

Opinion Editorial:

Sugar Land City Leadership: A Critical Choice Now and for Our Future

By: James Thompson, Former Mayor of Sugar Land and Fort Bend Business Coalition Member

The May 2025 election resulted in an important event for the future of the City of Sugar Land: a run-off election for three seats scheduled for June 7, 2025. Voter turnout for the May election was dismal at best – 7.54% or nearly 32,000 registered voters – and that election was for officials in municipalities and school board positions all across Fort Bend, not just Sugar Land.

Why is the upcoming Sugar Land run-off election critical for the future of Sugar Land? Because experienced, effective city leadership is vital for a successful, thriving community. City leadership affects citizens in a most direct, hands-on manner, oftentimes more so than federal governance. City leadership is paramount in shaping the future of a municipality for decades to come. City leadership determines whether a city thrives or fails. Having the right leadership matters, and it matters now and for our future.

The Fort Bend Business Coalition (FBBC) is dedicated to cultivating and supporting elected officials who understand and act on the needs of the business community by exercising common sense in making decisions and developing policies. And as a former Mayor of Sugar Land for eight years, let me assure you that running a city requires business acumen.

Unflappable Leadership

Being the calm in the eye of a storm is crucial for our city leadership. During my tenure as Sugar Land Mayor, a major event hit our city: Hurricane Ike. When the Texas governor declares an emergency – as he did during Ike – a calm demeanor, common sense practices and rational approach to life and death situations are paramount. When evacuation orders are an option, the mayor has sole discretion and unlimited authority to execute life-saving mandates. The individual elected to this position must exhibit unparalleled leadership skills and experience to manage crises that put our citizens in peril and do so with an experienced, level hand.

Relationship Building with Cogent Communication

Understanding the roles – and cultivating the relationships – of city staff, fellow council, community leaders, constituents and first responders is a vital part of city leadership. It

takes a concerted effort along with cogent communication to forge beneficial relationships with the community as a whole, which extends well beyond city limits. Effective city officials must develop and foster relationships with multiple counterparts, including other cities, county, state and federal officials. This requires a degree of political savvy and cogent communication skills that are vital for a city's reputation and longevity.

Sugar Land CEO

Setting policy for the City of Sugar Land is a business, and it must be treated as such. City leaders must possess standard business practices that come from owning and operating a business. Why? Because when you are stewards of a city, you are responsible for the prosperity and longevity of an enterprise entrusted to you by your constituents.

Who are the Best Pro-Business Candidates for Sugar Land?

The FBBC is a general purpose Political Action Committee (PAC) dedicated to the belief that an experienced, business-minded council is vital to sustaining and growing a prosperous municipality; therefore, the FBBC is proud to support city candidates who are committed to keeping Sugar Land one of the best communities to live, work and raise our children.

Sugar Land candidates endorsed by the FBBC in the upcoming June 7, 2025 run-off election include:

Sugar Land Mayor

William Ferguson

Sugar Land City Council, At-Large, Position 1

James Vonderhaar

Early voting is May 27 through June 3, 2025. When you go to the polls, remember city leadership matters now AND for the future.

For more information about the Fort Bend Business Coalition, visit

www.FortBendBusinessCoalition.com.