collects," he said. "I plan to [vote] no on tax increases and yes to spending cuts."

2nd Ward

Name: Kathryn (Kathy) Hall

Party: Democrat

City: Silvis

Age: 65

Family: Two children and two grandchildren

Occupation: Retired program/management analyst at Rock Island Arsenal

Political experience: None

Education: Graduated from Villa de Chantal in Rock Island, attended Black Hawk College, graduated from Army Management Staff College in Alexandria, Va.

Why are you running for office?

"I can bring a fresh voice for 2nd Ward residents. I want to truly represent the residents, listen to their comments, answer any questions and try to alleviate and solve their problems. I feel there should not be two voting members on the council from the same household.

"I listen well and can look [at] all opportunities presented without any bias. My work for the government in an award-winning partnering program and extensive volunteer involvement within the city has given me a lot of experience and knowledge."

Name: Barbara J. Fox (incumbent)

Party: Democrat

City: Silvis

Age: 64

Family: Married with two sons and one granddaughter

Occupation: Retired

Political experience: Silvis city clerk 1989-2009, 14th precinct committeeman, 2nd Ward alderman for two years.

Education: United Township High School graduate, attended Black Hawk College.

Why are you running for office?

"I would like the opportunity to serve the residents for another term to be a part of the

forward direction we have taken in the city of Silvis. I believe my experience in municipal finances will benefit the residents and enable us, as a council, to continue practicing fiscal responsibility.

"I believe we need to pursue further commercial development in the city and I believe I can be of assistance in securing that development. I believe my experience combined with the willingness to work hard and to keep the interest of the residents first and foremost are the reasons for pursuing (re-election)"

4th Ward

Name: Caryn Unsicker (incumbent)

Party: Democrat

City: Silvis

Age: 63

Family: Married with one son and one granddaughter

Occupation: Counselor at the Bethany Black Hawk Phoenix Program

Political experience: 4th Ward alderman since 2007

Education: Bachelor of Arts degree in English and education from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and Master of Arts degree in counselor education from the University of Iowa.

Why are you running for office?

"The Silvis logo is that we are the 'City of Progress.' I want us to truly be a city where people are proud to live.

"I want us to keep our focus on environmentally friendly and responsible residential and business growth, to address the issue of whether or not we still want to burn leaves, to start a systematic program to get rid of the ditches on residential streets, to protect our employees' job security in uncertain times, and to hire additional Police officers to reflect our growth as a community."

Name: Charles (Chuck) H. Reese III

Party: Democrat

City: Silvis

Age: 58

Family: Married with two sons

Occupation: Retired from the Quad City International Airport, volunteer Silvis firefighter

Political experience: Previous candidate for alderman and mayor

Education: United Township High School graduate, attended Black Hawk College.

Why are you running for office?

"Since being retired, I have time to better represent the 4th Ward. The 4th Ward is growing

in leaps and bounds and needs someone to be around full time.”