

Clyde Vanel Says A Change Is Needed

BY SASHA AUSTRIE

It was the stormy term limit season and an inspiring Barack Obama victory that thrust the idea of a council candidacy at the forefront of Clyde Vanel's mind.

"I decided to run in November 2008," Vanel, said. "I was inspired by Obama and disgusted by term limits."

In October, the City Council voted to potentially extend their tenure with a third term, in a 29 to 22 vote.

Vanel's chief opponent in the 27th Council District, Councilman Leroy (D-St. Albans), voted in favor of the third term.

"I'm not against term limits," he said. "I'm disgusted with the process."

In his defense, Comrie said that he's always railed against term limits.

Vanel argues that the City Council violated New Yorkers' civil rights.

"I'm ashamed of my district," he said. Vanel added that the line of power has been in place for 35 years, first with Archie Spigner and now Comrie.

"We've had 40 years of the same policies, legacy of leadership," he said. "It is embarrassing. Because they've been there for so long they think they know better. They couldn't get it right for the first 35 years; you want four more years

too mess it up?"

Max Kenol, one of Vanel's senior advisors, said that the "people in power were doing their best, but their best is not enough."

"I'm not against people in power," Kenol said. "I'm against their result."

Ronald Summers, a Vanel supporter, agreed with Kenol.

"It is not about the abilities of the elected officials," Summers said. "It is the violation of the basic rights people voted for."

Vanel, an attorney and restaurateur, is the unlikely politician. He proclaims himself a "businessman."

"I never thought of going into politics," he said. He's had a change of heart, which was fostered by the state of the 27th district.

"I'm in it because I understand business," he said. "We have an economic crisis. We have a foreclosure crisis that is a cancer."

He contends that he's better equipped than the incumbent to handle the problems.

If elected, Vanel said he'd implement plans to ensure that the current housing crisis never duplicated. Although he wouldn't go into detail about his plan,

Vanel said government had the means to adopt policy fore-going the crisis.

"Southeast Queens was Ground Zero in New York City for foreclosure," he said.

Vanel said the stats on the number of homes lost to foreclosure were staggering.

"A hundred people per week are being foreclosed," he said. "This is the crown jewel of black America. This is the only place where black household in-

come is higher than white household income."

He contends that the housing crisis has whittled billions in black wealth.

"This is the worst attack on black wealth since what happened in the 1920s," Vanel said. "Why is this happening the worst to us? We can't stand for it."

He touts his candidacy as one of action and transparency.

In the foyer of his campaign office there are handmade flowcharts graphing his progress with donations and donors. As of Thursday, Vanel said his campaign has collected \$25,000 from 108 donors, of which 40 are from the district.

He said his goal is to raise at least \$80,000 and have 75 people from the district donate to the campaign.

His supporters have no fear in regards to Vanel's chances against Comrie.

Summers said he met Vanel at a community forum.

"With Vanel, I see an energy there to be able to get things done," he said. "He is highly organized." Summers said Vanel has a "passion" when he talks about the opportunities in the community.

Although Summers doesn't live in the 27th District he campaigns for Vanel. He views Vanel as selfless and committed.

Donnie Whitehead, another of Vanel's supporters, said he first saw the candidate at a forum.

"Right now we are on a fact-finding mission," Whitehead said. "The facts look very good."

Whitehead said that his support of Vanel stems from the fact that he functions as an individual and not backed by a political machine.



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