

Good evening council members, city manager, city attorney, Staff, family and friends, and citizens of Pinole.

Since I am now officially a candidate for Pinole's City Council, I want to formally introduce myself. My name is Virginia Fujita and I've been a resident and homeowner here in Pinole for almost 30 years. Most recently, I was the City of Pinole's Personnel Specialist, coordinating all aspects of the city's human resource and employee service functions. I retired from that position last year.

I am seeking a seat on the city council for various reasons. It truly saddens me to see our city in such political turmoil, where our citizens no longer have confidence in the leadership of our city council.

Our citizens want and deserve to have an open, transparent government, a government that includes citizens' opinions and ideas in major decisions that will have long-term effects on our city.

I was appalled at the way certain council members behaved when it was announced that the former city manager's contract would not be renewed. No one deserves such disrespect, especially one of our own citizens, and especially coming from an elected official. That was not the time, nor the place, for a celebration. And to make such a key decision as that and have no plan in place, was totally irresponsible, and definitely put our city at risk.

Our former city manager is honoring the severance agreement that all of you signed, and yet, certain council members continue to frame her as a scapegoat for their decisions, or lack of decisions, on the Pear Street Bistro and other key issues.

It is time to restore respect, honesty and integrity to our city council. I am not a politician and I'm definitely not a career politician, but I can no longer sit idly and watch the continuing disintegration of what should be a cohesive and collaborative leadership.

I believe the citizens of Pinole want a councilmember who puts them first, and not someone who is primarily concerned with their own political aspirations. They want a person who makes decisions fairly and based on facts and not someone who makes decisions based on personal agendas or special interests.

I would appreciate the opportunity to be that person, to begin the work to heal our community and establish a new, transparent, forward-thinking city council.

Thank you very much for your time and I wish all of you a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday.

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