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Space is at a premium at candidates forum

Preserving land only topic of debate held by citizens group

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Published: Friday, 04/06/07

CAMPAIGN 2007 | BRENTWOOD CITY COMMISSION

BRENTWOOD — By the end of the night, Abraham Lincoln and Will Rogers had been quoted and all seven Brentwood City Commission candidates had spoken their piece on the issue of preserving green space in Brentwood.

At a special forum Wednesday night sponsored by the Citizens for Brentwood Green Space, organization founder Stephen Prince shamelessly touted the event's single-issue agenda.

"We're here to talk about the preservation of green space in Brentwood," Prince told the 125-person crowd gathered into a conference room at the Brentwood Library.

"You probably won't hear about much else tonight."

For four Brentwood High School students who attended the event, that was no problem.

Jane Hettinger, Jenessa Casey, Lindsey Kernodle and Anna Nyseth — members of the school's newly formed, environmentally focused Green Team — attended the forum to find out what each candidate had to say about maintaining the city's natural beauty. Hettinger and Casey, both 18-year-old seniors, are getting their first taste of elections during the Brentwood City Commission election.

"Several of us are going to be voting in this next election, and we felt like it was important to start learning about the issues here and which candidates will best represent our ideas," Hettinger said. "I mean, I want to know, when I come home from college, will my city look completely different?"

That's what Prince is afraid of — and what each candidate agreed was important to prevent.

Richard Boone, Betsy Crossley, Anne Dunn, Fred Kane, Paul Ross, Joe Sweeney and Bill Youree each said they wanted to see Brentwood stay green. The only slight difference in their opinions is how to make that happen.

Prince, who served as moderator for the forum, asked each candidate a series of three questions selected at random from a list they had all been given prior to the forum. Random questions from the audience and closing statements from each of the candidates concluded the two-hour event.

The majority of the questions centered on whether the contenders support preservation of green space and how they might go about doing so — specifically, whether they would favor using city money to buy remaining acreage for green space, if elected.

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