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Seldovia municipal election 2005 - *The Candidates Speak*

City Council - 1 year term - 1 position open



Peggy Boscacci (incumbent)

“Number one I feel it is important that a woman to be represented on the Council. But, I also feel that Seldovia is going in such a great direction right now. I like to be a part of that--see some changes and see some good things happen in Seldovia.”

Councilwoman Boscacci has lived in Alaska for the last 13 years. Raised during the summers in Seldovia in the 40's and 50's Peggy has deep roots here. Boscacci's dad was a commercial fisherman, so Boscacci helped out. Boscacci has lived in Seldovia as a full time resident in 1992. Councilwoman Boscacci is a registered Republican. Boscacci has practical experience she brings to the council: civil engineer, ice cream/laundromat owner, and real estate broker/agent, with experience in remodeling houses as well.

Boscacci thinks that Seldovia needs economic development. She feels confident that the City Manager, Kurt Reynertson, is a good leader and is taking Seldovia in the right direction.

Boscacci thinks Seldovia is going to grow in spite of itself. She feels the “fast ferry” would facilitate that in the community and become a growth “encourager.” Seldovia has retirees and she would also like to see families move to the community. Boscacci feels we live in an ideal place and would like to see more kids in the school. Boscacci is certain the “fast ferry” would be a great motivator for that proposed growth in Seldovia.

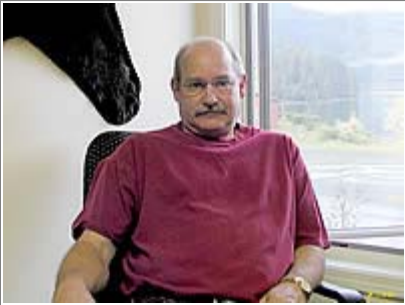
If resources were available, she would like to see the old cannery property developed here and some updating needs executed on the existing buildings. The momentum on this is gaining and she would like to see that continue. Boscacci is action-driven and would like the discussions and red tape to be curtailed so that the resolutions that have been brought to council can be seen through to the end in a timely manner. Boscacci views development of the old cannery site being a diversified facility/facilities of marine and non-marine related industry.

Boscacci feels that it is important for balance to have a female councilwoman on the city council. Her continuation of a second term speaks toward that voice in the population along with her unique, long-term history in the community.

Councilwoman Boscacci volunteers in the Seldovia Chamber of Commerce in the capacity of Secretary/Treasurer, has worked in the past at the Borough as Planning Commissioner for nine years, worked as a civil engineer, and is currently working in real estate as an Associate Broker/Agent.

Councilwoman Boscacci and her husband, Everett, have six children between them, and seven grandchildren.

City Council - 3 year term - 2 positions open



Tom Keesecker

“I think my strongest feeling right now would be that I think we need to come to a concise consensus of what needs to be done and go to work and get it done. As far as the dock and the things that we need to do that we have funding available to do. Quit < talking >...people are getting frustrated in this town...of knowing that the funding is available to do this stuff but they don't see it getting done. So, we need to get on with it and go to work.”

Tom Keesecker has lived in Alaska for 25 years. He moved to Seldovia in March, 2003. Keesecker is a registered Republican.

Keesecker feels the city should not run in a deficit. Any funding we have available for specific assignments/tasks should begin and then be seen through to the end. He dislikes the procrastination that is going on. Funds get eaten up by doing studies, talking, and procrastination, he wants to “get off the fence,” do the work and get the job done. Keesecker does see the jobs and city challenges as items that need to be prioritized and organized; he has had large-scale projects in which to complete and feels he has follow-through skills. Keesecker noted he came here to Seldovia and got the jobs lined up and built. Regardless of the funding situation, the money that is earmarked for those things that need to be done in the city inevitably get taken up in studies and engineering and procrastination. If we wait to spend it, Keesecker mentioned, we lose it. Keesecker feels action will gain Seldovia ground. He can bring his construction expertise to the city council that will greatly facilitate current and future projects that the city needs to begin, are currently working on, and complete in a timely manner.

