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Drebin kicks off his campaign for First Ward alderman

Kellogg prof wants to improve city's ABCs: arts, business and community Negar Tekeei

The message is not fair-share, but fair sharing.

At a campaign kick-off party Sunday at the Park Evanston, Kellogg Prof. Allan Drebin, a candidate for the First Ward alderman position currently held by Arthur Newman, outlined his goals to create a more cooperative relationship between Evanston and Northwestern.

Among the 150 Evanston residents who attended the reception were Mayor Lorraine Morton, former mayor James Lytle, Evanston-Skokie elementary school District 65 Superintendent Hardy Ray Murphy, Ald. Ed Moran (6th) and candidates for alderman in the Second and Fifth Wards.

Newman held his own campaign kick-off party Sunday afternoon at Pete Miller's Steakhouse, but did not invite the media.

Drebin said he hoped to improve "Evanston's ABCs": arts, business and community. He said the fact that it took the council 18 months to appoint a chairman for the Evanston Art Council is indicative of a lack of concentration on an important element of the city.

"The arts in Evanston are very important to us," Drebin said. "They help create a sense of community identity but have not been supported by the city."

Drebin said the council sends mixed messages to to the business community by creating tax increment financing districts designed to encourage business and then placing "archaic" restrictions on business activity. Drebin also said he was strongly opposed to a proposal before the current council, which would impose a \$10 monthly head tax on all institutions with more than 1,000 employees.

Finally, Drebin said he would work to build a more harmonious Evanston community by building up the relationship between the city and NU.

"My expertise is not fighting, but negotiating," he said.

Some were careful to express support for Drebin, saying they attended out of curiosity.

"I'm anxious to see who Allan Drebin is and what his ideas are," Moran said.

But others said they endorsed Drebin for the position, citing as primary reasons his expertise in municipal finance and his ideas for reforming the effectiveness of the council.

Morton, who is running unopposed for her fifth term as Evanston mayor, said she looked forward to a "return of civility" to council proceedings as well as the benefit of an alderman who would work for cooperation between the city

and NU. Drebin's previous work consulting cities and states on finances and budget concerns also would be beneficial for a city struggling financially, she said.

"I think he will be a wonderful addition to the council because we need someone to be the authority on fiscal matters," Morton said.

Others said they hope Drebin will help Evanston become a more business-friendly environment.

Tiffany Farris, an Evanston resident and business owner, said she is worried about the current aldermen's positions regarding the head tax.

"Even though the head tax would not directly affect me, it affects my potential clients," Farris said. "Also, there is no reason to say they won't impose the head tax on smaller businesses in the future."

Farris, Weinberg '00, is a member of Drebin's campaign committee, which comprises 12 Evanston residents, including a former alderman, former city clerk and NU students.

Kris Davis, an Evanston City Clerk from 1985 to 1997, said Newman's adversarial position on the council has proven detrimental in the past. Although she is a resident of the Fourth Ward, Davis said she supports Drebin because of the effect aldermen have on the entire population of Evanston.

"Art (Newman) is a destructive force in Evanston and a lot of the issues he has championed have and will end up in litigation," Davis said. "We need to have reasonable people on the council."

Newman said Sunday his record as First Ward alderman for 10 years would stand up against criticisms of civility and fairness.

"It's an old tactic that they've tried time and time again and people still vote for me," Newman said. "I have a passion for issues; there is no question about it."

Newman, who is managing his own campaign, said he did not inform the media about his party Sunday because he "didn't want a media press conference for (his) campaign kick-off." Newman said approximately 100 to 200 people attended the event.

Dov Klein, a rabbi at Tannenbaum Chabad House, said that while Newman has worked hard for constituents in the First Ward, he supports Drebin because, he said, Drebin has the interests of Evanston's diverse community in mind.

Drebin said it was precisely the entire Evanston community he hoped to involve in his campaign.

The contingent of Evanston that is often overlooked, Drebin said, are the students. With visits to Greek houses and residential colleges, as well as with student groups such as the Associated Student Government, Drebin said he wants to let students know how greatly they are affected by the council's decisions on issues such as the historic district, parking ordinances, landlord-tenant relations and the head tax proposal.

"I want to encourage students to recognize the importance of this election," he said. "By voting, (students') voices will be heard."

Newman also said he would be "doing some things for the students," but would not elaborate on plans for a public debate with Drebin.

Adam Humann, Weinberg senior and Associated Student Government president, said his role as a member of Drebin's campaign committee is to mobilize NU students and make their vote an effective one.

"My goal is to get 1,000 students out to vote for Allan (Drebin)," Humann said. "I think that assures him a victory."

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