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Risks, rewards of being establishment pick

Power brokers met privately, agreed to unify behind Kevin Faulconer, then cleared the field.

By Craig Gustafson (/staff/craig-gustafson/) 5:07 P.M. SEP 26, 2013

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San Diego City Council member Kevin Faulconer answers a question during the first mayoral debate with fellow City Council member David Alvarez and former City Attorney Michael Aguirre. The debate was sponsored by the Asian Business Association of San Diego. — Howard Lipin

City Councilman Kevin Faulconer is the establishment's choice in the San Diego Mayor's race after about 50 political power brokers met behind closed doors, agreed to unify behind his candidacy and then

created the City Council's new rules. (https://www.facebook.com/share?url=http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2013/sep/26/...) (https://twitter.com/share?url=http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2013/sep/26/...)



Faulconer, 46, will now get the financial backing that comes with that label but also the slings and arrows from critics who say he'll carry the water for big business and give short shrift to neighborhood concerns.

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COMMENTS

There's little doubt that the narrative of last year's mayoral campaign — downtown interests versus neighborhoods — will be resurrected ahead of the Nov. 19 special election to replace Bob Filner, who

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resigned Aug. 30 amid a sexual harassment scandal. How Faulconer navigates that discussion as the establishment candidate will go a long way to determining the race's outcome.

The city's longest-tenured councilman has a voting record that is decidedly pro-business, but he also has a history of diving into — and resolving — contentious community issues within his district, from a beach-alcohol ban to a permanent downtown homeless facility. In his campaign kickoff speech, he twice talked of building stronger neighborhoods and spoke Spanish, a clear nod to the disenfranchised voters in the minority-heavy communities south of Interstate 8.

“I think I have a strong track record of fighting for my community, for my neighborhoods, when I've been on the council,” Faulconer said in a recent interview. “When it comes to doing the right thing, not only for neighborhoods but to show my independence, I think I've demonstrated that. If my opponents want to say otherwise, I think we'll have pretty concrete and clear examples that show that I stick up for my beliefs and what I believe is right even if sometimes I have friends on the other side.”

Specifically, Faulconer points to the Mission Bay Park initiative that he crafted with former Councilwoman Donna Frye. The measure, overwhelmingly approved by voters in 2008, calls for some tax revenue generated by Mission Bay businesses to be reinvested in the park. Faulconer said he pushed for the initiative over the objections of then-Mayor Jerry Sanders and others.

Faulconer, who initially opposed a beach-alcohol ban, supported the 2008 voter-approved ban after raucous binge-drinking caused problems for neighbors and businesses in the beach communities.

Diane Takvorian, executive director of the Environmental Health and Justice Campaign, said the real concern should be how the next mayor will help impoverished neighborhoods not the wealthy ones Faulconer has represented. She noted that Faulconer voted against the community plan update for Barrio Logan, siding with the maritime industry over the concerns of residents.

“That community should be the poster child of the communities he says he cares about and we don't need to speculate about what he thinks about those communities, we have his vote,” said Takvorian, whose group has endorsed Democratic Councilman David Alvarez in the mayor's race. “(Faulconer) is solidly in the 'I don't care' category. He voted no for the Barrio Logan plan that had five years of community input. ... This is the kind of community he says he cares about. I just think the evidence flies in the face of that.”

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David Hendricks · Coronado, California

Craig, why don't you list the 30 "power brokers" who decided to clear the field for Faulconer? While we know that Mr. Manchester is one, who are the rest of the "business leaders and developers?"

For example, was Lani Lutar one of the power brokers? If so, it would shed an important light on the quotes in the article.

Another issue you left unmentioned was how the "power brokers" actually cleared the field? Whom did they convince to not run and how did they convince them?

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · September 27 at 3:25pm



John Tucker · Top Commenter · Works at USN Retired

Mr. Faulconer appears to possess the temperament, character and integrity to move the city beyond the "us" versus "them" paradigm.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · September 27 at 2:36pm



Robert Herr · Top Commenter · University Of Maryland

Like it or not, the insiders and big business are the ones that create jobs and generate taxes that pay for all the low income, no income, losers and scumbags that the progressive democrats care about. Sounds great to say lets take care of neighborhoods, but that takes money and the neighborhoods they are talking about do not generate any. The fact of the matter is San Diego needs jobs and that will never be the agenda of any Progressive Democrat.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · September 27 at 1:29pm



Rex Smith · Top Commenter · College of William and Mary

Kevin seems like an overall decent guy and he would be much better than Carl DePervert but he's not a deep thinker nor a bold visionary. It's profoundly disappointing to see Papa Doug is opening his wallet to make Kevin his puppet. I had sort of hoped Kevin wasn't for sale.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · September 26 at 7:14pm



Charles White · Top Commenter

No, Mr. Manchester, I don't want your money! I'd rather get outspent by Big Labor for Alvarez and the Fletcher/Qualcomm coalition. I'll lose, but I'll have the respect of...Rex Smith!

[Reply](#) · [2](#) · [Like](#) · September 26 at 9:19pm



Rex Smith · Top Commenter · College of William and Mary

Charles: You truly defy logic. Sometimes I wonder if you truly believe most of what you spew. Let me retract. I hope Papa Doug AND ONLY Papa Doug can buy city hall and have his way. Are we pals now?

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · September 27 at 7:41pm


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