Keesecker feels that the infrastructure is not being maintained properly and that if we lose our infrastructure, we lose our town. He feels that if we don't set aside “sinking funds” as part of the budget plan, we will not have a fund to draw from to fix various problems that commonly arise in city maintenance. Without a fund set aside we will begin a downward spiral, where we cannot band-aid these infrastructure issues any longer. Rather, we need to address them by using current funding to permanently and correctly fix this problem.

Keesecker noted that economically, families are the key element in improving Seldovia's economic status and growth; young people pay taxes and old people don't. With more families moving to Seldovia, funding will be commensurate, and that is critical for viability. Keesecker described it as a “stair system.” More kids, more teachers, businesses’ “ramp” because all businesses are positively impacted by the increase in numbers and it is the seed of families being “planted” that will most positively impact Seldovia's businesses and on a larger scale, the economy.

Keesecker knows the “fast ferry” project right now has insofar been funded for an impact study only. If the study results are not just right, coupled with the current federal government climate of the last 30 days (The Katrina Disaster), and it is not sold to the “money gods” in D.C., we will not see any funding. Keesecker feels we need to prove to the federal government that the new ferry system is warranted and we need it badly. Having the “fast ferry” will be a great motivator for people to live here. He thinks people would love to live here with a viable mode of transportation to travel to jobs located in Homer and beyond with the additional bonus of the immediate gratification factor in turn around of goods as well.

If resources were available, and the boat harbor was addressed through state funding (he feels that the boat harbor is critical for summer commerce). Keesecker thinks the following would need to be addressed: water, sewer and the greater infrastructure (repair of buildings) with attention to city property and buildings, which he feels are currently in a serious state of disrepair.

Top agenda items for Keesecker would be to get a priority list of what the boat harbor needs and get those things done (if there is no funding). If there were funding (which he acknowledges, does take time to acquire the grant/s), we need to go to work and do the things we have the money to do. Then we should address the highest priority need and work from there down to the lowest, in that order and see those through to the end. He would like to take whatever monies are currently available, for the boat harbor, and start on that priority list and get things done sequentially from top to bottom. That follows in line with moving forward, being proactive, and accomplishing a portion (at the very least), instead of not beginning any of it because not all the funds are in place.

Keesecker is a member of the Seldovia Chamber of Commerce, and has helped with the Independence Day Celebration. Keesecker works full-time currently, as a contractor (he is not an employee) for the Seldovia Village Tribe. His official title is building manager. He was contracted to implement and supervise the construction of three commercial buildings for SVT and this contractual work for SVT is now coming to an end. Furthermore, Keesecker feels he would bring a unique perspective to the city council with his construction background of more than a decade and his current work with SVT is a benefit, rather than a conflict of interest.

Keesecker thinks he is the best candidate for the council seat with his construction experience here in Seldovia, where he completed three, major commercial projects from beginning to end. Keesecker was also a business owner of his residential construction business for a decade in Anchorage, and feels adding his voice to the city council will help achieve that balance which is vital for a cooperative effort for Seldovia.

Tom Keesecker, along with wife Peggy, is a parent of 2 daughters and grandparent of 6 grandsons.

City Council - 3 year term - 2 positions open



Steve Lewis (incumbent)

“I feel I’ve got a broad based background that allows me to look at every issue, that comes before the council with some degree of knowledge and I feel that over the last four years I have done my best to represent every member of the community, impartially, I don’t feel that I have a specific constituent base or interest in mind but that I represent everyone in the community and my entire objective is to help this community be a place that everyone feels they’re a part of and everyone feels is working towards their interest.”

Councilman Stephen Lewis has been in Alaska since 1978; moving to Seldovia as a full time resident in 1997. His party affiliation is “Undeclared.” Lewis thinks it is a matter of fiscal responsibility of and by the city to remedy the current budget deficit of roughly 90,000. Lewis feels the city and city council has been remiss in balancing the budget. Lewis feels The City of Seldovia needs to start charging/enforcing for its services, such as: parking, parking fees (enforcement of existing fees), boat ramp fees, with fire and EMS services also needing to be addressed. The latter services have fees that are collected in other communities but not in ours. Some of the fee schedules are on the books but collection has not been enforced.

