

Candidate: Craig Nelson

Background: Finance Executive; former chairman of the Solana Beach Budget & Finance Committee

Website: <https://www.craig4council.com/>

On the issues:

Local Developments:

(Local developments) that fit the character of the community need to be encouraged. Too many property owners are dismayed and discouraged from improving their properties due to the red tape and bureaucracy involved. Nobody wants projects that don't fit the small town beach charm of Solana Beach but many would like some vibrant new restaurants and shops along with a makeover of the Von's center that could make it a true destination. Why is nobody from the City talking with the owner of that shopping center about a remodel to include a Ruth's Chris or similar fine dining and more retailers which drive tax income to the city while allowing residents to shop in their own neighborhood.

Affordable Housing:

(Affordable housing) is one of our biggest challenges. As we fall farther behind our goals for affordable we should look at the land Solana Beach recently purchased in Eden Gardens to provide affordable housing to all age ranges. Helping long time residents displaced by gentrification stay in Eden Gardens is more fruitful rather than becoming embroiled in more lawsuits over on Sierra.

Short Term Vacation Rentals:

(Short-term rentals are) still a work in progress throughout the beach communities. I think Solana Beach has one of the better programs in place. The current program drives significant tax revenue to the City as well as tourism dollars to our local merchants. Taxing those visitors also funds the licensing and code enforcement plus a 7 day minimum stay means more family vacations and fewer parties.

The Del Mar Resort:

The story poles (thank God for story poles) quickly told us the project was too tall, bulky and destroyed views. It is critical along the coastal zone that we protect views and property rights. Any developer and the Del Mar City Council should commit to putting this project, whether it's a park, hotel, condos or mansions, to a vote of the Citizens. I pledge to keep an open mind while protecting views and insisting whatever final proposal comes about, the voters have the final say.

Eden Gardens, La Colonia Park and gentrification:

Historic residents are being uprooted by the gentrification of Eden Gardens. We need to be sure new development has a component for those who have historically lived in the community. The City's recent purchase of a large parcel of land next to La Colonia Park could be part of the solution while addressing our affordable housing goals.

Lomas Santa Fe Corridor Updates:

Gridlock on Lomas Santa Fe:

I've lived in Solana Beach for 18 years and I'm committed to putting the interests of our local neighborhoods first. The proposal for roundabouts and gridlock on Lomas is the opposite.

Making the lanes smaller and crooked while smooshing the cyclists closer to the cars is a dangerous plan. Fill the potholes, pave the road and repair the sidewalk - add another motorcycle cop, those should be the priorities. Funds for beautification would be great but let's fix the basics.

I oppose the use of eminent domain to take private property and I oppose the reduction or shrinking of Lomas Santa Fe on both the East & West side. I am the only candidate to sign the pledge presented at the October 10th City Council meeting.

Parking on West Lomas? Nobody I speak with seems to think we need any there...this is why neighbors need a seat at the table with the consultants.

Solana Energy Alliance (SEA):

Despite hours and hours going over the data and numbers at the City I still scratch my head at the need to create a duplicate energy company. I went on the SDG&E web site and switched to 100% green energy in under 2 minutes. The City Council voted to form a new energy company to purchase green energy. The new power company will essentially become a subsidiary of the city, staffed with dozens of highly compensated consultants and experts similar to those employed by SDG&E whom we will continue to also pay. The purchasing of power is very complex and costly, so I can see an argument to be made that it's possible to do it better than SDG&E (who roots for them?). My complaint is the City's inability to get the message out to the citizens so they could decide for themselves. If not, you may find yourself surprised that the City has automatically enrolled you in their new power company (your bill is still delivered by SDGE). You may not be happy with that but the deadline to return to SDG&E has passed, to escape now you must pay an exit fee. We seem to have a communication and transparency problem. The City will tell you it's your fault for not paying attention, I say it's the City's fault for not grabbing your attention.

The Solana Power company suffered another blow last week when the exit fee went up 70% .

Budget:

There are currently ZERO City Council members with a degree in Finance or Economics. I am the only candidate to serve multiple terms on the Budget & Finance Commission for the City. My understanding of finance and in particular the finances of the City of Solana Beach are critical to maintaining city service levels while avoiding undue risk and not imposing additional taxes and fees on our citizens and businesses.