

Two In The 5th, Three In The 3rd Vie For Council

■ By **GEORGE ECONOMIDES**
Publisher

Historically, Southeast Long Beach and Northeast Long Beach – the 3rd and 5th Council Districts, respectively – have the highest voter turnouts in the city. In fact, a second-place finisher (also known as the loser) often receives more votes than the winners in three other council districts combined.

For example, the runnerup in the 5th District's 2006 city council general election received 5,483 votes – as a write-in candidate to boot. The *winners* in Council Districts 1 (2006), 6 (2008) and 9 (2006) combined for 4,211 votes! This points to one of the biggest problems with district-only elections, but that's a story for another time.

In 2006, Gerrie Schipske beat back the challenge of incumbent Jackie Kell, who was termed out but ran a write-in campaign. Schipske won by less than 170 votes out of more than 11,000 cast. That's not saying much when your name is the only one on the ballot.

Four years later, Schipske is now the incumbent but has drawn only one challenger, Mike Hedges. On the surface, it seems Hedges has little chance of unseating her. After the Business Journal staff spent an hour drilling him with questions about city issues, he appears ill-prepared to serve on the city council, but the staff is also left with the impression that he's a nice guy, likeable, has good intentions and is definitely anti-tax. Simply put, Hedges needs to be more involved and more visible in the community.

But below the surface, there are a lot of people in the district and citywide who would like to oust Schipske simply because they don't like her. While we doubt that dislike is enough to get Hedges over the top, the fact that he's a Republican (she's a Democrat) in a district that is about fifty-fifty in registration with a large number of independents, helps him. If Kell, a Democrat, backs Hedges, it could make this an interesting race, especially if Hedges can rally Republican voters to go to the polls. But that takes money which he has yet to raise. He can also count on a bit of an "anti-incumbent" vote that is spreading throughout the country. Lastly, there is an anti-gay faction in the district (Schipske is openly gay), especially among some church-goers, who will support Hedges.

Schipske, who just released another book – "Early Aviation in Long Beach (Images of Aviation)" – always well organized and a smart campaigner, is aware of the opposition but confident that constituents recognize that she has done considerable outreach and communicated well with them, and, by most accounts, has responded to constituent complaints.

Unlike the 7th and 9th District races profiled in earlier Business Journal editions where runoffs are expected, the 5th, with two candidates, is winner-take-all. Schipske will either rout

Hedges, or Hedges – if all the pieces mentioned earlier fall in place – will squeak by with a win.

Will there be a runoff in the 3rd Council District? Incumbent Gary DeLong, the only businessman and only Republican on the nine-member city council, is quite confident that he win on April 13.

Unlike most of the candidates running in the various council districts, the two challenging DeLong are very involved and well versed on district and city issues. Tom Marchese and Terry Jensen both have long histories in the city, growing up here, attending local schools, with strong family ties to public service. Active over the years in a number of ways and on a number of issues, these two have pretty much earned their stripes.

Either could easily win a council seat in this city – in just about any district but the 3rd. Unseating DeLong, who has amassed quite a war chest for his reelection bid and who is considered the only conservative on a city council full of liberals supported by unions, will be extremely difficult. Also, the 3rd District has leaned right for its councilmember for some 20 years – conservatives Frank Colonna and Doug Drummond preceded DeLong.

Jensen is a number cruncher. He knows budgets, he knows financial matters and, as evidenced by his taking on Mayor Bob Foster on the Measure I parcel tax in November 2008, isn't afraid to speak his mind when he thinks the numbers don't add up. Jensen also has the backing of the Long Beach Police Officers Association (POA), who want DeLong out in the worst way. Pay attention to how much they spend.

Marchese is an environmental watchdog who believes transparency is essential to good government, and who says "strict adherence to the rule of law" is paramount. He, especially, has been a thorn in DeLong's side, challenging him on several district issues including a wetlands land swap, a proposed Home Depot Center and the 2nd and PCH project. To date, Marchese has not raised much money, which could pose a problem.

With Jensen and Marchese both hammering at DeLong, the odds are that they will split the anti-DeLong vote. Since Jensen has the POA backing (which means several independent expenditure mailings), the odds are that he will garner more votes than Marchese. Whether that's enough to result in a runoff is difficult to gauge. Either way, DeLong is expected to get reelected.

At press time, another factor arose that may impact all district races: City Manager Pat West's future, who is scheduled for a review. POA President Steve James confirmed that he wants West out because, among other issues, of the process used to appoint the new police chief. Many in the community see the POA's influence with elected officials as too strong, which may hurt POA-backed candidates Schipske and Jensen.

Following are lengthy interviews for the 5th and 3rd Council Districts (yes, we are working backwards). The March 16 issue

will feature the 1st District and the two candidates for city prosecutor. The March 30 edition of the Business Journal will feature the race for city attorney. Election day is April 13.

To download the interviews of the 9th and 7th Districts, go to: www.lbbj.com and click (bottom right) on archives. The 5th and 3rd District interviews will be available to download by the end of this week.

Mike Hedges



Mike Hedges, a 5th District resident since the age of 3, is the lone challenger to the incumbent. Hedges is currently the chairman of the Greater Lakewood Chamber of Commerce and is the CEO of a local paving business. Although the 40-year-old has ties in surrounding cities, Hedges says his commitment to the city runs as deep as his roots here.

Hedges went to Long Beach schools, including Millikan High School and Long Beach City College. His father, Randy Hedges, a retired member of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, started Pacific Striping Company in 1976. The company originated in Long Beach and only recently relocated to Signal Hill. As the current CEO, Hedges has worked with several leaders in the community.

Hedges is active at both the local and state levels. He serves on the Bill review and Budget Committee for the California Chamber of Commerce, is the chairman of Workforce Skills and Labor for the California Small Business Association, is an active member of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association and serves on the One Stop Committee of the Southeast Los Angeles County Workforce Investment Board. Hedges is also on the board of directors for Care For the Children, a charitable organization that provides medical care and community outreach for youth, and is a Rotarian.

Hedges encourages residents and business owners to unite with him to "be part of building a new foundation for the 5th District of Long Beach," according to his campaign site, www.electmike-hedges.com.

LBBJ: You have a business in Signal Hill?

Hedges: Right. . . . I own a highway and parking lot improvement and contracting company, so we pave streets, parking lots, things of that sort.

LBBJ: How many employees do you have?

Hedges: 11.

LBBJ: It's a nonpartisan race, but are you a registered democrat or republican?

Hedges: Republican.

LBBJ: How long have you lived in the 5th District?

Hedges: 37 years.

LBBJ: And you're the chair of the Lakewood Chamber of Commerce. How does that work? Your business is in Signal Hill, you live in Long Beach, yet you're president of the Lakewood Chamber. How did that come about?

Hedges: We were a Long Beach business, five to six years ago, when we had to vacate for the [proposed] adult sports complex. We literally had to be out of the other place the following day. [The project is on hold due to a lack of revenue.]

LBBJ: What about the Lakewood Chamber?

Hedges: I was involved with the city as far as projects. . . . There were a couple of projects that we were awarded that we bid on. We got letters of intent or P.O.s from the city, and then the work was never scheduled. So I started asking questions. . . . I never got direct answers. I kind of hit a dead end. Around the same time, I

was invited to go to a Lakewood Chamber mixer

LBBJ: How many years ago?

Hedges: This was about three and a half years ago. [At the] mixer . . . I met John Kelsall, the CEO of the chamber . . . [and eventually] became a member.

LBBJ: So, three and a half years to be a member and all of a sudden you became chair? That seems pretty fast.

Hedges: It was fast. It was surprising to me. . . . Ben Harvey of Southern California Edison, was chairing it, and he asked me, "Would you be interested in chairing?"

LBBJ: And you were on the board at the time?

Hedges: Yeah, I was asked within the first year if I wanted to be a board member.

LBBJ: So you moved up pretty quickly.

Hedges: Um hum.

LBBJ: Are you a member of the Signal Hill Chamber?

Hedges: No I am not.

LBBJ: Isn't that kinda odd? Your business is in Signal Hill and you are chairman of the Lakewood Chamber.

Hedges: Yeah, and like I said it wasn't something . . . I ended up being a member [of the Lakewood Chamber] just from being proactive there.

LBBJ: Have you run for political office before?

Hedges: This is my first.

LBBJ: Did the Long Beach Chamber Political Action Committee endorse you?

Hedges: No, they are staying out of the 5th District.

LBBJ: That's interesting. Here you are the chairman of the Lakewood Chamber and you are a small business person. Why wouldn't they support you? Did they give you a reason?

Hedges: No they didn't. When I asked, I was told that they chose to stay out.

LBBJ: That means they didn't think you could win. That also seems to send a message that they support the current city council, which is contrary to what we hear from business people throughout the city.

Hedges: At the end of the day, the biggest endorsement I want is the residents of the 5th District.

LBBJ: Do you know the mayor?

Hedges: No.

LBBJ: Beyond chairing the Lakewood Chamber, what is your involvement in the community?

Hedges: I've helped many different churches. I have worked with churches for a nonprofit Care for the Children; I am on their board. Care for the Children helps cloth and provide school utensils.

LBBJ: Are you a regular voter?

Hedges: I have not been.

LBBJ: Did you vote in the last [2006] city council election?

Hedges: No.

LBBJ: What about the council race before that [2002]?

