City votes next Tuesday

By Bob Dennis

In Cambridge, November 4 will mean different things to different people. To MIT, the main focus will be on the Institute's struggle to retain its visibility as an institution. For the rest of Cambridge, Tuesday is the day when the electorate will choose the city's leadership for the next two years.

As the campaign signs throughout the city indicate, the five seats on the City Council and the six posts on the School Committee will be at stake. Cambridge elections are rather unique since this city is the only major community in the nation that still employs the proportional representation system. Under this system, voters select their choices preferentially and their second, third, and even fourth choices often prove crucial.

As The Cambridge Chronicle noted last week, "With PR voting, it doesn't pay for one candidate to make a personal attack on any other candidate," since it might cost him the chance of gaining some of the secondary votes of another candidate.

Not issue-oriented

While the PR system has succeeded in making the elections free of mud-slinging and has led candidates to offer a more positive approach, the system has not succeeded in making the campaign more issue-oriented. Despite heated controversies over housing and rent control during the past year, a campaign observer at City Hall comments that "this city doesn't work on issues."

There are 26 candidates for the nine-man City Council. Two of the incumbents are not seeking re-election. Arthur Rosenbaum and former City Councilor Thomas Owens (one of three blacks in the race) are considered the leading contenders for the seat of Corinna Wheeler. School Committee members Daniel Clinton and Gustave Solomon and contractor Leonard Russell are considered the most likely to capture the consistency being vacated by Bernard Goldberg. All incumbent candidates, with the possible exception of Daniel Hayes, are expected to win re-election.

The election results should be interesting since two incumbent Councilors, Edward Cranze and Thomas Danzey, are basing their campaigns on a strong "law and order" theme. The Cambridge Chronicle, traditionally conservative on the political spectrum, has endorsed Mayor Robert Connolly and student assistant in this area.

The Cambridge Civic Association, which traditionally gives its nod to the candidates that it perceives as the most progressive, has this year endorsed Coates, Moncriff, and Solomon in addition to the incumbents Ackermann, Edward Cranze, and Thomas Mahoney.

The Cambridge Citizens for Low-Income Housing, a newly- formed group concerned about the housing crisis, has endorsed Raytheon Company, Mahoney and Alfred Velbacca, as well as challengers Coates, Solomon, and Mahoney.

Councillor from MIT

In an interview, Councillor Thomas H. D. Mahoney, Professor of History in the MIT Department of Humanities, discussed his campaign. He has relied mainly on coffee hours, mailings and signs (about 125 are up in all sections of the city).

In his campaign, Councilor Mahoney has raised such issues as the maintenance of professionalism in the office of City Manager, housing, solid waste disposal, and pollution and traffic.

He has given special emphasis to the "filthy condition" of the Cambridge streets. He feels that "the morale of the city is determined by its environment" and that businesses should assume more responsibility for the cleanliness of the city.

Councillor Mahoney is especially proud of the leadership role he played in the formation of tenant councils in public housing projects and in procuring modernization funds for the projects.

One of the four Councillors who voted in favor of rent control this summer, Councilor Mahoney asserts that he favored the ordinance on the basis of "justice and humanity." He feels that rent control is desirable because of the many evictions that have been occurring and in order to assist those citizens of fixed income who cannot compete with the rising demand for housing in the city.

School Committee

In the School Committee race, there are twelve candidates for six positions. The C.C.A., which has endorsed incumbents Frank Duchar and David Witte and challengers Lorraine Butler, Francis X. Hayes, and Don Faust. Of the other incumbents, William Fitzgerald and John Good are seeking re-election while Clinton and Solomon are running for the City Council.

The only issue seems to be the general question of the quality of the school system. While the C.C.A. candidates say that much more could be done, the other incumbents had the defense of the present system.

A group of MIT and Wesleyan students has been actively involved in Lorraine Butler's campaign. Students who would like to serve as pollwatchers on election day should contact Steve Young at the Urban Action office, W-10-457, x1894.

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