An open response to Chris Fogel, Sue Beckmeyer’s campaign manager, and other Realtor-funded candidate campaigns. And a wish for the 2020 election.

As a threshold issue, I do not support vandalism of political signs. Period.

As a separate issue (and much more important to our community), Chris Fogel’s and others’ strong, righteous indignation in response to vandalism of a few of their campaign signs, and their very weak response to the ongoing anti-Keener smear campaign, is indicative of the destructive force of outside special-interest money trying to control Pacifica City Council and local politics.

Chris, I assume you see yourself as a political operative after your stint as John Keener’s campaign manager in 2016 and now as Sue Beckmeyer’s campaign manager. But the naivete in thinking that voters don’t see or feel the connection between all three realtor-funded candidates and the anti-Keener smear campaign is patently ridiculous.

As one NextDoor commenter said: “I have worked on political campaigns, so I know the denouncements from O’Neill and Beckmeyer are meaningless. Part of how the game is played is that you have an outside
special interest group mail out flyers that ‘go negative’ on your opponent, and then you publicly denounce those flyers, because you want voters to think you're a nice person who would never get down in the mud and spread insults and half-truths about your opponent.” This is now the unfortunate norm in Pacifica.

On NextDoor and other forums, PAC and realtor-associated folks keep playing down the connection and assert that there somehow is a fictional wall between Independent Expenditures-Political Action Committees and the candidates (see the link below showing the sources of campaign contributions), even after one of the FPPC filings show that one of the PACs (Pacifica BACPAC) had a meet-and-greet with Beckmeyer and O’Neill. Another PAC (Pacificans For Responsible Government) on its website used to promote O’Neill, Beckmeyer, and Flores, and the last time I checked, had become an anti-Keener website. The realtor-group funders are all connected in general as trade associations and directly via the SAMCAR return address on the anti-Keener smear campaign mailers. Of course, there is a connection between Sue Beckmeyer, Mike O’Neill, Vickie Flores, and the dishonest anti-Keener smear campaign. They are the beneficiaries of the outside-realtor contributions and the smear campaign.
Another important factor is that both realtor council members Mike O’Neill and Sue Vaterlaus voted against the 2017 Pacifica Ordinance 820 requiring Pacifica campaign contribution filings to be posted on the city website—an election transparency ordinance. Candidate Sue Beckmeyer was the only member of the public to oppose this ordinance at the City Council hearing. Luckily, this ordinance passed and all voters can easily find out who has contributed to each candidate and how much. So everyone now knows the realtor-funded candidates were the benefactors of at least $15,000 each from outside Pacifica special-interest money. The other City Council candidates didn’t take any outside Pacifica special-interest money.

Now these realtor-funded candidates are forever tainted by GOP/Trump-style politics in Pacifica and the smear campaign. Will this be repeated in 2020?

I have no idea why anyone who truly cares for our community thinks that our City Council should be dominated by realtor-funded candidates, especially when council member Sue Vaterlaus is already a director for both the California Association of Realtors and the National Association of Realtors. She also is SAMCAR’s Government Affairs Chair. All of these realtor groups are associated with the anti-Keener smear campaign mailers. We don’t need any more realtor-funded candidates on council. This is too much
influence for one trade association. Our City Council should represent all of our community and a diversity of viewpoints. Beyond deferring the Local Coastal Plan and climate change protection, what else do the realtor groups want? Is there a new plan to develop Rockaway Quarry?

Either way, I truly hope the 2020 election doesn’t bring another mountain of outside realtor money hiding behind “Independent” expenditures or another dishonest smear campaign. Keep it clean in 2020.

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