Hedges: No. [He did vote in November on the school district's parcel tax issue, the November 2008 Measure I parcel tax and state/national elections in 2000 and 2004.]

LBBJ: Through the end of December, you raised just over \$3,000. How much do you want to raise?

Hedges: Ideally, about \$74,000.

LBBJ: \$74,000! And you are at about \$3,000. You have a ways to go.

Hedges: Instead of going after the campaign contributions, I wanted to focus on face-to-face [discussions] to hear concerns, and building relationships.

LBBJ: So why should people look at Mike Hedges and say we need to make a change and “I think Mike is the guy?” What makes people want to support you?

Hedges: I am a business advocate . . . I chair the workforce skills and labor committee for California Small Business Association, which has 120,000 employees and business owners. I have sat on business advisory committees for assembly members, state senators of both parties. . . . I think there is a lack of leadership in the district. I’m walking and hearing the complaints about items such as sidewalks . . . there are a lot of sidewalks with gaps. You can tell at one time they had tried to fix them, putting asphalt on them . . .

LBBJ: Don’t you think it’s because there’s not enough money?

Hedges: That is part of it, but I think there is more there. . . . internally, inside City Hall . . . it seems that she doesn’t get a lot of people [councilmembers] to vote with her.

Then there’s the Tesla deal over there with the Boeing property. You have Tesla that comes in, you have the city that has shown – now after the fact – that they had contacts and letters that went back and forth and phone conversations and everything documented . . .

LBBJ: And she criticized that.

Hedges: She did. And in the beginning she claimed that there was no contact and she was the only form of contact with the president [of Tesla]. I think she misled people. Mayor Foster said it was political grandstanding by her. I think you look back and even my perception is that she seems to address issues that bring her press. And now, walking – and I am not one to run a negative campaign – but just listening to residents is: “My issues aren’t big enough for her. My issues didn’t fall into whatever the topic was that they write about or whatever.” Residents just they don’t feel that their issues are taken seriously or are as great as the ones they are reading about. . . . And don’t forget, she chose to announce a run for congress soon after she was elected a councilperson.

LBBJ: So you think she’s failed the district . . .

Hedges: This is her ninth campaign. And she’s tried going everywhere else. So you look at what are her motives for her decisions. What is her leadership. Is it really in the best interests for the people of the district or is this a stepping-stone for something bigger? I think she has failed with leadership, representing the residents and the businesses of the 5th District. Going back to what I said earlier, it’s a lot of attachments – it is what is going to get the press. It is standing up saying I single-handedly did this or that, or I am the only one who communicated with Tesla. Or, I am the one who is going after the movie studio deal. She gives this image that she is the golden light and the entire city is gray.

LBBJ: Is she a team player?

Hedges: No.

LBBJ: Can she get five votes on an issue?

Hedges: Tough.

LBBJ: Is crime an issue in the 5th District?

Hedges: In comparison to the rest of the city, no.

LBBJ: Do you remember when the sheriffs patrolled the 5th District. Would you like to see that again?

Hedges: My dad is retired from the sheriff’s department. I think that we have a good police department, and I would like to see that public service stay here within the city instead of contracting out. Nothing against the sheriff’s department – I think they do a phenomenal job.

LBBJ: If elected, you will be facing a General Fund deficit for

the new fiscal year. Are you willing to cut public safety costs if that is the only way out?

Hedges: It’s worth looking at, yes, but would it be something I would be aggressive to go after? Not so much right off the bat, no. I would want to see other options . . .

LBBJ: Would you go to the people and ask for a tax increase?

Hedges: No.

LBBJ: OK, so no tax increase. And it seems you don’t want to push cutting public safety personnel. What does that leave?

Hedges: I would want to look at the exact numbers for other departments; look at overlapping management; look at city staff; look at, for example, more contracting out possibilities, and look at current contracts [issued by the city].

LBBJ: Do you have a lot of overtime in your business?

Hedges: No.

LBBJ: Why not?

Hedges: Because we monitor that.

LBBJ: Do you think the city should do the same thing?

Hedges: I completely agree with you.

LBBJ: Fire department overtime is huge every budget year, and it’s not uncommon for personnel to make \$25,000 to \$50,000 in overtime pay, yet councilmembers are unwilling to tackle the issue. The union claims it’s cheaper to use overtime than hire more firefighters . . .

Hedges: I think it is something that definitely needs to be looked at, and somebody definitely needs to be accountable. There was a similar issue with the sheriff’s department in Orange County. There were people [earning] equivalent to six months pay in overtime pay.

LBBJ: In the last round of city budget talks, one recommendation was to close one of the 5th District fire stations for half a day. The councilwoman went to bat and fought that and got the city council to overturn that recommendation. What do you think about that?

Hedges: I think that your emergency services are core services and they shouldn’t be jeopardized. I think that [Station] 18 is an asset. What she did, going to bat [to keep it open], any councilperson in any district would have done the exact same thing.

LBBJ: Don’t we have plenty of fire stations in the 5th District? It seems like we have more in the 5th than anywhere else, yet we have the fewest calls for service.

Hedges: But it is the largest district of the city. There are a large amount of seniors. And so your response time for critical care, for heart attack, things of that sort – if you did have stations that were spread further apart or overlapping – that might be the difference between saving a life or losing a life.

LBBJ: Recently, President Obama referred to the C-17 as “waste, pure and simple.” He wants to eliminate the C-17 program.

Hedges: I completely disagree. If you speak to anyone in flying in the military, they will tell you the C-17 is the strongest, most durable aircraft.

LBBJ: What do you think about the Long Beach Airport. Any concerns there?

Hedges: I think that the space could be improved upon. Residents like the convenience [of using the airport].

LBBJ: Do you support the terminal improvements that are planned?

Hedges: Yes.

LBBJ: Do you think the flight limit is OK?

Hedges: Yes. ■

Gerrie Schipske



Gerrie Schipske was elected to the city council in 2006 after a hard-fought battle in the primary and general elections. The multifaceted incumbent is also a nurse practitioner, attorney, university instructor, author, mother and recently a grandmother. Born and raised in Long Beach, Schipske, 59, has Long Beach in her veins.

She has served her community on several levels. She was elected in 1992 to serve a four-year term on the Long Beach City College Board of Trustees. In 1998, she was selected as a White House Fellow National Finalist and then appointed by President Bill Clinton to Attorney General Janet Reno's Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women.

She has worked on the board of health and human services and the committee that spurred the development of the Aquarium of the Pacific. She also teaches graduate and undergraduate classes in political science and public administration at California State University, Long Beach.

Schipske has founded several entities in the city, such as the Community Baby Shower, the Joint Powers Authority for the California State University Headquarters, the Long Beach Police Department's Women's Advisory Committee, Long Beach Cares and RxForLongBeach.com. The California Senate Rules Committee appointed her to the California Medical Board in 2007, where she serves as the first registered nurse to ever sit on the board.

She recently posted her personal voting record, dating back to 1992, on her campaign Web site, www.schipske4council.com, which boasts, "We know her. We trust her." In addition to her union endorsements from local police, firefighter and other unions, she has the backing of the Long Beach Airport Association.

Schipske currently resides with her partner of 28 years, Flo Pickett, with whom she has raised three children. Schipske says she has spent most of her life working to improve the quality of life in Long Beach. She sat down with the Business Journal to discuss her candidacy for a second term and her new full-time job.

LBBJ: You have a new job, running the Democratic Party for Orange County?

Schipske: I am not going to run it. I am going to be the executive director for the Orange County Democratic party.

LBBJ: Do you have a staff?

Schipske: No.

LBBJ: It's just you?

Schipske: It's just me, and a group of volunteers. That's the way they run party operations.

LBBJ: You have been very visible in the district, hosting many events. How is the new job going to affect that?

Schipske: We talked about that and it's not going to affect me because I have a very good council staff and I am very well organized. So we will do things when I am available to do them. And that's actually what I had been doing anyway when I worked my previous job. . . . Constituent services is the number one thing that we do – my staff is extremely responsive. . . . And I am on Blackberry, and I respond constantly to e-mail. I think people appreciate that.

LBBJ: You have been here almost four years. What is your main accomplishment during this period?

Schipske: Bringing openness and transparency – not only to the 5th District, but really pushing council in that direction. Wherever I go, people – whether they are my constituents or whether they are from another district – appreciate my e-mails, they appreciate the blog, and just communicating with people [and] having community meetings on issues that people need to have input on. I am very proud of that. One of the first things I did when I went in there was author that legislation that requires elected officials to keep their records because I didn't have any records when I came into office. Apparently that had been the practice.

LBBJ: They dumped everything?

Schipske: They just dumped everything. Which put me at a disadvantage for the first three months because people would call and say, "Well, I am on the list to get my sidewalk fixed." Well, there was no list.

I was the first one to put my calendar online and do the blog and really communicate. That's been a real plus.

LBBJ: What is your relationship with the other councilmembers?

Schipske: I think we are all very professional with each other. It depends on what the issue is. Some of us sign onto different issues – we get asked by other councilpeople and I ask different councilpeople. It depends on what the issue is.

LBBJ: One of the criticisms we've heard from a variety of people is that you don't seem to communicate with fellow councilmembers on some ideas that you may have. You bring them up on the council floor instead of talking to councilmembers in advance.

