

The November 6, 2007 Quarter-Term General Election will be pretty straight forward. It is only municipal elections, and even those are just two votes.

# of Votes to Cast	Office / Referendum	Jurisdiction	Candidate / Vote	Explanation
2	City Council	City	<b>Kris Wang, Raj Abhyanker</b>	<p>This is a race between six candidates for two seats, one of which is currently vacant. Like all local races (and particularly this one, since I have only been living in Cupertino for less than a year), it is difficult to know the relevant issues and have an informed basis for choosing candidates.</p> <p>However, I can quickly eliminate Mark Santoro, who appears to be a pretty nominal candidate. I also immediately note that Albert Chu has the Republican County Party endorsement and is quite explicitly conservative. However, he is unfortunately not running a very organized or thoughtful campaign. While I give some deference to the Party's endorsement in nonpartisan races, the clearly superior qualifications of several other candidates can trump that deference. That is the case here.</p> <p>Next, I eliminate Gilbert Wong, who seems qualified but is a Democratic Party establishment candidate (and probably, with Wang, the frontrunner). For obvious reasons, I prefer candidates to be independent of the local Democratic leadership.</p> <p>After that, I pick Abhyanker. His positions seem generally conservative, and he has built a solid campaign structure. He does not have endorsements, and he seems a bit reactionary (being vocally against higher taxes and opposing the use of non-English characters on business signs) -- although even this could serve as a valuable counterweight on the Council. Another plus for him is that the <i>Cupertino Courier</i> editorial board had good things to say about him (although they did not endorse him).</p> <p>This leaves me to choose between Wang, a one-term incumbent and current mayor, and Barry Chang, an elected School Board member. This was a tough choice, but I ended up siding with Wang. Things generally seem to be going well in Cupertino, so without better information, I should default to a general pro-status quo vote. She has lots of endorsements, appears competent and respected, and emphasizes fiscal responsibility, so, having already chosen a maverick like Abhyanker, Wang is the stabilizing side of my vote. She also seems more removed from the Democrats (although she probably is one) and has Laurie Smith and Pete Constant's endorsements. Meanwhile, Chang has some key good qualities (independence, previous elective experience, and a fairly conservative tone), but he appears somewhat quixotic. Specifically, he is fully anti-housing growth, a major issue in the campaign. While I do not personally have a position on the issue, he seems inflexible and formulaic in his thinking. Given that I already want a maverick like Abhyanker on the Council, Wang seems like a safer choice for the other seat.</p>

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