



## **Mayoral Candidates Forum on Energy and Transportation - Friday, March 23, 2007**

The forum opened at 6:20 with the arrival of Councilman Nutter

Heather Shayne Blakeslee, Friends Center Capital Campaign, welcomed the audience, outlining the plans for green renovations of Friends Center that will make the facility fossil-fuel free. They will have a green roof, insulate, utilize day lighting to reduce the need for electric lighting and will be the first building in the city to install deep well geothermal heating and cooling (the well will be as deep as the empire state building is high), and lastly, they will begin living differently in the building. Friends Center will become a model of green building in the city and host programs and visitors.

Liz Robinson thanked her fellow planners, Hollister Knowlton (ECA board and PYM's Earthcare Working Group), Jerry Silberman (Philly Beyond Oil), Peter Javscas (PenTrans), Michael Fedor (PA League of Conservation Voters) and Heather Shayne Blakeslee (Friends Center). She also thanked the many event co-sponsors and invited the audience to visit their displays at the sustainability fair in the Cherry Street Room after the forum. She expressed her gratitude to Zack Stahlberg, Committee of Seventy, who is serving as moderator and has given the planning committee much valuable advice.

The candidates will begin with a 2 minute opening statement, followed by questions posed by Zack, who will also take audience questions (to be submitted on the yellow cards distributed at the registration desk), for which 1 minute will be allotted.

Zack Stahlberg introduced Republican candidate Al Taubenberger and invited him back for a bipartisan debate next Fall. He acknowledged two city council candidates also present - Andy Toy and Matt Rubin.

With a big smile, Zack explained that, as the other candidates had still not arrived, Councilman Nutter would begin with a two minute opener, followed by a two minute opener by Nutter for Congressman Fattah, followed by a two minute opener by Nutter for Representative Evans.

**Opening Statement - Councilman Nutter** - MN brought laughter from the audience as he thanked them "for this wonderful opportunity to talk with myself! I usually do that in private, not in front of 200 people....but, seriously, thank you for the opportunity". He noted that he has participated in all the forums except two, to date, and this is the third on the subject of environment, energy, and/or sustainability, which signals a real change in awareness of these issues. "We all know that energy and transportation will play an increasing role in the city. The workforce and commercial activity depend on them and they can either enhance or destroy our city". He mentioned that peak oil and global warming are becoming part of the regular conversation and noted that we wouldn't have heard these issues raised just a few years ago.

As evidence of the climate changing, our parents, he said, talked about having the coldest winters, with much snow. By contrast, this year, we had, at most three storms, two of which shut the city down, the last one with less than 3 inches. Then he said that there are things for us to do at the city level. He closed by saying that he is very serious about the issues of energy and transportation, and invited everyone to visit his web site for more information about what he proposes, and his testimony to the transportation commission on his views.

Q: Zack Stalberg to MN - You mentioned what a mayor can do. Philadelphia was an early signer of mayoral compact on Climate Change and asked Nutter's intentions in this area.

A. Nutter asked whether Zack was referring to the Kyoto Protocol or the Clinton Climate Initiative. Zack indicated the former. Nutter said he would re-establish the departments of energy and of transportation, and would pursue the goals of the Kyoto Protocol. He stressed his commitment to let the public know how the city is progressing via regularly issued reports. "Regular communication will be one of the hall marks of my administration."

Q: ZS to MN - What will you do to reduce the City's energy use?

A. MN listed a number of actions including re-lamping city buildings, reducing energy consumption by participating in LEED for current and all new city buildings, and "in our building code and zoning code." While he is not sure we can replicate what Chicago is doing with their massive green roofs initiative, he mentioned making solar energy more affordable, and the need to lower costs for residents, whose average energy costs are \$4,000 per year, which is up to 35% of their total income for many. He promised to work with npos like ECA to reduce energy consumption in buildings.

Q: ZS to MN - You have mentioned an office of sustainability. How would that work?

A. The sustainability cabinet would be comprised of existing staff with a sustainability coordinator (check web site to see if this is what he said), which will outline goals. Every city manager will be held accountable to standards.

Q: ZS to MN - What are your goals for purchase of clean energy?

A: MN - We need to look to at least 5% renewables for city government, especially in light of PECO rate caps coming off in 2010.

Q: ZS to MN - What's the impact of rate caps coming off?