Schipske: Humm. That is the way everybody else does it too. First of all, we have got to be careful of the Brown Act because you want to make sure that you are not doing serial polling to make sure you have the votes. And I noticed lately what's happening is that we are seeing more agenda items with four people on there, which is very very close to the five vote thing, which you know, begs the question that there is going to be some real public discussion on the floor. I view council business differently. I view that we are supposed to be out in the public and disclosing what our ideas are and getting input and not working behind closed doors.

LBBJ: We are not saying behind closed doors. Let's say you have an idea for an ordinance. Wouldn't you want to go to a couple of councilpeople and the mayor and bounce it off of them?

Schipske: I think it depends on the issue. I have had some issues that cross district lines, but if it is something very specific for my district . . . A lot of that goes on between the chiefs of staff, it doesn't go on between the councilmembers because most of the councilmembers aren't there except for Tuesdays.

LBBJ: How do you get along with the mayor?

Schipske: We have a cordial relationship. In fact the other day he was offering again to help me raise money for the Rosie the Riveter Park. I sit right next to him, and we kind of keep it . . .

LBBJ: But hasn't he been upset with you about some of the things . . .

Schipske: I am sure he is. He doesn't like my blog, and neither does Gary DeLong. And he didn't like my position on Measure I. But I am not his rubber stamp and I was not brought into office to be his rubber stamp. I am there to represent the 5th District, and I think I have done a pretty good job.

LBBJ: One of the other criticisms we've heard is that you can't get five votes.

Schipske: That's not true. In fact, if you go back and look – because I knew this was coming – I would say about 90 percent

of the time it is 9-0. There's a variety of issues that none of us can agree on or all of us agree on. It would be interesting to see the issue you are talking about, but if you go back and look, they are usually 9-0 votes.

The other day, I was the only one who did not vote in favor of a gas rate increase. Now, does that make me somebody who doesn't work with the council? No. It's outrageous that we are in the middle of a very serious economic downturn and we are sitting there raising gas rates for no reason. Even the mayor called that out and said, "Why are you doing this?" . . . So, I was the only one who voted against it. My constituents are telling me that they cannot sustain increases in property tax, gas rates and water rates.

LBBJ: Let's talk about the budget some more. You are probably going to face another deficit. Is everything on the table for you? Police? Fire? What about the pension issue?

Schipske: I came forward with an idea that we sunshine our negotiations as they do with state employees and with the school districts throughout the State of California. I found it interesting that my colleagues are calling for pension reform and support when none of them would want to do that. Everything is on the table and it has to be. And it's not just for us, it's for everybody in the State of California. We have got to look where inefficiencies are. As to pensions, we cannot sustain the high pensions that we have, but we have to keep in place those that we have already collectively bargained.

LBBJ: Why can't city employees pay more of the pension cost?

Schipske: We would have to negotiate it.

LBBJ: Do you think that the city manager has cut to the bones in every department?

Schipske: No, because I have never seen a real, thorough look at every department, and I have brought this up every budget cycle. I think the budget process has not been well done. We don't have a line item budget so when we talk about trying to find programs and things we have no way of finding it because it is all salaries, benefits and other miscellaneous things. There is no way for us to go in there, and that has to be changed – we've got to know what is in the department. I was outraged two years ago when I got a memo that showed that the police department was taking its \$11 million in overtime and paying for forensic materials, ammunition, helicopters, the sexual assault response team. These are programs that are ongoing, why were they not in the budget? They were always used out of the overtime. But council had no way of knowing that. So we have got to fix that.

I would like to see him do a more thorough look at every department to see where you can make efficiencies. That includes public safety – I don't think that is a separate cow over there. But we also need to make sure we have enough officers on the street and our fire departments are fully staffed.

Going back to pensions for a moment, pensions are collectively bargained. We need to sit down with all the bargaining teams. By the way, their agreements are not open; if they choose not to open them, they don't have to.

Another place where we can get a lot of money is if we could get 43 percent of the city out of redevelopment. We are losing so much tax increment that's going into redevelopment. . . . that is a huge issue that nobody wants to talk about.

LBBJ: Why don't you bring that up?

Schipske: I have brought it up. We can't get five votes because – with the exception of Mr. DeLong – I think everyone [councilmembers] has redevelopment [areas in their district]. It is a cash cow for certain districts, so it does put my district at odds

with them. We work together to try to get more equalization on infrastructure payment, but the problem is that you cannot sustain this level of services in this large of a city when 43 percent of your tax increment is being skimmed off and put into redevelopment. That money needs to go into the General Fund.

That doesn't negate that we need to look at pensions. We do. My feeling that the collective bargaining groups are practical.

LBBJ: Would you merge prosecutor into attorney?

Schipske: I would.

LBBJ: What about the health department? Do we need a health department.

Schipske: I think we do. I'll tell you why: The city's General Fund only contributes approximately 21 percent of the health department's budget.

LBBJ: It's still a few million dollars, right?

Schipske: Yes, but in return, what we get is we get local jurisdiction on health issues. When we've had a tuberculosis epidemic, when we've have an AIDS epidemic, we could handle it locally instead of having to rely on the county, which is so large. . . . I would say that isn't causing our problems. And, most of the people who work at the health department are contract employees and they are not getting benefits . . .

LBBJ: What do you think about the new chief of police?

Schipske: I am impressed.

LBBJ: Are you happy with the selection, or do you think the pick should have been from within the department?

Schipske: What's done is done.

LBBJ: That means you would rather have had an internal pick.

Schipske: I didn't say that.

LBBJ: You said, "What's done is done." That means it's too late to change . . .

Schipske: But I don't think it is fair when a decision is made to bring someone in that we sit there and second-guess. The decision has been made. I think we need to be supportive and give him an opportunity to do the job that he has been selected to do.

I met with him privately after the announcement and we talked about a number of things, and I am very impressed with him. I think that he is going to be a good addition in Long Beach. I think that it is great that he is internal in the sense that we've got somebody who lives here and knows the city.

LBBJ: President Obama said of the C-17: "It's waste, pure and simple." Would you go to bat for the C-17?

Schipske: Oh absolutely. We've got 5,200 jobs here. We can't lose the C-17.

LBBJ: How about the airport. Are you happy with the final decision to improve the airport?

Schipske: Yes. We just met with JetBlue . . . and they seem to be very pleased too. We are moving along – we broke the ground on the parking, and in December we will probably break ground on the terminal. JetBlue is in town this week and they are looking at the design.

LBBJ: Are you happy with the progress the port has made in reducing emissions?

Schipske: Yes. But I would like to see the state step in and do something about bunker fuel because that is the worst source of pollution coming out of the ports. It's the dirty fuel that they burn. And I know that they have this thing where they come in and they don't burn it and things, and that is great, but we still have a number of ships out there.

LBBJ: Didn't you push to get more money from the port?

Schipske: I pushed to take a look at it to see if we could increase the transfer of funds, and we could. I have also asked the

city auditor – and she is supposedly looking at it – to see if the transfer has dropped. What I want to know is did it drop because the accounting system that they used change? Did they expense things out that before they hadn't? Because the way the charter reads . . . They have to meet all their operating costs first. . . . We need to find out [if there] were things expensed out that lowered the rest of the money that was available. . . . I have to tell you, I get more people coming up to me and saying, "Thank you for standing up for the taxpayers. Thank you for being the only one who asks questions or the only one who said no to something."

LBBJ: Let us share a few things he said regarding your first four years so you can respond: He said he sees a lack of leadership – he didn't give any examples; he says, "Schipske doesn't get a lot of people to vote with her;" "She seems to address issues that bring her press;" he thinks that you dropped the ball on Tesla; he hears from residents that "their issues are not big enough for Schipske."

Schipske: Let me see, lack of leadership. Well, I would say, depending on the issue we all have different levels of leadership on the council. As I said earlier, I think I led the charge about open and transparent government, and I am very proud of that. And I pushed for the lobbyist ordinance. . . . About putting my calendar online, just being open and available.

Let's see, "he doesn't think a lot of people vote with her." Well, again, it depends on what the issue is. No, they don't want to transfer funds from the port. No, they did not want to have transparency of the collective bargaining process. We can go on and on. On the opposite [side], I kept Measure I from becoming a 50 percent issue by refusing to declare an emergency because there was no emergency. [The Measure I parcel tax could have been placed on the ballot if the city council unanimously agreed, thus requiring a simple majority for passage. Schipske's "no" vote, along with a few other issues, forced Measure I to become a dedicated fund measure requiring two-thirds voter approval. The measure received 52 percent, thus failing.] And I knew the 5th District was not going to support Measure I. I hear from people, I survey people constantly, and I am trying to represent what the interests of this district are – not the interests of the other councilmembers or the mayor. I am supposed to be here for the 5th District, and I think have done a good job.

[Next] "Seems to address issues that bring her press." Any elected official who does anything puts out that he or she did it, otherwise, he [opposing candidate] would be saying, "She hasn't done anything in four years." You can't have it both ways.

LBBJ: What about his criticism of how you handled Tesla.

Schipske: Let me tell you about Tesla.

What happened was that [at] the State of the City, the mayor said, "We've got two sources of potential revenue: a movie studio or Tesla." After [he said that], I went to the city manager and I said, "OK, so are we getting Tesla?" The city manager kept saying to me, "It is between Boeing and Tesla – we can't get involved in it." And so I said, "Well then, why was this in the State of the City as a potential source of revenue if it is not real?"

