A Memoir

College Station City Council
2007-2011
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John L. Crompton
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by
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PREFACE

Life is comprised of a collection of experiences. My four years on city council were a wonderful experience. I say that without any connotations of cynicism. Like all the best experiences, it yielded a wide spectrum of emotions: the jubilation of successes and the disappointment of failures; periods of adrenaline rush and of tedium; opprobrium and approbation from citizens; meeting many people with whom I would not otherwise have interacted; interactions with people who had diverse views; new insights into the working of local government; and enhanced knowledge on a wide variety of topics derived from public briefings, interactions with senior managers, and confidential briefings in executive sessions.

The reflections in this document on my council experience are selective, egocentric and idiosyncratic, since they are viewed only from my perspective. The descriptions and observations incorporate my biases. Thus, the document is a personal memoir, rather than an impartial historical account which would require a holistic balanced analysis.

My reason for investing effort in this project is selfish. Writing is an avocation for me, but it is also my primary learning and growth vehicle. These written reflections have facilitated self-analysis and, with the benefit of hindsight, have offered new insights into how I could have better addressed some issues. These lessons are valuable in my professional life in the context of both teaching and consulting.

My four year period was one of the most turbulent and controversial in the city’s history. There was an almost continuous string of issues that aroused passions and received substantial publicity. My intellectual capacity, value system and political acumen were fully engaged which added to the richness of the experience – although there were times when I did not appreciate these “opportunities.”

The first chapter of this memoir is entitled: Reflections on four years on city council. It provides a macro perspective of the four years. The bulk of the memoir which follows this chapter comprises a description of the accomplishments and failures of agenda items which are arranged under the major themes of my election platforms in 2007 and 2008: Neighborhood Integrity, Alleviating Traffic Congestion, Fiscally Conservative Actions, Ecological Sustainability, Amenities, and Economic Development. Within these six chapters (2 through 7), those agenda items that I considered to be major items are developed as more lengthy case studies which discuss the context and debate associated with them in more detail.