

MAYOR, MAYOR NOT

They might not see eye-to-eye on everything, but Randy Zotter and Bobby Wilson, who are both trying to unseat three-term City Councilor Darlene Harris, agree that the district needs fresh leadership. To some political observers, the race for District 1 (which covers most of the North Side) will turn on whether residents want a vocal opponent to Mayor Bill Peduto's agenda.

(COMPILED BY ALEX ZIMMERMAN)

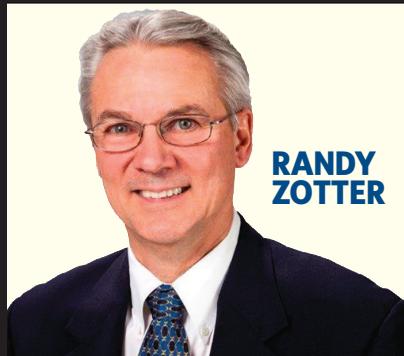
CANDIDATE



DARLENE HARRIS



BOBBY WILSON



RANDY ZOTTER

BIOGRAPHY

Harris is looking to win her fourth term on council and has previously served as that body's president, as well as president of the Pittsburgh Public Schools Board. Is a staunch critic of the Peduto administration and has frequently clashed with the mayor's supporters on council.

A University of Pittsburgh researcher, Wilson credits his interest in local communities to his longtime involvement in the Sarah Heinz House and Boys and Girls Club. Ran for council in 2011 and was defeated handily by Harris in the primary.

A retired carpenter, Zotter has been involved in a number of North Side community organizations and has worked on issues ranging from nuisance bars to senior housing. Proudly — and often — proclaims he "has no desire to be a career politician."

PUBLIC SAFETY

Says there need to be more public-safety officials on the streets. Has criticized Peduto for lobbying to keep Pittsburgh's financially distressed status as a negotiating tactic with the police union — which she says could limit pay increases and keep morale low.

Says one of the biggest impediments to public safety is lack of personnel. Wants to hire more police and building inspectors, and supports the mayor's budget. Says Harris' lone "no" vote on the budget "could have put the North Side and city at risk."

Generally supportive of newish police Chief Cameron McLay. Says one of city's biggest public-safety problems is keeping the bureau competitive with nearby police departments. Wants housing incentives to keep officers in the city and supports a transparent disciplinary process.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Touts her record securing funds for business districts — including better lighting and signage — and notes her support of the North Side as a "preservation community." "I don't think anyone wants to tear down the community, which is what they've done in East Liberty."

Says he would lobby for more URA and CDBG funds, and work closely with community groups to ensure a robust planning process. "That way when money does become available, we'd already have shovel-ready projects."

Says the key to robust community development is making sure all residents are included in decisions about the neighborhood. Wants to create a program that offers tax abatements to people who take on troubled properties, and supports Peduto's "complete streets" initiative.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MAYOR

Says "my opinion is coming from the community." Stands by her vote against the budget and questions the wisdom of Peduto's decision to drop legal action against the city's nonprofits. "I think Peduto wants yes-people ... you can't buy my vote."

With the endorsement of both Peduto and Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, it's no surprise Wilson is critical of Harris' posture toward the mayor: "It's going to take someone to reach across the table and repair relationships that have been destroyed."

Argues Harris' opposition to the mayor has hurt the neighborhood. "Look at what's happening in East Liberty, Lawrenceville and South Side — and then look at the Garden Theater. We need to work with Grant Street, not fight against it."

FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

Harris has secured endorsements from major labor groups, including the Allegheny County Labor Council, firefighter and police unions, and Teamsters. She's also supported by the Allegheny County Democratic Committee. As with all candidates, financial disclosures are not required until May 8.

In addition to being endorsed by the city and county's chief executives, also has union support from the Laborers' District Council of Western Pennsylvania and Fraternal Association of Professional Paramedics. He's also endorsed by Steel City Stonewall Democrats and the Sierra Club Allegheny Group.

Though he says he has not received any endorsements, Zotter notes he has served in a number of community organizations such as the Central North Side Council and the Mexican War Streets Society.