So, I called Eloy Musk [Tesla CEO] and I said, "What do you need from the City of Long Beach for you to make your decision?" And Mr. Musk – and you can call him to verify this – said that he had been treated badly by the City of Long Beach and that if it came down to choosing us over Downey and it was on the basis of treatment, he would choose Downey in a heartbeat. He said that Tesla was largely ignored. And I asked for proof, and the only proof I got from the city was a letter that he [Musk] verified that he got that said, "We'd like you to put your Model S in an electric vehicle mall that we are planning." And Musk said, "I was

insulted over that." He added, "You don't see any correspondence going back and forth about, 'Hey we really want you over on this Boeing property.'"

So I took that back to the city manager and I said, "What is going on?" And the city manager said, "Well, we've decided we want a movie studio there." And I said, "What do you mean we've decided?" I said, "You mean the mayor has decided?" And I said, "The city council has not had any kind of input on this." And I said, "I don't care what we get on that property, but if we don't get jobs in Long Beach we are in dire circumstances."

So I kept going back to the city manager saying, "You've got to come up with some sort of incentive because Downey is eating our lunch." And so this was not – I have no authority to decide whether or not Tesla was going to be here. But I could not get them off the dime to do it. And so, magically, at the twelfth hour, we get this thing on the council agenda and there's this little tax incentive . . . I was very upset with the city manager, and I said, "You told me for months there was nothing. Where did you get this?" And he said, "We worked and came up with it."

LBBJ: One last question. Assuming you win, this will be your second term. Do you support term limits?

Schipske: Yes. I will respect term limits and not run again. But I will tell you that I think term limits is very damaging because you don't have your institutional memory; you don't have accountability. ■

Gary DeLong



Councilman Gary DeLong has lived in Long Beach for more than 25 years and has represented the 3rd District since elected in 2006. He earned his bachelor's in business from California State University, Dominguez Hills and his MBA from the University of Southern California. The 50-year-old got his start in the telecommunications industry as a college student working for AT&T. He is currently the president of The RTP Group Inc.

Through his position on the council, DeLong has been involved with several boards and committees in the city. He is the chairman of the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority and of the Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority. As chair of the council's federal legislation committee, he advocates on the behalf of Long Beach at the nation's capital. His position as chair of the budget oversight committee also allows him to keep his finger on the pulse of the city's finances.

DeLong also has been very active in the community, supporting the Aquarium of the Pacific, California Conference for Equality and Justice, ChildNet Youth and Family Services, Long Beach City College Foundation, Long Beach Playhouse and the Rotary Club of Long Beach, among others.

According to his campaign Web site, www.garydelong.com, he puts public safety, the budget and the Port of Long Beach as his top priorities for the 3rd District.

DeLong and his wife, Dawna, have three daughters. DeLong told the Business Journal he expects to win a second term and doesn't believe there will be a runoff. He also supports term limits and is especially concerned about unsustainable pension costs.

LBBJ: What do you consider the major accomplishment of your first term?

DeLong: Getting my arms around the budget and making sure as we get government leaner that we're cutting bureaucracy and we're not cutting important services for residents and businesses in Long Beach. Also, as chair of the budget oversight committee, being in the position to work with the city manager, work with department heads, work with the mayor, and work with my colleagues and then getting it through the council and doing it smoothly.

LBBJ: Do you feel in pursuing this that you've received the information that you've requested from staff members?

DeLong: Absolutely.

LBBJ: Have they always been open about answering questions?

DeLong: Definitely. Now it is incumbent upon me to ask the right questions, so they answer what we ask. They don't always volunteer information. You've got to know the right questions to ask.

LBBJ: And your budget committee colleagues are Suja Lowenthal and Patrick O'Donnell. How do you work as a team?

DeLong: I think we work well as a team. We have different viewpoints, so we certainly don't walk in step with each other, but it's a respectful conversation and just a variety of points of view that comes together in a good package of recommendations for the city council.

LBBJ: Most likely you're going to be facing a deficit again for the next fiscal year.

DeLong: Not most likely. We *will* be facing one. We anticipate a \$12 million deficit. It could be larger in the next 30 to 45 days. But that's probably what it is.

LBBJ: Do you feel everything's on the table, including public safety?

DeLong: No, I don't. I think everything should be on the table, but everything is not on the table currently. I think that's the way the council and the city management want it.

LBBJ: What isn't on the table?

DeLong: Labor concessions. We had labor concessions last year. As you know, we had a \$39 million deficit. Labor came up with \$15 million in concessions. We reduced the rest in the city manager departments. I think we need to do something similar. I don't know what the exact numbers would be but we should do something similar. We need to reduce our labor costs.

LBBJ: Would be willing, if necessary, to take a look at firefighter costs and police costs?

DeLong: You have to look at everything. If you start out saying, "You can't touch this and you can't touch that," then what you end up with is a very small amount of things that you can touch.

LBBJ: Do you feel the city manager and his staff have done as much as they can in cutting department costs?

DeLong: None of us have done as much as we can. You know, it's like any enterprise. You can always do better. You can always work smarter. You can always try harder.

LBBJ: So you think there's a little bit more wiggle room?

DeLong: There is. Absolutely. But again, my goal is when you make cuts, you need to protect the things that are important to residents and businesses. You have to protect those and squeeze the rest. . . . We're going to cut until it bleeds a little.

LBBJ: What about looking at some other ways to save money, like combining the city prosecutor with the city attorney offices? Do we need a health department?

DeLong: I think everything should be on the table. There shouldn't be any sacred cows. You can't get a good conclusion if you start removing things to look at. Now, should we consolidate

the city attorney and the city prosecutor's offices? Maybe. I don't know that I would support it, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't look at it, you shouldn't see what the efficiencies are, you shouldn't see what the savings are, trying to understand any consequences and then make an informed, intelligent decision. That's the correct approach. You don't say, "No, we can't touch that."

LBBJ: You own a company that's involved with technology. Is there more we can do in the city as far as technology?

DeLong: Absolutely.

LBBJ: Are we behind in our technology upgrades?

DeLong: We're absolutely behind. We have outdated technology. We should be looking to outsource to the private sector, which may or may not be the right thing to do. I'm not telling you that's what we absolutely should do, but we should look at that. The private sector is more efficient and more cost effective in delivering services. We're looking to outsource towing; we just outsourced towing collections. We should look at traffic signal maintenance. When contracted out maintenance of the medians, we saved \$1 million a year. When we outsourced the city light power, we saved millions and millions of dollars.

LBBJ: How would you characterize your relationship with your fellow councilmembers?

DeLong: Cooperative, but we're generally not on the same page with many things. Surely, for example, on unions. That's a clear one where I'm not in the majority with my views.

LBBJ: Do you communicate with them prior to council meetings on issues that are on the agenda or maybe ideas that you have that you want to put on the agenda?

DeLong: I look for people with similar fields of expertise. So for technology, I'll look for Councilmember Garcia and Councilmember Lowenthal; they're young, they like technology, and they're people you could form those coalitions with. If it's a budget issue, I might work with some others, work with Pat O'Donnell. It's more issue-oriented.

LBBJ: How do you get along with Mayor Foster?

DeLong: I get along fine with the mayor. We don't agree on everything, which I think is probably healthy for the city. But I think we have a good, respectful relationship. We respect each other's perspectives.

LBBJ: You supported him on Measure I. Do you feel that was a wrong stand? Do you feel you had no choice or what?

DeLong: I don't want to wiggle on this, but I do think our infrastructure is in desperate need of repair. While I don't believe that was a perfect plan, I do think there's significant room for improvement. It's the only plan I've heard in three and a half years. I've got to give the mayor credit for that. He tried to do something. Everybody else bitches and complains about it and does nothing. The mayor tried to accomplish something. I will always support the person who's trying to get something done, even if I don't necessarily agree with their approach. I hope that we've learned from that and said, "OK, how do we do it better next time?"

LBBJ: Anything else on the budget or related financial issues?

DeLong: Clearly, our biggest problem with the budget is the cost for employee pensions. In the last seven years, while city revenues have grown \$18 million, our pension costs have grown \$42 million. As a businessperson, you know it is not sustainable for your expenses to grow faster than your revenues. . . . It's not about fairness, it's not about right or wrong, it's not about how it should be. It's simply that that's unsustainable and we have to fix it. The longer we delay, the bigger the problem is. If we don't get it fixed, we're not going to be able to do these other things.

LBBJ: Do you feel that the average Long Beach resident understands the pension issue?

DeLong: I think the average Long Beach resident knows the pension system is out of whack, it's a problem and it needs to be fixed. They may not be as familiar with the details, but they know that it's broken.

LBBJ: Isn't there a big payment coming up in a couple of years?

DeLong: Yes, in fiscal year 2012.

LBBJ: So whatever our deficit is for this coming fiscal year is minor compared to 2012?

DeLong: One of the things I recommended recently to the budget oversight committee is to move to a two-year budget cycle for that very reason. When we make changes and we make cuts in fiscal year 2011, what we really need to do is look at the two-year impact. What we don't want is one-time savings to get us through fiscal year 2011. What we need to do is make systemic changes, structural changes, so when we make structural cuts they not only help us in 2011, but they start helping us in 2012.