Councilman Lewis thinks the basic physical infrastructure has been ignored for a minimum of ten years. The roads are in worse shape than they were ten years ago. The paved portion of town has been dug up and a series of “fixes” have been completed, with the “fixed” portions not getting re-paved; still needing comprehensive work to be done. Lewis was pleased that the fire hall building finally got a new roof this summer and the harbor office building has received the renovations that it desperately needed but still needing more attention. Lewis mentioned we are endeavoring to address through The Village Safe Water Project. Lewis thinks the funding for things like the city’s infrastructure is directly related to the federal government’s current situation in Washington D.C.

Lewis feels it’s foolish for the city to concentrate on any one aspect of the potential areas for economic development. To date the city has been primarily directed toward economic development in the fishing industry. Lewis mentioned that our community is not moving toward being a recreational/retirement community, it has already become one, especially in the last 5-7 years. Lewis emphasized the vacancy rate is huge in the winter at 30% +. Lewis likes the idea of a more “balanced” approach with: exploring the potential of winter tourism, fisheries, other mineral industries (which might have it’s challenges due to land ownership issues, but worth exploring), some “cottage” industry (defined loosely as home-run businesses’) examples which include, but are not limited to: B&B, literary efforts, stained glass, corporations, computer, etc. Lewis does not want to see this potential limited because of the seasonal occupancy. He has noticed with some alarm that the harbor was not full even during the summer months. Lewis thinks the old cannery property might have potential as a boat storage facility and this should be explored.

Lewis is also Chairman of the Kachemack Bay Ferry Steering Committee to facilitate the “fast ferry” project. Currently the fast ferry project is in the study phase. Funding is already in place for this study. There are several elements the study will address: economic, design, environment, intergovernmental relations, remove support for the Tustumena Ferry Service or remove Seldovia from The Alaska State Marine Highway, root and traffic, and social impact. Lewis predicts the timeline on the study to take at least 18 months with that being pretty fast for this type of study. Lewis is in favor of the fast ferry proposal if the analyses are proven beneficial, as a whole, for

our community. Furthermore, he feels peer-study is key in the determination of the study's suitability for Seldovia. Lewis would very much like to see an improved ferry service to our community, but the level of improvement is up for debate. Lewis understands that the limited ferry service we currently have hinders our growth and our economic viability. He is interested in studying the results of this analysis.

If resources were available he would like to see fiscal responsibility and the city's infrastructure for the use of all the people of Seldovia be updated and maintained. These would also be Councilman Lewis's top agenda items.

Lewis has volunteered in the following capacity: city councilman, Vice President of Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Council, lifeguard at Susan B. English School for 6-7 years, Fire Dept Chief, also Assistant Chief, Fire Dept. Engineer, member of Kachemack Bay National Estuarine Citizens Advisory Council (education and research on the environmental and oceanographic aspects of The Kachemack Bay Estuary), member of the finance subcommittee of The Alaskan Municipal Legislative Committee (to participate in the league's effort to get revenue sharing reinstated).

Lewis wishes to continue on as city councilman to insure the city gets back on its feet.

Lewis thinks he is the best candidate because of his experience with four years of city operation, had experience with AML in Juneau, his extensive life experience and familiarity with legislative dealings while also observing government operations in many areas of the United States and other parts of the world. He was a technical advisor for two native groups for possible petroleum development during the 1980's, and is a currently employed consultant with the by Arctic Slope Regional. He feels he has a sound social and local civic background, industrial experience in major program design, bidding, bid analysis and contract/bid awards. Lewis will offer a broad spectrum of abilities to offer the city for it's benefit. He has stated that he does not have any individual constituent base here and is running at large, and his charge, if elected is to equally represent everyone in town and their interests.

City Council - 3 year term - 2 positions open



Walter McInnes (incumbent)

“To move forward and get things done.”

Councilman McInnes has been in Alaska since 1959. McInnes is a long-time Seldovia resident having purchased property in the same year he became a resident in 1962. McInnes is registered as “Undeclared.”

The economic direction McInnes feels we should work toward is graduated, sustainable growth during his next term. He feels it is critical for Seldovia's viability as a community.

