



BARRIO LOGAN | NESTOR | OTAY MESA | SAN YSIDRO | SHERMAN HEIGHTS

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Candidates square off for Alvarez's council seat

Split on future development, rent control, and maybe lead in paint

By Dave Rice, March 16, 2018

Ramping up campaigns for the June primary, three candidates to replace David Alvarez in the San Diego City Council's District 8 met before a packed house in Sherman Heights on Thursday night (March 15) in a forum organized by the Environmental Health Coalition.

Attendees included Antonio Martinez, a member of San Ysidro's planning and school boards, Vivian Moreno, currently an Alvarez staff member, and Christian Ramirez, a Sherman Heights local and immigrant rights advocate at Alliance San Diego. Marcos Diaz, currently termed a [potential candidate](#) like the other three, and Zachary Lazarus, the [only candidate listed as fully qualified by the city](#), did not make an appearance.

District 8 is unique in that it is [split into two segments](#) — an urban core of Sherman Heights, Barrio Logan, and Logan Heights and parts of San Diego along the border — Nestor, San Ysidro, and Otay Mesa.

Much of the evening's discussion focused on topics on which the candidates all agreed: restrict homeless services and so there are not so many within the District 8 boundaries. Participants all lauded proposals to beef up the city's adopted [climate action plan](#), to enforce designated truck routes through Barrio Logan to limit polluting freighters through residential neighborhoods, and

an update to the Barrio Logan Community Plan, which was [shot down in 2014 primaries](#) when voting on the neighborhood's priorities was opened to residents citywide.

"The City of San Diego doesn't care when it comes to our communities. They think that our communities won't demand our fair share," Martinez mused. "Part of the problem is that they have their meetings at 2 p.m. when our people are working."

Ramirez echoed a similar theme, complaining to a crowd of assembled supporters who'd come bearing poster board signs of support about the placement of [a homeless storage facility](#) adjacent to Our Lady's school playground.

"This is the kind of half-baked idea that's turned our communities into the dumping ground for the elites."

"It's scary. I mean, I'm a 35-year-old woman and when I'm walking I look from side to side," Moreno added. "You can't have a [homeless] encampment, you just can't. You can't have one on the sidewalk, you can't defecate on the sidewalk."

An issue where the group split was on a call to oppose developments such as an increase in housing in Otay Mesa. While Martinez and Ramirez pledged opposition to such projects, city staffer Moreno cautioned that taking an on-record stance as a candidate would be cause for any elected official to recuse themselves from voting on a project once in office.

Rent control was also an issue where Moreno stood against the seeming consensus that implementation would provide a net community benefit.

"Go try to rent a room in San Francisco and see how much it costs. They have rent control, so I don't support it — I support more affordable housing."

A stand likely to be controversial amongst property owners that was supported by all three candidates was a new point-of-sale requirement that houses within the city undergo lead abatement before they're sold.

"If you're about to sell a home, we want to make sure that the lead is removed so that that if you move in and your grandchildren come to visit, you're not going to have that issue," Moreno said.

California's primary election is set for June 5, 2018. The top two candidates will then face off again in November.