**Gillette Speech [No. 16047]**

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Campaign-announcement speech for Mr. David Gillette in support of his candidacy for the office of City Councilman for Knoxville’s 6th District.

[to the person introducing you] thank you so much, [first name of introducer], for that wonderful intro-duction. [to the audience] i only hope that in the next election, i’ll get the chance to live up to it.

and yes, ladies and gentlemen, to confirm what has long been rumored: i am indeed this evening *officially* an-nouncing my campaign to become district six’s next rep­resentative on knoxville’s city council.

i’m given to understand that there are, at the moment, at least a baker’s dozen other folks running for this same seat. and so i’d guess you wouldn’t have come to this event if you weren’t at least a tiny bit interested in the answer to the question: *why david gillette?*

why should the voters of district six pick *me* to represent them on the city council?

i’m not a politician. i’m a reasonably successful busi-nessman, who’s been involved in civic and community affairs for more than a quarter-century. just at the moment, i’m serving on knoxville’s neighborhood advi-sory council; and i continue to serve as vice president of the mechanicsville community association. i’ve been recognized for my community service work by both may-or rogero and governor haslam.

but i don’t think this is a time for a “battle of the resum-es.” i would guess that all of my opponents in this race — or at least most of ‘em — have the necessary tools and experience necessary to perform effectively as a city councilman.

but let’s face it: both the powers and the responsibili­ties of knoxville’s city council are really quite limited, particularly in the areas of taxation and revenue-gen-eration.

moreover, any single councilman’s vote represents only eleven percent of the council’s full voice. so in a very real sense, it amounts to little more than fraud for any city council candidate to promise that he or she will “get things done.” things don’t get done with eleven percent of the vote. they get done through trust, lead-ership, and commitment — or “t.l.c.,” as I call it.

you can trust me to be an honest and conservative shepherd of the city’s finances, whenever city council has anything to say about it — like when construction or maintenance bids are involved.

you can trust me to always tell you the truth about city and neighborhood affairs, even if it’s something you might want not to hear. and you can trust me to never make a promise to the voters of district six unless i know for [damned] well and certain that it can be kept.

You can also trust me to listen to whatever you have to say, on whatever topic you want to talk about. and to me, this is the most important thing, because in the final analysis, i understand that the most important role a councilman has is to give his own constituents a voice in the affairs and the future of our fair city.

and I can promise you this: my voice will not be a quiet one. it will be a voice of leadership on a wide range of issues that our city council must come to grips with. issues like the adverse effects of gentrification on poorer neighborhoods; and how these could be amelior-ated. or issues like the forced bussing of school kids because government redevelopment priorities have so ruthlessly disadvantaged poorer neighborhoods with respect to new-school construction and the mainten-ance of the existing-inventory.

but i believe that a city councilman, to be truly effective as a leader, has to be active well beyond the doings and debates in of the city council, and must be personally active within his or her own community.

in that respect, i must tell you that i’ve heard a lot of bitchin’ and moanin’ — pardon my french — about this or that aspect of life in district six. and the most frequent thing i hear mentioned is safety — not enough cops, raci-ally prejudiced cops, unreponsive cops, too much gang violence, too many drugs, etc., etc., etc. these are in many cases tragically real problems. and to the de-gree that city council has the power to correct them, i will vote for any creatively responsible program that might to do so.

but as i’ve said, there’ only so much city council can do. on the other hand there’s a whole lot that we *residents* can do to attack some of these problems ourselves.

in the area of neighborhood safety, for example, we can deploy the neighborhood watch concept throughout the district and throughout the city; and we can vigor-ously support an *“if you see something/say something”* public awarness campaign. i’ve had experience doing this in [name of town/area/city], and I can tell you, these pro-grams work.

we can provide grassroots awareness and training programs on subject like “home safety” and “street safety.” We can sponsor workshops throughout our our neighborhoods, on a regular basis, which among other things would teach participants how to take advantage of the many city and government services that are available to them but of which so many of them are unaware.

there’s so much that we as residents ourselves can do to solve our problems that don’t have anything to with city council debates, votes, or political maneuvering . it depends solely on us and our willingness to use the considerable power that’s in our hands, if we could only figure how to apply that power effectively in the cause of our neighborhoods’ saftey and revitilization. It’s in this arena that I pledge to commit my efforts, heart and soul.

as a longtime resident of the greater knoxville area, i’ve got lots and lots of ideas about the kinds of things our city ought to be doing, what the future should hold, what our city’s funding priorities ought to be moving forward, and so on. but instead of going on and on about my own ideas, i’d much prefer to hear yours. so first of all, if you would, let me know what you think is the most pressing issue that city council should be addressing but isn’t.

[call on one of the audience members who raises a hand.]

what’s the most important issue to you?

[acknowledge his/her answer and then use it to start a brief discussion with the participant: why is this import-ant to you? how has government dropped the ball here? what would you like to see city council do in this re-gard, etc.?]

[to the group] show of hands, please: how many of you feel the same way?

[ad lib a comment of recognition, then repeat the above “town hall” interaction for as long as there are people wishing to speak.]

thank you all for your interest and participation this evening. i assure you i’ve taken very detailed mental notes on the suggestions you’ve given me here this evening, and i’ll get to work on them with full vim and vigor at eight o’clock in the morning, the day after i’m elected.

i hope i can count on all of your votes.

thank you for listening!

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