



## Johnson touts housing, environmental issues

Aspen councilman seeking second term says, 'I did a good job'

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ASPEN — City Councilman Jack Johnson said he's confident he has carried out the will of the majority of Aspenites for the past four years and wants to continue that effort for another term.

Upon the announcement of his candidacy to seek re-election, Johnson, 45, said he and the council members he has served with have made enormous strides in protecting Aspenites' interests.

"I did a good job," Johnson said. "I wasn't sure I had until I had looked back at what I've done."

He said he is proud of the city government's purchases of vacant land for future affordable housing, as well as its environmental initiatives and past building moratoriums to slow the rate of growth.

"I was a legislator," Johnson said, adding he helped preserve locally serving businesses by setting aside deed-restricted affordable commercial space at the Cooper Street Pier building, as well as the Isis movie theater, and making sure the Red Onion was preserved.

He said one of his proudest accomplishments in office is establishing a new instant runoff voting method. For the first time this spring, Aspen voters will rank their candidates by choice instead of having to go to a second election in June if a candidate doesn't receive a majority in the first go-round.

Johnson said he didn't have a specific agenda when he ran for council for the first time in 2005. He said his knowledge of the land-use code as a Planning and Zoning commissioner helped guide the government through growth and zoning challenges his first four years in office.

Johnson points to the Aspen Area Community Plan as the road map to follow in carrying out the wishes of city residents. Before he was elected, that community plan wasn't being followed as closely as it should have been.

The key for elected officials is to maintain Aspen's small-town character — not just its built environment — but also its economic base, which should center around tourism and not real estate speculation, Johnson said.

"Aspen needs to go back to basics," he said, adding the town should cater to all socio-economic classes. "We need more diversification in our economy."

Johnson is about to launch his campaign into full swing. He met with his campaign team Sunday evening, and in the coming weeks, they will begin raising money and collecting names of supporters.

Johnson said he campaigned at the Burlingame Ranch affordable housing development on Saturday, which produced two sheets of names of potential supporters.

On Sunday, as Johnson sat in the sun on a bench on the Hyman Avenue mall, he was approached by a previous supporter who voiced her willingness to help him get re-elected.

The second paragraph of Johnson's campaign letter sums up his motivations to serve as a city councilman: "From the moment I first drove over the pass and dropped into Aspen I have felt at home. I felt an instant connection to the people and place," he wrote. "It's hard for me to put into words and I suspect it is for you too — what it is for us to love this town enough to fight for it as we do. Many people, perhaps you, feel that the fight is over. I