A: MN - The Mayor is going to have to sit with PECO and the city energy director. This will be a unique opportunity for the city to have a voice. I would ask for my energy/sustainability department to give me the information with which to negotiate. Hope to get some benefit for the citizens out of these negotiations.

Q: ZS to MN - What can the mayors' office do to create jobs in clean energy?

A: MN - there are real opportunities to better educate and inform citizens. There are many entrepreneurial opportunities, new industries to be created. If I were to put solar panels on my roof, for instance, I wouldn't do it myself, would need trained installers. The city can create tax incentives for start ups in the green industries. I'm also looking at training and employment opportunities to aid reentry for released prisoners. City needs to be aggressive about this.

At this point, Congressman Fattah had arrived and ZS turned to him for his two minute opening statement.

**Opening Statement - Congressman Chaka Fattah** - Pleasure to be here. Sorry to be late. There are new industries of which Philadelphia has already taken advantage. Wind energy is being installed at the airport. This amount of wind energy is equivalent of planting 1 million trees. This is the first major airport to do this. We have a major running start. At the Navy yard, there is a company making light fixtures that "last forever" and it already has a contract with the military to install lighting on submarines. So there are jobs. But this is also about quality of life. We need to invest substantially in our mass transit system. As one of the 1st steps we need to install bush shelters at every one of our transit stops equipped with solar heating. We also have to have a dedicated funding source. He supports Rendell's idea of taxing excess oil profits and leasing the PA Turnpike. The way we go about the long term lease negotiations of the market Frankford El and the Broad Street Subway is important. Those leases are up December 31st. Philadelphia should have more say on SEPTA board. It needs to be a regional system. For the last several winters, we have gotten home heating oil from Venezuela for low income residents. If I lead this city we will be the most aggressive city to get on the right side of these questions.

With Dwight Evans now present, the third candidate was invited to give a statement:

**Opening Statement - Representative Dwight Evans** - Two of the most essential questions for the next mayor are transportation and energy. A first priority is the planting of 50K trees over the next 4 years. The City right now has only one person in energy office. By contrast, Portland has set a goal by 2032 a 50 % reduction of energy use. We've not made this a priority. Our building code, transportation - we have not made these priorities. I believe a green environment is related to reduction of violence. In Chicago and Portland, there has been more focus on this. No question but we need a dedicated funding source for transit. But rather than making this a governance debate, we need to figure out how we modernize our transport system for the 21st century. We need a smart growth strategy for this city. We cannot do it alone; it needs to be approached from a regional standpoint. We also need to look at our highways and bridges. Over half the bridges in PA are dilapidated. I support the Governor's plan. We need a seamless energy and transportation plan. We can affect foreign policy by being more efficient - we wouldn't be sending our sons and daughters to war if we were using less oil by being more efficient.

Q: ZS to each of the three candidates - How would you deal with PGW?

A: MN - there was a moment, maybe 10 yrs ago, when the City might have gotten out of the gas business, but that window closed. Now we have PGW with a billion dollars in debt, with three kinds of customers - those who pay, those who cannot pay, and those who will not pay. There needs to be a city-state partnership that provides some relief. We have to get out of the gas business. PGW's situation puts the city in perilous state.

A: CF - It is not my intention for Philadelphia to get out of the business of PGW. We have about 400K people in the city who need natural gas to heat their homes. Because 25% of our population is below poverty, many would be in peril if we were to privatize or sell off PGW. Unlike PECO, which has 400,000 customers in the suburbs who can easily pay their bills, we need to find a way for our neighbors to have heat in their homes. We need to provide help through LIHEAP. But the costs are now much higher. There are many challenges. But we

don't want to unload it as if it was a burden.

A: DE - PGW was once the best gas works in the nation, until politics got involved. It was run by UGI. It was Frank Rizzo who brought it into the city. Every mayor since has ignored the problem. PGW recently requested the largest rate increase ever. I would propose a bridge loan - take \$200 million from the state budget and invest it in PGW. This would avoid a rate increase, which would drive more into poverty. There should be a merger with PECO for gas customers. PECO has 400K customers in suburbs, so it knows how to run a gas business. At the same time we need to invest in weatherization and education.

Q: ZS to DE - What measures can the city take to help homeowners who want to be more energy efficient?

A: DE - I'm a big fan of incentives. We need to use the city's tax, building, and zoning codes to provide them.