Working toward the common goal of the extensive repair the city's infrastructure required, McInnes worked on getting the Village Safe Water Grant. He and another councilman were together in pursuing this grant while on the same committee which highlighted the problems and the areas of need for water and sewer correction and replacement.

McInnes feels there has been the type of growth he describes as desirable in just this last year. He thinks this type of sustainable, consistent growth is beneficial to Seldovia's longevity. The best growth would include children and the maintenance of the school system. The best way to have that is having sufficient numbers. Whatever we can do, as a community, to make this area attractive to families with children would promote that growth.

McInnes noted that a passenger ferry or “fast ferry” would certainly increase the city's capacity for growth, and for usage to those of us that are already residents of Seldovia.

If resources were available McInnes would like to create some job opportunity's for that above mentioned age group of families with children. Creating some jobs, to expand that age group, would be of prime importance.

The top priority of McInnes is moving forward and getting done with the projects we already have money and input for. That is the very top thing for McInnes; move forward and get things done! For example: the harbor, the fuel tank replacement, the infrastructure (which we are already in line to receive money for), the old cannery property, the city dock and the airport. We need to keep the ball rolling on these monies we have received, getting the work done in a timely manner.

Over the years, McInnes helped out at the Seldovia Fire Dept. with the pump truck and a variety of other things. He had opportunity and has given a lot of personal time to a variety of people, to help in various ways over the years. This is the Seldovia way. McInnes was available to help people when he was on the job, and before his job, during his job, and after the job; he made sure people's questions and areas of assistance were recognized and addressed by him. During his 28-year tenure for Homer Electric Company as a Power Plant Operator, he devoted his personal time in assisting his fellow Seldovian. McInnes has also seen a few projects in his time from beginning to end and feels he has the follow-through to see the current projects that the city is facing get action on as well.

Councilman McInnes wants to finish the work that was started during his last two terms. He has the background information and knowledge of this work. He has been following this body of work, with some of the other council members and feels that is a huge benefit in completing the tasks at hand. The council is a lot of work; you realize that the council is the people that have the city's best interest in mind and are motivated to serve the community on a consistent and long-term basis. What McInnes has learned in his 6 years on the city council is it's not about what he wants, but what he can do for the community. He feels that the council has to work together and respect each other to get that work done.

McInnes feels he is a well-suited candidate, in large part due to his long residency in Seldovia. He is personally privy to a history in this town that others have only read about, and would like to share that knowledge to assist the council. McInnes remembers, from his personal experience, different instances of land use and a variety of other things that are unique to him and bring a rich fabric of history to the council. He noted, as the oldest member on council, that he is representative for this age-segment of the population and it is important to hear that voice.

Councilman McInnes, with his wife Margaret, have four children together and ten grandchildren.

Mayor - 3 year term - 1 position open



Savannah Lewis

"Seldovia is facing a number of increasingly urgent challenges in the form of a stagnating population/economic base and deteriorating infrastructure. I don't think anyone who is paying attention can be unaware of this. But now it's time to move beyond just putting bandaids on the problem and demanding that things get better. We need to draw on the expertise and opinions of all of our residents, rather than pitting one set of needs or plans against another, if this city is to develop an organized plan to insure its survival in its present form."

> How long have you lived in Alaska ?

I have been an Alaska resident since 1978.

> How long have you lived in Seldovia?

I've been a year-round resident in Seldovia for just over eight years, although I've been a taxpayer here for 15.

> Do you have a party affiliation?

I don't believe the city elections involve traditional party affiliations in that seats are elected in common, not by party platform.

> Do you have an economic direction you would like Seldovia to move toward?

I would prefer to see the city government move towards proactive fiscal planning and away from the deficit-budget/crisis mode it has been in for the past few years. In terms of the community as a whole, I don't think any single industry or direction provides adequate support for a viable community in today's political economy. More realistically, we will stand a better chance of survival by participating in a variety of small niches.

> What are your areas of concern for the city regarding:

> a) Services to include: Water, Sewer, Utilities, EMS , etc.

