



For Immediate Release

Super Majority of Omaha City Council to attend OTOC Candidate Accountability Session on May 1

Leaders of Omaha Together One Community (OTOC) will host a **Candidate Accountability Session with candidates for Omaha Mayor and City Council on Monday, May 1 at 7:00 P.M. in the church hall of St. Leo the Great Catholic Church, 102nd and Blondo Street.** A super majority (at least 5) of the next Omaha City Council will respond to OTOC on four issues affecting the quality of life in Omaha. All six contested City Council races have a candidate who has committed to attend. One mayoral candidate will also be present. They include:

Candidates for Mayor of Omaha

Heath Mello--Attending

Jean Stothert—Declined to Attend

Omaha City Council Candidates attending

District 1 - Pete Festersen

District 2 - Ben Gray and Dennis Womak

District 3 - Chris Jerram and D'Shawn Cunningham

District 4 – Jim Rogers

District 6 - Brinker Harding and Dwight Pedersen

District 7 - Aimee Melton and Brian Thommes

OTOC is non-partisan and never endorses candidates or parties. OTOC seeks to determine where candidates stand on issues of importance to the community and organizations. OTOC then makes that information available to our leaders and communities, so they can educate themselves about the candidates and their positions.

At this unique opportunity to hear from City Council candidates from six districts that span the city, **OTOC will seek commitments from candidates on these important issues:**

- **Safe Rental Housing** –Protecting vulnerable families and reducing deteriorating buildings/demolitions
- **Yard Waste Recycling** –Ending the co-mingling of household garbage and yard waste, creating a marketable OmahaGro product and lowering methane gas leakage from the city landfill.
- **Regulating Pay Day Lending** – Making it less likely Omaha borrowers will fall into a “Debt Trap”
- **Omaha Police Policy toward Immigrants & Refugees** – Advocating for a practical community oriented approach to interacting with undocumented immigrants and refugees in Omaha.

How this Session is different:

An OTOC Accountability Session is not a forum and it is not a debate. OTOC leaders will share the background of issues of concern with candidates and ask candidates to take firm positions and to work with OTOC to resolve the issues. These issues are ones of major concern that have emerged within the 30 member coalition of congregations and other community groups that make up OTOC.

Over 100 engaged OTOC and community leaders are involved in Action Teams to address those issues. Interested individuals work together to study the issue of concern. Research about the concern reveals the causes of the problem, suggests possible solutions, and discovers the decision makers with the responsibility and power to solve it. Most of these issue teams have been active for years.

All participating candidates have been briefed on these issues. OTOC leaders provide the candidates with the questions that will be asked, and background information, so that on May 1 candidates can be prepared to clearly respond with Yes or No and an explanation of their answer.

This meeting is open to the public. **For more information, see www.otoc.org**

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