

Yoon begins bid for re-election

By Jessica M. Smith
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West Roxbury -

Sam Yoon, the Boston city councilor at-large, kicked off his West Roxbury re-election campaign last week with friends and supporters at the West Roxbury Pub.

Yoon, 37, who is seeking his second term as a citywide representative on the council, mingled with the crowd and shared some of the reasons why he is running for the seat he earned in 2005.

According to Yoon, he still receives compliments on his 2005 victory.

“I need to say back to them ... but I’m running again,” said Yoon as his audience laughed. “I don’t think of it as a necessary evil. It’s something that’s part of my job.”

As the councilor who hosted budget talks in 10 neighborhoods, including West Roxbury, so residents could understand how the city spends money, Yoon emphasized that believes in promoting transparency in government. He also said he will continue to foster communication between lawmakers and citizens.

“We need two-way communication. [I] need to constantly have a connection with you,” said Yoon, adding that he has received close to 50,000 electronic mail messages about concerns ranging from the Boston Public Schools to the city’s sidewalks.

Yoon, who came to the United States from South Korea when he was 10 months old, also stressed the importance of having a diverse City Council that includes Asian-Americans. He added that he would feel that way “even if [he] wasn’t Sam Yoon.”

“A diverse City Council makes our democracy work,” said Yoon, who also spoke about housing.

During his tenure in office, Yoon, who chairs the housing committee, said that he filed a hearing order to explore why the city was allowing its residents to defer paying their real estate taxes, but charging them 8 percent interest to do so.

“Why’s the government trying to act like a bank?” wondered Yoon, noting that as soon as the order was filed, Mayor Thomas Menino allegedly said, “Let’s make it 4 percent.”

“This is when you know you have a good idea. When the mayor steals it from you,” said Yoon as the audience offered their applause.

Although Yoon spoke only briefly, he did not go without questions from the audience.

Bobby Casey from West Roxbury wanted to know what Yoon and his colleagues were planning to do about the expiring-use housing such as High Point Village and the Florence Apartments. Those dwellings, in addition to thousands of others in Boston, have either lost or will lose their federal status as affordable housing.

“Are these people going to have to live on the streets?” said Casey.

Yoon said that the council was working with representatives at the State House to help pass legislation.

The best things we can do is be advocates,” said Yoon.