I'm not clear on what you're asking here. Yes, I believe that the city is the best entity to provide water, sewer and emergency safety services, and I would like to see these continue to be included in the city's offerings rather than be contracted out to other agents. I think it's important that the city properly justify its fee schedules for these services so as to reflect their actual costs to the city, given that our real property tax base is so out of line with our actual consumer population. I do have some specific proposals to make to the council on funding city services if I am elected.

> b) Growth

I am not so sure that growth is as important as halting our decline and reaching for stability as a mixed community. Simply embracing growth for its own sake runs the risk of magnifying our problems, not alleviating them. Most Seldovians are here by choice, and part of that choice includes living in a small community. It should be the role of our city government to respect that choice and make sure that such growth as we require to reach economic viability and stability doesn't imperil this.

> Any comments on the daily "fast ferry" that may become a part of Seldovia's future?

I look forward to seeing the economic analysis of how this would become fiscally viable, including how ongoing infrastructure maintenance needs will be met. While it's easy to be "for" better transportation, we will need to look very carefully as a community at the costs this will impose on us as well as the actual extent of service this plan will provide. I think it's also important to remember that we are served by many other transportation providers, and it is in our interests that the local transportation industry as a whole should be nurtured to its healthiest, most varied state. There is no single answer that will meet all of Seldovia's transportation needs.

> If given all the resources, what would you change here in Seldovia?

My "dream" Seldovia would have a mixed-age population with a sound economic footing that provides adequate revenue for the city to maintain basic services and provide for its citizens, but without substantial change in its rural, quiet nature. I'm not really interested in changing much about Seldovia itself--just strengthening the economics that permit us all continue to live here under this form of municipal government.

> What would be your "top agenda" items?

The survival of this community. Small rural communities all over the state are going under and I don't want to see this one join their numbers. This requires fiscal solvency, first, and then careful work to define and nurture the city that best serves the needs of our whole community, not just any one segment of it.

> What volunteer work/committees are you a part of?

-Seldovia Public Library: board member and library assistant

-Seldovia Arts Council: member, past officer -Seldovia Sea Otter Booster Club: member and web support

-City of Seldovia : web support, research assistance

-Seldovia Volunteer Fire Dept.: photo support

-Susan B. English School: worked for five years in a half-time volunteer position running the school library; served two terms as the community representative on the Susan B. English School Parent Advisory Board/Site Based Decision Making Council Seldovia

Planning Commission: served 1 year; vice-chair

> Why are you running for this office?

> Why do you feel you are the best candidate?

Because I believe it is the responsibility of each citizen to participate in government by helping provide the services needed to maintain a community. Because it distresses me to hear how many of my fellow community members feel disengaged and disenfranchised from participation in city decision-making. I don't like to hear "them" statements in this community where, really, there is only "us." I have skills in organization, research and communication that I feel would benefit the operation of our city. Over the past eight-plus years, I've attended all but perhaps half a dozen city council meetings, giving me a detailed historical acquaintance with the issues and processes of

recent city business as well as the discussions that went into past council decisions.

> Are you a parent?

No. I do, however, maintain the Seldovia Sea Otter Booster Club website as a volunteer effort and participate in their meetings. I also volunteered the equivalent of a half-time job to the school for five years in organizing and running the school library, and served two terms as community representative on the Susan B. English School Parent Advisory Board/Site Based Decision Making Council. I think that children are vital elements of a healthy community and we should all, parents or not, be deeply concerned about maintaining our school-aged population base to an extent that will enable the district to provide a good education for our future community members.

Mayor - 3 year term - 1 position open



Dick Wyland (incumbent)

"I usually give everything 110%. I plan on continuing to do that. When it comes to donating time or energy, I am not a bit shy about stepping up to the plate. I can be controversial at times, but I try to take the whole community and the whole state into consideration."

Mayor Wyland has lived in Alaska for 25 years. He and his wife, Jan, bought property here in Seldovia in 1987, becoming full-time residents in 1989.

Wyland is registered as a Republican.

Mayor Wyland is "gung ho" about the old cannery property getting developed as soon as possible. Wyland envisions mainly marine-related facilities or possible heavy/light industrial. Wyland hopes that this type of development would open the door for possibly 6-8 families to move here and have viable jobs in the community. Mayor Wyland is concerned about Susan B. English School's declining numbers and thinks this would address two issues at the same time.

