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STRONG MAYOR CHARTER CHANGE? —NO WAY!—

Councilmember Jeff Harris and
Councilmember-elect Katie Valenzuela weigh in

Measure A seeks to change our City Charter to give the mayor more power over our budget, ordinances and policies, while diminishing the role of councilmembers in shaping our future as a city. It's a bad idea that will reduce the influence of the people on the City of Sacramento.

The proponents of the measure say the city manager is appointed, not elected, which is true, and therefore not accountable to the people, which is untrue. Our city manager works for the City Council and the council can remove the manager at any time for non-performance of our directives. That's accountability! A strong mayor? If you don't like the decisions of a strong mayor, you are stuck with them until the next election. Concentrating most of the power of a municipality in a single person who can't be fired is a loss of accountability, invites cronyism and big money investment in a mayoral campaign. You can see it already as the more wealthy and influential individuals in Sacramento line up to support Measure A, while the neighborhood organizations and constituents have formed a grassroots campaign to stop the power grab.

Due to Covid-19 the federal government disbursed \$89 million dollars in aid to Sacramento. The City Council immediately took action and used the funds to support small business, bolster food banks, give mortgage relief, support arts and hospitality institutions, provide workforce training and address homelessness. None of this would have been more successful or more quickly implemented with a strong mayor. It was the work of our excellent city staff under the direction of the city manager that made it happen.

Of 482 cities in California, only five have adopted a strong mayor measure. Why? Because citizens want a say in their government. Our Council will soon have two new progressive members and will be more diverse than ever. Is this the time to take power away from the councilmembers?

Since the great recession we have made great strides in Sacramento. There is much work yet to do, but changing our governance structure in a pandemic is a fool's errand.

Vote **NO** on Measure **A**

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PHOTO COURTESY OF EASY DINER

Opening Easy Diner in uneasy times

BY PATRICK HYUN WILSON / patrickw@newsreview.com

Dozens of chairs and cardboard boxes full of kitchen equipment are scattered throughout the dining room. It isn't much to look at now, but Elizabeth Gibb and Chad Novick plan to turn Easy on I bar and grill into a neighborhood diner for all.

Gibb and Novick aren't new to the restaurant world. They have operated their food truck, Bambi Vegan Tacos, since 2018.

"Originally we were looking for a spot to land Bambi," Novick said. "We wanted it to be Midtown/downtown, and then we came upon this spot and we fell in love with it."

According to Gibb, there were limitations in running a food truck that could be solved with a bigger location.

"We don't use any Impossible meat or Impossible burgers, and we do create everything. The filling in our cremini beef that we put inside the Bambi tacos started with big, huge crates of mushrooms," she said. "With that tiny space and that tiny refrigerator space it was hard to create the food that we wanted."

Though their initial plan was to open a new Bambi location, Novick says that amid the coronavirus pandemic, he wanted to create a familiar place.

"People in the neighborhood, you know, expect a neighborhood diner. So we just wanted to provide that comfort," Novick said.

The pair isn't planning to overhaul Easy on I completely; they're even keeping most of the name as they reopen as Easy Diner in a couple of months.

They plan to serve American diner foods with a Santa Fe influence, a vegan menu and a rotating cast of tacos. And they're

bringing all of the lessons they learned from running Bambi.

"The very first event we did I was driving down the freeway and I hear these like 'pop, pop, pop' in the back..." Novick remembers. "The water tank had ruptured. There's water everywhere, and I'm driving on the freeway trying not to crash. But that's kind of what a food truck teaches you. It's just, you gotta adapt."

Bambi hasn't been out on the street since March when the pandemic started. It took a personal turn for Gibb.

"My mom got sick right when COVID hit," she said. "She got cancer and went through chemo. She was [immunocompromised] so I was really careful as far as we can't run this food truck."

Gibb says that she and Novick have been able to take time to get everything in order for Easy Diner's opening day.

"We could really manage and figure out exactly what we need and exactly how many employees, keep our costs at what we can make with just some tables outside and to-go service," Gibb said.

Despite the difficulty in operating a restaurant during the pandemic, Gibb and Novick are optimistic about Easy Diner.

"A lot of good restaurants are going down and that's super sad. That sucks for the culture of Sacramento," Novick said. "Restaurants have evolved. I think delivery is just going to be a bigger part of restaurants going forward. So starting a restaurant fresh, you know, we can look at that with a fresh lens. We can plan."