LBBJ: How long has that concept been in the works?

DeLong: I introduced it in the last 30 days, and we're going to move it through the city council. So far, city management is supportive. The budget committee unanimously supported it. I would expect the council to support it and the mayor as well and say, "Let's go ahead."

LBBJ: During last year's budget hearings, you voted against the police contract. That's the one where they gave back the pay raise. They delayed it, right?

DeLong: They delayed it and they increased it.

LBBJ: The police union got mad at you.

DeLong: Yes. But I voted against it for two reasons. One, I didn't feel they should be upset. I really felt that if we just stuck to the original plan, which was asking labor to contribute the \$19 million as we were trying to balance the budget, that was fair. Most people I know are happy to hang on to their jobs. I thought that was a reasonable request by the city to say, "You can keep what you have, but we can't give you anymore right now." You're having an upside [the vote] that I think was short-sided. It's typical government: "OK, I'll solve a problem today and I'll make a bigger problem for myself four years down the road. Heck, I won't be here. What difference does it make." I don't think you should approach solutions that way. I think that's one of the things – coming from the private sector – I get that. I'm going to run my business forever, so I don't want to trade for a bigger problem four years from now so I can solve today's. I have to solve both and I've got to do it in a way that helps me four years in the future. So that's one reason I voted against it.

The other and probably primary reason I voted against it is that it did not take on any meaningful pension reform. It did nothing. It didn't increase their retirement age. It didn't reduce the pension benefit. It didn't increase the employee contribution. It did nothing. I felt that we were coming to a point in time, and I certainly think we all agree on that, it's here. We need substantial pension reform. Not just in the City of Long Beach, but all the cities in the state. We need it, and we missed an opportunity to get some. I think we should have done that, so I couldn't vote to support it.

LBBJ: Your opponents, as well as several councilmembers, have said that the first priority for everybody is public safety. But when we ask some of them "at what cost?" they don't have an answer.

DeLong: I'll give you my answer. We spend too much in the police department today. We need to curb its rate of growth.

While on the one hand we're very fortunate to have such an outstanding police department . . . we have great officers. But it's very expensive. In the last seven years the department's revenues grew \$18 million and our police department budget grew \$40 million, and \$20 million of that is pension costs. We've went from 38 percent of our General Fund going to police to 48 percent. While I think we would all agree that public safety is our number-one priority . . . it's not the only priority. We need to fund the police department appropriately, but we've got to make sure that we do it in a sustainable manner and we do it in such a way that we have funding for other things that residents want. You can't just say [as a councilmember], "Hey, I did a good job. I funded police, but I cut everything else."

LBBJ: Will you support waiving the fee for a home-based business for artists? Secondly, are we ever going to be able to find some sort of revenue stream for the arts community to survive in this town?

DeLong: I think it's appropriate for government to use financial incentives to support various parts of the economy and the quality of life in the city. So yes, I think that's an appropriate use of city funds to say arts and culture are important to the residents in our community. One of the things we can do to support our arts and cultural institutions and the artist is to waive the business license fee. As long as it's connected, I think that's a very appropriate thing for city government to do and I will support that.

LBBJ: Do you think we're doing enough in economic development to attract businesses and retain the businesses we have?

DeLong: Contrary to the number of awards we win as a business-friendly city, I just don't see it. I've never found our city to be business friendly. When you talk to people that run businesses here, they don't find the city to be business friendly. When you talk to people trying to build things here, they don't find the city to be business friendly. I'm not sure who these people are that find our city to be business friendly.

I think that we're becoming much more customer focused from the residents' perspective. I do believe in the last five years, year after year, our city gets much better at responding to resident requests, whether it's tree trimming or whatever it is. You want a service, we try and respond the best we can. I don't feel we've made that same level of improvement in the business community.

LBBJ: Are you happy that airport terminal improvements are underway?

DeLong: Yes. It's long overdue and long delayed, but we're finally moving forward. We've got the garage groundbreaking, as you know. The plan is to finish the design of the terminals and get that groundbreaking done before the end of the year. We're finally moving forward.

LBBJ: Why were so many people worried that by improving the facilities it would somehow lead to hundreds of flights?

DeLong: You know, I've never understood that perspective. We have a rock-solid noise ordinance. That's what matters, that's what controls the number of flights. I've never understood that point of view. I think it comes down to people being afraid of the unknown. It's one of human nature's tendencies. And people are often afraid of change.

LBBJ: Are you happy with the progress Port of Long Beach officials have made in reducing emissions?

DeLong: I am thrilled with the progress. There's more they can do, and they intend to. What I'm also impressed with is the way they've gone about it. The specific example is the clean truck program. The board of harbor commissioners took the position that their goal was to reduce emissions. They didn't

care if you were a union worker or driver. They didn't care if you were a non-union driver. The only litmus test for them was that when you come into the port, you have to show up with a clean truck or you don't get through the gate. I very much respect the fact that the port kept the number one objective up front at all times: reduce emissions on the surrounding community. Unfortunately, they may not be headed in the same way with the project-labor agreement (PLA) for the Middle Harbor project. That does concern me. To me, we should have a level playing field. We should not discriminate. We should be receptive to a union workforce. We should be receptive to a non-union workforce.

LBBJ: Do you support term limits?

DeLong: I do wholeheartedly. I did before I was elected and I support them more now.

LBBJ: So if you win you're not going to run for a third term?

DeLong: Absolutely, positively not. It will not happen. I know they say never say never in politics, but it will not happen.

LBBJ: What happened with this Tom Dean deal and the wetlands?

DeLong: The land swap?

LBBJ: Yes. Let's face it: there's been a lot of criticism.

DeLong: Yes, I think there's been a lot of criticism.

LBBJ: What's your relationship with Tom Dean?

DeLong: I know him as well as any other landowner in the area. I know most of the landowners.

LBBJ: Is he a friend that you have family barbecues with or travel with?

DeLong: No. I've never traveled with him.

LBBJ: Were you unfairly criticized?

DeLong: Gosh, I don't know if you're ever unfairly criticized. If you're going to be an elected official, you're going to get criticized. The time you start saying, "That was fair and this was unfair," no. You're part of the process, and part of the process is that people give their perspectives. You've got to respect that. Whether their perspective agrees with you or not, you've got to respect it. You really do.

LBBJ: So where's the issue now?

DeLong: The issue is now that council said, before closing the transaction, that there were two things that we wanted. One was we wanted to make sure that the city was not putting itself in a change of title from a liability perspective. There needs to be a cost-share agreement in place before anything goes on that says who has what percentage of any future environmental liability, because there will be future environmental liability. Everyone knows that. We'd like to see the EPA action be through the process to make sure there aren't any EPA issues. It's OK to have an EPA issue, we just need to know what it is. We don't want to get into something and find out that it's much bigger than what everyone anticipated. It's going through its process, as it should.

LBBJ: So what's the end result going to be?

DeLong: What I hope the end result is that at the end of the day, we have been able to move the graded wetlands from the private sector to the public domain. That is my goal. This is the best plan I've heard.

LBBJ: Does staff support this plan?

DeLong: This is a staff-driven plan, but I do support it. Until there's a better plan, I support it 110 percent. But, if somebody comes up with a better plan or a cheaper plan or a faster way to get there, I would look at that plan.

LBBJ: Where are your colleagues on this?

DeLong: The last vote was 5-4 to move forward.

LBBJ: Is there anything else you want to talk about?

DeLong: Infrastructure. The city continues to do a poor job of maintaining our infrastructure. Now, on a positive side, we allocated more funding for sidewalk repair this year than we have since we formed the 10-year sidewalk plan. I'm very pleased with that. I led that effort with Councilmembers O'Donnell and Lowenthal, and then the full support of the council to appropriate the money. What we still fail miserably at is appropriately funding street repaving projects. ■

Terry Jensen



After much deliberation, Terry Jensen is officially in the running for the 3rd District City Council seat. Of the three candidates, Jensen moved from the 8th District less than a year ago.

Jensen, 64, has been a Long Beach resident since he was 6 months old. He attended local schools, including Poly High, Long Beach City College and California State University, Long Beach. He started his own business when he was 26. His wholesale distribution company, which provided live plants and plant-related materials throughout Southern California, led him to open and operate retail nurseries. After several successful years, Jensen sold his business and got involved with real estate. He became the regional vice president of a San Francisco Bay Area investment company responsible for renovating and managing office buildings and shopping centers.

Jensen became active in the community by coaching his children's sports teams and joining their schools' Parent Teacher Associations. He served on the Long Beach Redevelopment Agency Board for two years. "I'm just a Long Beach guy," he says. "There isn't a place in the city that I don't know. There isn't an issue that I haven't become aware of in the city."

His wife serves as an assistant superintendent for the Long Beach Unified School District. One of their children is a police officer, the other a nurse.

Jensen told the Business Journal that he wants to not only simplify and prioritize budgetary matters, but also bring honesty back to City Hall and serve both his district and the city as a whole.

LBBJ: You are semi-retired, correct?

Jensen: Yes. I haven't done anything for about a year and a half, maybe two years. I made a decision in 2002 that I was going to dramatically alter my life and give more back to the community and spend more time with my family.