Mayor Wyland thinks it may be as long as a year or two before the public see the city's infrastructure addressed. There is always a lot of paperwork and complicated processes that need to be followed before the end result. Wyland says that there has been a series of patchwork done but doesn't know of anything comprehensive happening since the Urban Renewal in the 60's. Wyland thinks the main areas that need to be addressed are: fixing existing water leaks, removal of the thin wall conduit that is feeding the water, acquire an extra water tank, and chlorinating the water before it enters the tank. Wyland noted we might have to go back to a filtration system (this system filters water before it enters the tank). He looks forward to seeing this infrastructure implemented in his next term.

When addressing growth, Wyland emphasized positive growth; he doesn't want Seldovia's population to stagnate. He emphasized we don't want our windows boarded up and have businesses operating only three months out of the year. On the flip side, we don't want to be a "Homer Spit." Controlled growth with a good supply of year 'round jobs, coupled with good transportation would go a long way toward slow and steady population growth. Wyland feels we are headed in the right direction, with an excellent city manager, Kurt Reynertson, at the helm; having good leadership skills and follow-through. The old cannery property is crucial to this slow and diversified growth that Wyland feels is critical for the continued viability of our small community. Wyland thinks that if we are not careful this will be an in and out bedroom community for Anchorage and the lower forty-eight. We already have that to some extent and its expected in this type of desirable community but he would also encourage year- round residency. The development on the old cannery property site would go a long way toward promoting this objective for the benefit of Seldovia.

Mayor Wyland does not want to see a passenger -only ferry as he feels the economy will only benefit from moving product in and out of the community. Without accessibility to frequent transport of goods and people we will still not be viable and see the growth that we need to maintain our city's integrity. He thinks whatever ferry system we have it will be imperative that it transport both passenger and

material/goods. Wyland also believes it is crucial that we remain on the Alaska Marine Highway System. Wyland will be interested in the results of the comprehensive study that will be completed in the near future on the impact of a "fast ferry" for Seldovia.

If given all the resources, and the above issues of development and infrastructure were addressed, Mayor Wyland would also like to see attention paid to beautifying the Seldovia Cemetery. The City of Seldovia needs to be in compliance with city ordinances pertaining to trash and general clean up of the roads and properties within the city boundaries (and beyond). Wyland is also interested in dust control on the city's roads and funding has already been allocated toward that end, thanks in part to Representative Seaton.

Wyland is going to be aggressive with his top agenda items, which are: getting the old cannery property developed into a viable industrial property, implementation within the next year or so. Wyland also plans to stay on top of the water/sewer (infrastructure) issue, fuel tank replacement and looking into the potential for the city dock to be refurbished.

Mayor Wyland's volunteer resume is extensive: past Seldovia Fire Dept. Firefighter, runs the annual spring city clean up, assists with electrical for the Independence Day Celebration, former Cub Scout Leader, football coach and club director, ~~President~~ 2nd Vice President of the Alaska Municipal League, and past President of the Alaska Electrical Inspectors Association. Wyland is also a Korean War Veteran, former business owner of his own electrical company, and also served as Interim City Manager of Seldovia among a variety of other pursuits.

Mayor Wyland would like to run for one more term and finish the work that has been started. Wyland would like to see it <the work> through, help the community by getting development, and get a smooth operation going where it has become a little lax. A second term would allow time to get thru some of the obvious governmental red tape that is part of seeing construction projects come to fruition. Mayor Wyland has forty years construction experience that he can bring to bat for the community. He will use his expertise in this area to see the development of the proposed industrial project come to completion. Wyland would like to work hard toward the goal of a viable small industry, that employs families, which in turn enhances the growth of the community as a whole.

Wyland has had many years dealing with organizations, private businesses, permit processes, different government entities, and prides himself on his approachable and easy-going confidence while still getting the job done. In collusion with first-rate City Manager, Kurt Reynertson, he feels they will make a great team for Seldovia for the next three years and beyond.

Mayor Wyland and his wife, Jan, have raised six children together, have seven grandchildren and three, great-grandchildren!