Q: ZS to CF - what would you do to encourage Transit Oriented Development (TOD)?

A: CF - TOD is the new direction. In TOD, you put early childhood centers and other retail operations at the bus and train lines. There is much we can do. We need to professionalize the building and zoning codes. We need to get city council out of decision-making on development and zoning. The issue of weatherization - we can use tax abatement money for existing homeowners.

Q: ZS to MN and DE - What about the governor's plan for dedicated funding for SEPTA?

A: MN - Yes, I already voiced my support for his plan for leasing of turnpike and for placing a tax on excess oil profits.

A: DE - Only Chicago and Indianapolis have tried leasing the turnpikes - I'm not so sure that is the way to go. I would rather look into sales, personal income, and gas taxes. Also look at some sort of sliding scale on taxing cars. I think there may be some constitutional issues about selecting one industry to tax. Also, SEPTA needs to be restructured. Real thorough planning is needed regarding growing the system.

Q: ZS to all three candidates - What about the environmental impact of casinos? What would you do to minimize it?

A: MN - The best way is to make sure they are not built at the locations where proposed. Clearly there is going to be a ballot issue, which is good because it encourages people to speak their minds. If the casinos end up getting built, we have zoning control. They will need zoning approvals and we should use every legal restriction available to ensure that they do not destroy the waterfront.

A: CF - Given the way state law is constructed, we are going to end up with two casinos. Revenues from them will be used to reduce the wage tax. One big way to control their impact is to be sure that any new construction conform to the very best practices in terms of environmental issues. There is gambling in 48 states now. It is the easiest way for politicians to raise funds without raising taxes.

A: DE - first, we need to have environmental impact statements done, then deal with DER. We need to talk to PennDot in terms of the impact on the roads. I support the idea of casinos. I voted for them. It will reduce property taxes of elderly, but the City should have its say about where they end up.

A: MN - I wanted to add that by having the zoning reform commission on the ballot in May, we will begin to reform that system. There already is a tax abatement for improving existing property. But they are not telling homeowners about it. It's important to get that information out.

Q: ZS - what will you do to make Philadelphia more bike-friendly?

A: CF - We've already done a lot to make this a bike friendly city - we've invested in bike paths through ISTEA and other Surface Transportation Act funding. We need to make sure there is easy intermodal transition, for example add bike racks on more buses; create safe, secure locations for bikes to be parked; add bike lanes along highways. Part of my plan is to incorporate facilities for bikes at places like 30th St. Station.

A: DE - We need to talk to our drivers - need an education campaign. We have come a long way, but need drivers to respect established bike lanes.

A: MN - I'm not a biker but am married to one. I agree that motorist education is important. Also, improving the condition of roadways, and making sure that the City's Office of Transportation is also concerned with bikes. We need to make sure we have a well laid out network with bike racks downtown. In Chicago's Millennium Park, there is an entire facility with bike racks and shower facilities, and it pays for itself. Need to be as creative as possible. Also need to talk about pedestrian safety.

### **Closing statements**

Michael Nutter - There are a lot of issues in this campaign. I have talked about the impact of sustainability and the environment on this mayoral campaign because the public is emphasizing it. Good policies will be put forth as a result. I've been working for this city for 15 years. Violence, education etc also come into play in conversations on environment. I'm running to represent you and this city to restore the integrity that has been lost and I want to take it back from the special interests groups. I invite you to visit my web site. Come by the office anytime to talk or to volunteer.

Chaka Fattah - I have helped strengthen Philly CarShare. I hope we can get 100K additional trees planted, which would help abate storm water runoff. Councilman Nutter is right about pedestrian safety. We need safety around our schools. Those in this room will be okay no matter who wins the mayoral election, but I want to lift the life chances of those at the bottom - the 25% in poverty, the thousands who are homeless. My plan is to be green and modern but I am also thinking about the many thousands who do not share in the prosperity.

Dwight Evans - I want to thank all the groups who helped sponsor this forum. This is street level democracy. For any of us to get to city hall we have to go through you. We have to answer your questions. John F Kennedy said that "a rising tide raises all boats". Clinton said, "It's the economy, stupid". What impedes our economic growth? Violence, corrupt political leadership, poor education system. If you change the environment, you change the behavior. You have a real choice in 52 days. You need to decide who's for real change and who is just making the motions. Who is going to make change? We can move the city forward if you vote for me.