Candidate Information

Santa Cruz City Council

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Who do I contact to ask questions about the election or file nomination papers?

A. City Clerk Administrator Bren Lehr at (831) 420-5038. Offices are located at 809 Center Street, Room 9.

Q. How many seats will be placed on the November 6, 2012 ballot?

A. Four full-term seats, 4 year terms. Two seats held by incumbents, and two seats are at-large because incumbents have termed out.

Q. What are the nomination period dates and hours of operation?

A. July 16 through August 10, 2012, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and by appointment only on Fridays (due to furlough day). If any eligible incumbent does not file by August 10, the nomination period will be extended to August 15, 2012.

Q. What are the qualifications to run for City Council?

A. Section 602 of the Charter of the City of Santa Cruz states, "Qualifications. A person shall be eligible to be nominated for, or to hold office as a member of the Council only if such person is a registered qualified voter of this City, and shall have been for at least thirty (30) days next preceding nomination or appointment, a resident of the City of Santa Cruz, or of territory annexed thereto."

Q. How many signatures are required on the nomination paper?

A. At least twenty (20) and no more than thirty (30) registered voters of the City of Santa Cruz.

Q. Does a Councilmember receive a stipend for serving on the Council?

A. Yes. Councilmembers receive $1,551.31 per month, less a 10% reduction based on budget reduction. The Mayor receives $3,102.66 per month, less a 10% reduction based on budget reduction. Each Councilmember receives a $350 per month car allowance, and a parking permit. Health insurance is available. The City pays into the Public Employees' Retirement System. Each Councilmember is allotted $510.00 per year for office expenses, and the Mayor receives $1,275 per year.

Q. Can I run for the office of Mayor of the City of Santa Cruz?

A. No. The Mayor is elected from within the Council by the Councilmembers.

Q. What days does the Council meet for regular and special meetings?

A. 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month for regular meetings

Closed sessions start at approximately 1:30

Open sessions start at 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

1st and/or 3rd Tuesday of the month for possible special meetings

Open sessions typically start at 7:00 p.m. but may start earlier

Meetings are typically cancelled in August and the second meeting in December

Q. Does a Councilmember serve on City Committees and Outside Agency Committees?

A. Yes. Councilmembers each serve on 5 or 6 (out of approximately 21) City Groups and Outside Agencies, i.e. Conference and Visitors Council; Criminal Justice Council; Cultural Council; Library Joint Powers Authority Board; LAFCO; Santa Cruz Metro Transit District.

Additionally, councilmembers make appointments to approximately 15 city advisory bodies, such as the Planning Commission, Water Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, etc.

Q. Is there training for new Councilmembers?

A. A Councilmembers' Handbook is included with the City Councilmember Candidate Packet. This handbook will familiarize candidates with rules of procedure for conduct of City Council business, agendas, decorum in Council meetings, duties of the presiding officer, etc.

Additionally, an orientation for new Councilmembers will be provided by the City Manager and key department heads.

Q. As a Councilmember, do I have to disclose personal financial information?

A. Yes. The Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) requires that new Councilmembers file an assuming office statement and file annually thereafter. Form 700 is a public document that requires you to disclose certain interests such as stocks, including IRAs or 401Ks; business entities; sole proprietorships; partnerships; corporations; trusts; rental property in the jurisdiction; non-governmental salaries of the public official and spouse/registered domestic partner; gifts from non-family members; and travel payments from third parties (not your employer).

Q. What is the City's Campaign Expenditure and Contributions Limitations Ordinance all about?

A. Candidates who agree to abide by the Voluntary Campaign Expenditure and Contributions Limitations agreement will receive certain benefits in exchange.

Q. What are the Voluntary Campaign Expenditure Limitations for City Council Candidates?

A. By signing the agreement, a candidate agrees to spend no more than **$26,641.00** on their campaign and accept no more **$325 from individuals** and no more than **$780 from organizations**.

The benefits include:

- Being prominently identified on the City's website with a photograph and a 400-word candidate's statement in English and another language if desired (however, the City will not provide translation services and the two statements together cannot exceed 400 words).
- At no expense to the candidate, the City will provide a vendor for electronic recordkeeping of FPPC forms.

Q. Where can I find information pertaining to map of precincts and index of registered voters?

A. Contact the Santa Cruz County Elections Office, 701 Ocean Street, Room 210, (831) 454-2060.

Q. Where can I find access to the current California Elections Code?

A. Access is available at the following locations:

- County Law Library
- Downtown Branch of the Public Library
- City Clerk Administrator's Office
- California website at http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/calawquery?codesection=elec&codebody=&hits=20

Q. What are the requirements for signs?

A. California Code Section 5405.3 Outdoor Political Advertising – State Law – Business and Professions Code states the following:

A temporary political sign is a sign which:

(a) Encourages a particular vote in a scheduled election
(b) Is placed not sooner than 90 days prior to the scheduled election and is removed within 10 days after that election
(c) Is no larger than 32 square feet
(d) Has had a statement of responsibility filed with the department certifying a person who will be responsible for removing the temporary political sign and who will reimburse the department for any cost incurred to remove it

The Clerk's office is not responsible for enforcing sign laws and will not investigate violations. The law directs the Department of Transportation to remove signs that do not comply with the regulations before an election and to bill the responsible party for removal costs after the election.

Q. When do I file a form 501 (Candidate Intention Statement)?

A. Prior to raising or spending any money.

Q. When do I file a form 410 (Statement of Organization recipient Committee)?

A. Within 10 days of raising or spending $1,000. The original copy must be filed with the Secretary of State and a copy provided to the City Clerk Administrator.

Q. When do I file a form 460 (Consolidated Campaign Disclosure Form)?

A. Semi-Annual statement for committees covering January 1 to June 30, 2012 to be filed by July 31, 2012

First pre-election statement covering January 1, or July 1, through September 30, 2012 by October 5

Second pre-election statement covering October 1, through October 20, 2012 by October 25

Semi-Annual Statement covering October 21 through December 31, 2012 by January 31, 2013