

Courtney Guinn pursuing Mesa D1 City Council seat



Maria Polletta, The Republic | azcentral.com 8 a.m. MST January 28, 2016



(Photo: Courtney Guinn)

Courtney Guinn is the third candidate to make a bid for Mesa's District 1 City Council seat, which will change hands when Councilman Dave Richins steps down next January.

The 35-year-old Walgreens program manager filed a statement of organization earlier this month, according to City Clerk DeeAnn Mickelson. He joins retired [Mesa firefighter Mark Freeman \(/story/news/local/mesa/2015/07/01/freeman-first-mesa-district-council-seat/29581993/\)](#) and [former Vice Mayor Pat Gilbert \(/story/news/local/mesa/2015/07/13/former-mesa-vice-mayor-pat-gilbert-seeks-seat/30020755/\)](#) in the race to represent the northwest Mesa district. The election is in August.

"In recent years, I have seen an increasing lack of judgment in how the city of Mesa is using funds," Guinn said, when asked what spurred him to consider running. "I have come to the decision that if I am not willing to do my part to make a difference, then I am as guilty as the individuals making the decisions today."

Guinn said he questions recent spending in the Fiesta District, where the city in 2014 erected massive light-up monument signs to help rebrand the area.

The signs are part of an \$11-plus million [Southern Avenue streetscape project \(/story/news/local/mesa/2015/01/20/mesa-micro-parks-on-the-way/22053813/\)](#) designed to support what Mesa hopes will be a revival of the zone, which has deteriorated in a struggling retail economy. The city has said it wants to encourage pedestrian activity and connect the district's residential areas to assets such as Mesa Community College and Banner Desert and Cardon Children's medical centers.

Guinn also blasted the "orange glowing signs and artwork which now line Mesa Drive" — part of another broad set of streetscape improvements that included new bus stops, fencing and decorative walls — as well as a controversial vote to [purchase the former Mervyns building \(/story/news/local/mesa/2016/01/14/mesa-city-council-split-over-27-million-purchase-old-mervyns-building/78310418/\)](#) near Stapley Drive and Main Street.

The council in December approved the \$2.7 million purchase on a 4-3 vote, after butting heads over whether it would be a solid investment as the city works to extend the light rail east or a risky real-estate gambit.

"The city cannot and should not buy every building or piece of land that needs development or improvement," Guinn said. "We should be working with builders and companies who want to come to Mesa, instead of competing against them. If Mesa needs office space, I am sure we can find them some space to rent throughout our city."

Guinn said he has heard similar feedback from residents in recent years, which is why helping "ensure that the city of Mesa spending is more in line with where voters want the money spent" will be his "primary goal" if elected.

A Mesa native who has volunteered with youth sports, Boy Scouts and other community organizations, he said he believes Mesa is a "great city" despite disagreeing with some of its leaders' choices.

"I hope to bring a fresh perspective to Mesa and work to solve the issues at hand," he said.

Richins, who has said he is "excited about the quality of the candidates that are talking about running in District 1," said he will wait to endorse a candidate until closer to the August election.

