



Date: September 5, 2018
To: Santa Clara Community
From: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager
Subject: Statement regarding November 2018 Election

Over the past week, several local media outlets have falsely attributed a decision that the City Attorney and I made to terminate Santa Clara's practice of hiring an outside consultant to conduct candidate forums. I would like to set the record straight that neither of us has made such a decision and that would exceed our role and authority.

In fact, May 2017 City Council's Ethics Committee discussion on this topic not only precedes my appointment as City Manager, but the Council's Ethics Committee expressed concern about the appropriateness of continuing to hire an outside "democracy consultant," as was done for the November 2016 election. My employment started in October 2017, well after these items had been publicly discussed. It is unfortunate that no one asked the City Attorney or City Manager for clarification, yet attributed this decision without any regard to the facts. The public is being misled by false reporting.

As a professional City Manager with nearly 25 years of experience, having served as Interim City Clerk for the City of San Jose where I served as its Election Official, I know firsthand the ethical practices of what is required to administer a fair, transparent, and legal election. I also know that it is legally problematic for public service employees to engage in political campaign activities—including, organizing and conducting a candidate forum. This is not something that should be taken lightly and, per City Council Policy, a neutral organization may organize and conduct a candidate forum in a City facility. I support this legal activity; however, this is not a decision that I have taken, nor should I participate in.

Attached are my emails on the candidate forums over the past week. They show that: I support transparency; that I support that candidate forums take place; that on August 28, I requested that the City Clerk consider issuing a more complete and thorough response on the question about a consultant; and, it is worth noting, that the City Clerk and I have facilitated the public discussion on this topic at the next City Council meeting since our local media outlets have not been accurate.


Deanna J. Santana
City Manager