When you're a consultant, sometimes you do work that you don't like to do and you do business with people that you don't particularly like, so after that I decided that I'm not going to do business with anyone I don't enjoy and I'm not going to do any work that I don't enjoy, and I'm not going to solicit any business. If they call me and I like them and I like the work then I'll do it. I've been pretty faithful to that ever since. I only do what I like to do and what I'm passionate about. One thing I'm passionate about is the City of Long Beach. It's been very good to me. It's been good to my kids, my wife. We're all in public service. That's why I'm doing this [running for office].

LBBJ: You moved from the 8th District to the 3rd District less than a year ago. Now all of the sudden you're running for the 3rd District council seat.

Jensen: I didn't move to the 3rd District to run for council. I had no thought of running for council. I bought the place almost two years ago, and then we decided to move into it. We've always wanted to live by the beach. It wasn't until I started thinking about the direction the city was going in, and the problems that we were having, and some of the things the incumbent was doing . . . when people found out that I was moving to the 3rd District, I started getting telephone calls saying, "Would you consider running for council in the 3rd District? We're very dissatisfied with the representation we have now." There were many, many calls. I kept saying no. Then I thought about it and I ultimately decided that I was going to do it. I don't need the job, but I love this city and I cannot stand to sit by and watch it slide down into third world status with the disastrous decisions these guys have been making for the last four years and the eight years prior to that. I was brought up to believe that either you did something about it, or you shut up. I'm not one to sit silently by and watch something that I really care about deteriorate.

LBBJ: Your decision to run, though, changed, literally, at the last minute on filing deadline. Some of the gossip on the street is you changed your mind because the Police Officer's Association (POA) called you and said, "We're going to support you. We want you to run." Is that true?

Jensen: Not entirely.

LBBJ: What part of it is true?

Jensen: Let me tell you. When I made that decision that I wasn't going to run, I started getting phone calls that night with people saying, "Terry, you must rescind that decision. You have to run. We can't afford another four years of this administration." There were several calls, and one of the calls I got was from the POA. I had a meeting with the POA and others, and we sat down and we talked about it. It was after that discussion about how passionate they felt about me running and that they will help me – but they couldn't guarantee that I would get the endorsement. I didn't. I had to go through the interview process just like everybody else. They were very clear: "We will not promise you anything until after the interviews."

LBBJ: So you didn't want to run. Calls came in. One of them was from the POA encouraging you to run. The POA says we're not going to give you an automatic endorsement; you still have to go through the process.

Jensen: Right.

LBBJ: It sounds odd, doesn't it? Why would they want you to reconsider if they didn't want to endorse you? If they didn't want Terry Jensen, and they were going to support Tom Marchese or Gary DeLong, then they wouldn't have called you, right?

Jensen: Well I don't think it's any secret why they're not happy with Gary DeLong. But no, there were not guarantees, and I have no guarantees. I went through the interview process. Only the board can decide that they're going to do that. I went through the process. I talked to them and I didn't guarantee anything. I didn't promise anyone anything other than being deliberative and honest and careful to make sure that whatever we do to reorganize how pensions are established now and in the future in the City of Long Beach, will be done only after very careful, deliberative thought and process. No knee-jerk, short-term fixes like we've been doing for the last 15 years. It's going to be a careful evaluation to do something that is sustainable now and in the future, otherwise I won't do it.

LBBJ: You became the spokesperson in the city opposing the mayor's Measure I parcel tax in November 2008.

Jensen: Yes, I did. I called [8th District Councilwoman] Rae

Gabelich and I said, "Rae, I will not, under any circumstances, support a tax measure in the City of Long Beach unless first the city makes some fundamental changes in how they manage our resources. Only after they do that will I get behind any tax measure. I will aggressively fight to prevent that from being passed."

LBBJ: But Gabelich supported it.

Jensen: Yes, she did. We don't always agree.

LBBJ: So you were out and about, debating the mayor. Sometimes he didn't debate, did he?

Jensen: He never showed up at any of the debates. As a matter of fact, he didn't even want to show up at any of the venues where I was speaking. Measure I was a terrific idea, but a deeply flawed plan and was badly presented. For the last four years, the City of Long Beach has been shooting itself in the foot over and over and over again with measures and ideas and programs that if properly presented probably could have been supported by the majority of the people in the city. The hand-fisted ways they try to do things, they lose their credibility, they lose their audience and people fight it.

I'll badly paraphrase Lincoln, but he talked about if you have the people behind you, there's virtually nothing you cannot do, but if you try to impose your will on the public and they're not behind you, you cannot get anything accomplished.

LBBJ: Sounds good, but . . .

Jensen: That's a lesson that they have not learned yet in four years. With Measure I, they had not one single public forum. They had not one single open session or study session meeting in city council. There was nothing in public about that until boom, they said, "Here's Measure I and here are the wonderful things it's going to do." Which, by the way, had \$25 million down there to pay off Mr. Tom Dean for his wetlands debacle. They don't tell anybody that.

As is my practice with the way I look at things, when he [the mayor] first came out with it I said, "You know, that's not a bad idea. Our infrastructure is a mess. In 2004, I think [former city auditor] Gary Burroughs told me that the infrastructure deficit in Long Beach was \$2 billion. That's what Gary thought it was. I do reserve studies, and I've done this stuff for years. If you don't fix anything, in the commercial business, you call that cash flow because the money falls right to the bottom line. But sooner or later you're going to have to pay the piper because if you don't fix your streets, curbs, gutters and your infrastructure buildings, pipes, it's going to cost you much more later on to fix it.

That's what the city's been doing for years, and that's why we have such a big problem. With Measure I, when Foster started talking to the council and he tried to slam it through and get it cleared as an emergency, that didn't work. [Councilwoman Gerrie] Schipske kind of derailed that, but there was going to be a lawsuit anyway to stop that by the taxpayers and taxpayer groups.

LBBJ: Then he changed direction . . .

Jensen: Then he tried Plan B. It wasn't any better, and he made several promises that he couldn't keep. He made several assertions that simply were not true. I called him on it. I said, "If you want to fix it, I'll help you fix it. But the way the plan is right now, there's no way I could support it." I spoke at every public venue I could. I wrote editorials that were printed in three different papers, and I would have friends of his, neighbors of his, and say, "Terry, we agree with you. It's a bad plan." I would ask, "Can I use your name?" and they said no.

LBBJ: Have you spoken with the mayor since Measure I?

Jensen: No. I said during the debates that all I want is an open

forum. This is what I've always wanted. I want the public and the council to be able to make informed decisions on every issue. We seldom get that opportunity, either in council or with measures.

LBBJ: Speaking of money, how much have you raised?

Jensen: I just started. I'm between \$8,000 and \$9,000.

LBBJ: How much are you trying to get to?

Jensen: We have a budget of \$56,000.

LBBJ: Do you have a campaign manager?

Jensen: I have a few people who are helping me out.

LBBJ: Volunteer or paid?

Jensen: Both.

LBBJ: How do you get along with councilmembers?

Jensen: Very well. I don't know Garcia, but when I was on the RDA [Long Beach Redevelopment Agency] board I interacted with Suja Lowenthal. All of the others, I go way back with Dee Andrews. He's a Poly guy. Rae and I are close. Patrick O'Donnell and I are very friendly. Uranga, I'm friendly with her.

LBBJ: Do you support term limits?

Jensen: Yes, I do.

LBBJ: If you're elected, you're going to have to make some decisions with the General Fund on either somehow generating more revenue or cutting expenses. Are you willing to look at cutting public safety personnel if there is no other answer?

Jensen: I don't accept the premise that there's no other answer. I think, and I've been very clear from the beginning, that every single department in the city has to share in the solution.

LBBJ: Don't you think they have, though?

Jensen: Not to the extent that everybody could. I have been doing budgets for 30 years, and I have never once found an organization that was operating at 100 percent efficiency. Not even close.

LBBJ: The city manager, councilmembers agree that four or five years ago there was a lot of fat, but they've trimmed that. They say they're down to bare bones in almost every department except public safety.

Jensen: I don't accept that. I have personal knowledge that in some departments they've cut to the bone and others they haven't cut enough fat. You know it's just as tragic when you're doing budgets when you cut too much out of a department and not enough out of another one. You're failing miserably.

LBBJ: Could we combine a couple of departments, say, prosecutor and attorney?

Jensen: I don't know how that would save. If you put the same number of people in the same room, you don't save any money. Look, we do our budgeting backwards in the City of Long Beach. When you budget, you should budget and say, "What do we want?" First you have to decide what you want. Your priorities, and you budget toward our priorities. If you have money left over to do the non-essentials, then you do it. It's like a family.

LBBJ: So your priorities are?

Jensen: The essential city services are really quite clear. People move into neighborhoods because they're safe, so that means public safety – police and fire – has to be excellent. Streets, gutters, pipes, the backbone of the city, the infrastructure, the parks, the street trees, the street medians – neat and clean and well maintained. And utilities. You have to have that and it has to be maintained, not like in some third world countries where it's on only three hours a day. The educational system has to be terrific.

LBBJ: The educational system? What does that have to do with the city budget?

Jensen: It's not part of the city budget, but I'm just talking

about the essentials. That's not part of the General Fund, but it's part of why people might want to move into Long Beach.

Then you have trash pickup, right? Those are the essentials. Everything else may be desired, and it may be highly desired, but it's not essential. So you budget for those four items, and you decide at what level you want to supply that service. Do you want excellent service, mediocre service or poor service? Do you want it to be like Nordstrom's for the department stores, or Disneyland for the amusement parks? Or do you want something less? Once you establish that, only when you establish that can you make a budget that makes any sense.

I heard DeLong say something the other day at a homeowners meeting that surprised me. He said, "We cut \$20 million out of the budget and nobody noticed it." Well, did nobody notice that \$20 million of streets weren't done? Or \$20 million of public safety wasn't done? I mean, the list could go on and on and on. Have they noticed that some people in the gas department don't work on Friday and the libraries are shut? Of course we noticed it. You're cutting bone, not just fat.

So, when you've established at what level you want to maintain your public service, your essential services, then you budget to it. In some cases, if the city was honest, they would say that they have to tell you – based on our current level of funding for police, fire, public works – they would have to admit that what we are doing is budgeting to a mediocre level of service. If they were honest, they would tell you we can't fix our streets. The police aren't fully staffed. The fire department isn't fully staffed. Our trash pickup isn't as good as it could be. We're not painting or patching our buildings. We're budgeting to a very low level right now, and that's a short-term fix to a long-term problem. It's not making our city any better because we have all this other stuff that isn't essential.

It's pretty clear. Once you establish the level, you establish the budget. If we said we wanted something between outstanding and mediocre, we couldn't afford to do it.

LBBJ: So the health department can go?

Jensen: In my model, it's not essential.

LBBJ: What about parks and recreation?

Jensen: It depends on what part of parks and recreation we're talking about.

LBBJ: Youth programs, senior programs.

Jensen: It's desired. It's highly desired, but it's not essential.

LBBJ: What do you think about the 2nd Street and Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) project?

Jensen: Interesting project. That hotel should have been redeveloped 20 years ago and that corner needs to be redeveloped. My position on that is very clear, and I've said from the very beginning that I would not approve that development if it created traffic impacts over and above what SEADIP [Southeast Area Development Improvement Plan] would allow, no variances. Only what is allowed under current law.

LBBJ: Do you agree that that corner is an eyesore?

Jensen: It's horrible.

LBBJ: And it's an entrance to the city.

Jensen: It's horrible.

LBBJ: So something's got to be done.

Jensen: Sure it does. I want that corner to be redeveloped.

LBBJ: So you don't think the condos should go in.

Jensen: I didn't say that. I think a mixed used development on that site is a terrific idea. I don't have a problem with their [the developers] mixed use. I don't have a problem with that at all. It might be a little too dense, it might be a little too high,

but the problem with that development, frankly, is that the developers were not controlled from the very beginning by the councilman in that district.

LBBJ: You're putting the blame on DeLong for this?

Jensen: Absolutely, and whoever else was there before him. Because you know as well as I do, the first thing I would do when I would go into a city when I was looking at doing some development or buying a shopping center, one of the first things I'd do if I knew I had to expand it . . . was I went and talked to the councilperson in that district. I said, "What can we do here? What would you approve? What would you not approve?" I wanted to know what the guy who made the rules in that district thought.

LBBJ: What have you been hearing 3rd District residents during your walks?

Jensen: People are concerned about traffic; they're concerned about their streets and potholes. There are some people who think the potholes are only in North Long Beach. It's all basically the same thing. I don't care where you go in the city; it's basically all the same stuff. Public safety. Crime.

LBBJ: Is there anything that we haven't talked about that you'd like to bring up?

Jensen: I am deeply worried about the direction the city's going in. I do believe that this is a very pivotal election. If the wrong people are elected, I think the city is in for a very rough road. It's a trust and confidence issue in the city. People do not trust what is coming out of City Hall . . . We do a lousy job of managing our fixed resources and assets, and we need to put together a very competent group of people who will evaluate everything on an annual basis to make sure that we're maximizing our revenue from each one of those assets. ■

Tom Marchese



Tom Marchese is a third-generation resident of Long Beach. He said his father was a city engineer who helped build much of Long Beach, including City Hall, Queensway Bay, The Belmont Pool and Pier, the original Long Beach Arena and the Terrace Theater. His mother was a professional dancer who participated in local charities and civic groups. Marchese attended local schools, including Wilson High School and Long Beach City

College.

He refers to himself as a businessman and private investor. He is co-owner of MCC Construction and Development and works for TRF Consultants. Marchese says his priorities lie with the community, and he is involved with several Long Beach organizations. He is the vice president (and former president) of the University Park Neighborhood Association. He is a member of the Long Beach Democratic Club and the Women's Democratic Study Club and is an alternate delegate for the Los Angeles County Democratic Party.

Marchese, 53, is the director of the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust and a founding member of the Los Cerritos Study Group and SEADIP [Southeast Area Development Improvement Plan] Review Panel. Through his work with the Los Cerritos Study Group, he won a mayor's award in 2006. In its 2009 "Best of Long Beach" issue, the District Weekly newspaper proclaimed Marchese the "Best Whistle-Blower" for his public-records request regarding a land-swap issue involving developer Tom Dean.

According to his campaign site, [\[cil2010.com\]\(http://cil2010.com\), he has made promises that he intends to keep. He advocates for smart growth, job creation, a balanced budget and the protection of city services.](http://www.tommarcheseforcoun-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Marchese sat down with the Business Journal to discuss his candidacy, his efforts for governmental transparency and why he believes the incumbent needs to be unseated.

LBBJ: Give us a quick background on who you are.

Marchese: I was born in Long Beach. . . . My dad was a city employee. . . . I've lived in District 3 for 41 years. I went to local schools . . . and got my law degree. I was fortunate enough to partner with my father and my brothers to do a lot of good work. I've been a homeowner's president. . . .

LBBJ: Which homeowner's association?

Marchese: University Park Neighborhood Association [below Cal State Long Beach between 7th Street and Loynes Drive near Studebaker Road].

I've done a lot of charitable work over the years because I believe in accountability, transparent government, fairness and a strict adherence to the rule of law.

LBBJ: Are you a lawyer?

Marchese: I'm a lawyer by education. I have retained counsel. I don't have to solicit clients. I studied toward my MBA afterwards. So, in other words, I wanted a partnership with attorneys that didn't solicit clients to work in-house. Afterwards, I partnered with law firms that do charitable work that is business-related.

LBBJ: Are you currently employed or are you retired?

Marchese: I'm a businessman and a private investor.

LBBJ: Do you support a part-time city council or would you rather go full-time?

Marchese: I think that it's fine working the way it is right now.

LBBJ: We expect a deficit in the next city budget. If you're on the city council, how would you address that? Would you look at cutting employees? Is everything on the table?

Marchese: The budget problem is not going to go away next year, clearly. And with respect to cutbacks, I have said in the past that I believe that the economy is on the rebound. I hope that it is. I'm investing that way. I'm hoping that the up tick in port throughput – 20 percent recently – and other rebounds could occur to the General Fund. I'm hopeful. With respect to cutting or furloughing further employees, I don't look to cut employees. I hope not to. I definitely would not cut any more from the police department.

LBBJ: Where do you think you could find savings. Let's say \$10 million to balance the budget and the General Fund. Do you think you can do that through trimming additional costs?

Marchese: Have you seen my ink in the Press-Telegram?

LBBJ: No.

Marchese: You haven't?

LBBJ: We're asking the questions. Just respond to us.

Marchese: Okay. What I'm telling you is that the incumbent has spent so much time trying to put special deals together for his close friends that they grant huge discounts on city property that I've had to respond legally and advocate to unravel them time after time.

LBBJ: So that's how you're saying there's savings?

Marchese: What I'm telling you is that rather than try to sell city property at large discounts to certain friends of ours, I suggested that one or two of those items might have been sold on the open market to the highest bidder to just plug the hole in the budget on a one-time basis in one or two different years. I don't understand why it is we have to hand huge bundles of property to a close friend at huge discounts, first of all. Second of all,

there's a lot of waste in City Hall. It's right here. Politics is about priorities.

LBBJ: What do you mean by waste?

Marchese: . . . just being able to get in there and take a close look at the budget, go over it with a fine-tooth comb and see when and where we could save money.

LBBJ: We've talked to several current and past councilmembers and they're almost unanimous that all the fat has been cut.

Marchese: I want proof of that.

LBBJ: Would you cut park programs?

Marchese: No.

LBBJ: Do we go to three-man crews on fire trucks?

Marchese: No.

LBBJ: Do we close a fire station?

Marchese: No.

LBBJ: Do we try to raise taxes? Increase the utility tax?

Marchese: No.

LBBJ: What do we do?

Marchese: Pat West invited me to review the budget with him because, you know, they didn't give us access to anything. . . . He and I have an appointment in the future so that I can actually review the numbers and I can go over them with my experts and take a closer look.

LBBJ: With your experts? You have experts?

Marchese: Of course I do.

LBBJ: You don't do this yourself?

Marchese: We all have experts. I've got a great network of friends that I work with and people that I rely upon, mentors and people whose judgment I value.

LBBJ: Do you support term limits?

Marchese: Yes, I do, but I also support the right to be a write-in candidate. If Beverly O'Neill can do it, she opened the door, then I believe Mrs. Uranga and Mr. Lerch are entitled to do the same as well.

LBBJ: How much have you raised? According to the latest statement it's \$2,000?

Marchese: Right. I didn't raise any money before Christmas. What I did was I lined up donors and I lined up the precinct captains, because – this is kind of proprietary – I'm running a traditional nontraditional campaign.

LBBJ: How much do you want to raise?

Marchese: Our goal is about \$70,000. I think I'm about halfway there.

LBBJ: Who is the Long Beach Police Officers Association [POA] supporting?

Marchese: The POA went with Terry [Jensen] and I got the Fraternal Order of Police endorsement. Look at how Gary's [DeLong] betrayed his promise to the police department.

LBBJ: How did he betray the department?

Marchese: He closed the [police] academy. I'm upset that he closed the academy.

LBBJ: Wasn't that for budgetary reasons?

Marchese: Politics is about priorities. What do we have, a \$1.4 billion budget?

LBBJ: Do you support the selection of the new police chief?

Marchese: I wasn't on the selection committee and I have never met him.

LBBJ: Do you think it should have gone to an internal candidate?

Marchese: I don't know how the selection process was done. I want to talk to Pat West about it. I'd hoped that they would promote from within. That's what I told the Police Officers Association, just because I felt that there were enough guys

with a deep enough résumé and enough experience that knew the area so well that that might be the logical choice. But knowing little to nothing other than reading an article about the new chief, I'm told that he has a fantastic background and that he lives in the area.

LBBJ: So you would have preferred an internal candidate?

Marchese: I'm not going to say who I would have preferred. I wasn't a part of that decision-making process. I'm just a resident. . . . I wish him nothing but the best.

LBBJ: What's your feeling about the 2nd and PCH project [2nd Street at Pacific Coast Highway, where a hotel stands in one of the few blighted areas of Southeast Long Beach]?

Marchese: It's unlawful. I don't see how they're going to get a coastal development permit. I don't know how they're going to pass CEQA [California Environmental Quality Act] scrutiny. I've already submitted an opposition based in fact and law, along with the law firm Chatten-Brown & Carstens, and with other appellants as well. I have nothing against revitalizing that corner.

LBBJ: So you oppose the 2nd and PCH project as it's proposed . . .

Marchese: Based on the extent of the variances they're requesting and the traffic concerns.

LBBJ: You opposed the Home Depot project on Studebaker.

Marchese: Yes, on legal grounds. They couldn't get a coastal permit. Do you realize that the power company sued them too? Don't you remember that we filed a lawsuit and AES filed a lawsuit? That's the problem. AES didn't want that project there either.

LBBJ: Are there any developments in the 3rd District that have come up in the last four years that you've supported?

Marchese: Sure.

LBBJ: Name some.

Marchese: Well what do you mean by developments? Redevelopments?

LBBJ: Like a retail center or . . .

Marchese: It's built out. You know the 3rd District. It's built out.

LBBJ: Not if people are looking at 2nd and PCH.

Marchese: Oh, that's a redevelopment project. I would love to see that hotel restored to its former glory or something pretty.

LBBJ: So you would want to keep the hotel.

Marchese: Or something close to it.

LBBJ: Would you put condos there?

Marchese: I would stay within the SEADIP [Southeast Area Development and Improvement Plan] ordinance.

LBBJ: OK, so what can you put there?

Marchese: Right now it's zoned for a hotel with a height limit.

LBBJ: So you don't want to find a middle ground and support some other kind of development there?

Marchese: What do you mean? You can build a beautiful, low-rise hotel there.

LBBJ: What if we don't need a hotel?

Marchese: Then you have to go through an appropriate coastal plan amendment.

LBBJ: That's an entrance to the city.

Marchese: I agree. It's got to be cleaned up.

LBBJ: Wouldn't it be good to have some nice shops for people to shop at instead of going to South Coast Plaza?

Marchese: Who do you think is going to lease those shops?

LBBJ: We are asking you.

Marchese: Well I'm just asking you a question.

LBBJ: What would you like to see there other than a hotel?

Marchese: It's zoned hotel right now.

LBBJ: So that's it?

Marchese: You don't understand the coastal law. That is in the coastal zone. It's part of the certified coastal plan. You can't change the certified coastal plan without a coastal plan amendment.

LBBJ: So you would support it if there was a good alternative and an amendment?

Marchese: Good luck getting an amendment to the coastal plan. That's the reality that these guys don't understand.

LBBJ: OK. Say you're a councilperson representing the 3rd District. You have a blighted area at 2nd and PCH. . . .

Marchese: I would redevelop it within the confines of the coastal act and the applicable zoning. It could be gorgeous.

LBBJ: It would be a hotel?

Marchese: It's zoned hotel right now. I'd keep it that way with limited retail.

LBBJ: What would you do on Studebaker and Loynes where Home Depot was planned? Leave it the way it is?

Marchese: No. You don't understand that.

LBBJ: We're asking what you would do as a councilperson?

Marchese: Presently, that property is the subject of two court orders and a coastal commission finding. It's not just a lot up here, zoned commercial with a minimum open space that you and I can put a concrete tilt up on. [The adjacent] AES filed a lawsuit based on their concerns to maintain the power plant. They [land owners] have to comply with AES, which they weren't doing. You can't just build next to a power generator. They're also in the coastal zone. They have water on both sides of that lot. Have you ever seen the lot?

LBBJ: Yes.

Marchese: They have to comply with the coastal act. The coastal commission applied 11 different criteria that they'll have to study. Anything that goes there has to be coastal dependent or coastal related by law.

LBBJ: As a councilperson, what would your preference be for that area?

Marchese: I'd clean it up and sell it back to the power plant. They should have never sold it. Plus we could clean up the contamination. That's probably the most contaminated soil in Long Beach.

LBBJ: Recently, President Obama referred to the C-17 as "waste, pure and simple." What's your reaction?

Marchese: That's most unfortunate.

LBBJ: Would you fight to keep the program?

Marchese: Of course. I would do whatever I could to prevent that. Also, I believe I'm in a better position to help. I've worked with some people that worked on that campaign, and I think I might be in a better position than DeLong to try to do the right thing there.

LBBJ: When the incumbent was first elected, what was the first issue that you recall that you disagreed with him on?

Marchese: He broke his campaign promise before anything else.

LBBJ: Which was?

Marchese: To implement and enforce the Los Cerritos Wetlands Study SEADIP review zoning panel that we'd spent two years on.

LBBJ: Did he say why he didn't do it?

Marchese: He said, "You know, I had a chance to look at this report a little bit better and I really don't like it."

LBBJ: What's the exact name?

Marchese: Los Cerritos Wetlands Study Group SEADIP review panel had received unanimous planning commission approval, unanimous council approval, and we've received awards from the mayor. . . .

LBBJ: And this would have been in 2006?

Marchese: Right when he came in. And you know what he did? He handpicked a secret committee that no one could get on – that Wetlands Development and Improvement Plan – and he put his developer buddies [on it], quietly. I skunked him. I slipped a bud on that committee and reported the truth out to my friends for the six months that went on.

LBBJ: How would you rate the performance of the incumbent during his first term – on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best.

Marchese: 1.

LBBJ: And you base that on what?

Marchese: He let the community down on the Home Depot [project on Studebaker]. He let the community down when he failed to enforce the rezoning work that we worked on in 2004 to 2006 just as he got elected. He should have enforced the Los Cerritos Wetlands study plan. He failed the community when he put together a secret rezoning panel to try to add huge density to the Eastside of town without mitigating the traffic. He failed the community miserably when he destroyed the wetlands on Loynes Drive.

He failed the community miserably when he tried to help sell a long list of municipal assets to a close friend of his at enormous discounts. I stood against that. I blew that up and I have a lawsuit prepared to file if they go forward with it. I believe he breached his judiciary duty. I believe if it wasn't a gift of public funds, it was close enough to argue about it. I believe there were ethical lapses. There were Brown Act lapses. I believe that there were too many conflicts of interest in that deal that should have been revealed. I asked for them to be revealed. They weren't. I don't think that was ethical or necessarily lawful.

I think he let the community down with respect to the bar situation on 2nd Street, because I've met with those people and I believe that rather than build a wall between the two parties he should have sat them down and worked with them collectively. I think Gary is too prone to building walls between a small clique of the special interest buddies, and in doing so denying the rights of the remainder of the district. That's why I'm running. I believe I am the superior candidate.

LBBJ: Anything else?

Marchese: He stood silent as 2nd and PCH has ramped up for the last year and a half. He's made no comment whatsoever.

LBBJ: Has he done anything that you've supported?

Marchese: He's got the worst council attendance in the history of my district. Has he been there half the time? . . . Check the tapes. We have. He was barely there the first two years. . . . His non-attendance was so bad that we chided him to the point where Bob Foster finally remarked when he came in late, "Oh Mr. DeLong, it's nice to see you. I'm glad you could show up." I mean, seriously. He's there maybe, what, two, three hours and then he takes off.

LBBJ: Is there anything else that you would like to discuss?

Marchese: I'm exceedingly proud to have been asked by so many individuals to consider doing this. I'm humbled and awed by the support that I've received thus far. I'm known for being a hard worker and an honest and faithful friend to all. I would be honored and privileged if I was entrusted to do this. Trust me, I will do my very best to do justice to my father, whose name is on City Hall, and to my mother, god rest her soul, and my family. Honestly, I believe that I was asked to do this because I am able to do this and if I am elected, trust me, the entire community will be a part of my team. I would work very hard and I would be honored to do so. It kind of puts a tear in my eye to think of the possibility. ■