

# Fresno District 3 incumbent Oliver Baines faces two opponents

By George Hostetter

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Oliver Baines knows what it's like to run from behind for the Fresno City Council District 3 seat.

Now he must deal with running as the favorite.

Baines in the 2008 election finished second to former City Council Member Mike Briggs in a crowded primary, then easily won in the general election.

Baines is seeking a second term in the June 3 primary. He faces community activist Barbara Ann Hunt and businessman Eddie Rashad.

"I'm very proud of what our office has been able to start in my first term," Baines said. "We're on track to accomplishing them. But that will take another term."

Hunt said it's time for a change.

"I want to make a difference in housing and jobs," Hunt said. "Our young people need equal education. We've got to reduce crime. We've got to get economic development going."

Rashad in an email said he's running because city government doesn't heed District 3's needs.

"The most pressing issue that will be addressed during my term will be the adequate allocation of city funding for the development and renovation of District 3, in particular the southwest area," Rashad said.

District 3 includes new housing tracts west of Highway 99, downtown, west Fresno and industrial parks.

Baines said good things are heading District 3's way.

"I know we will see some economic development occur in key corridors in the district," he said. "We will see some key advancements in work force development. I'm excited about that."

Baines is optimistic that the long-running fight over the regulation of the Darling rendering plant in west Fresno is nearing a "win-win" resolution.

Baines played key roles in a number of City Hall issues:

-- The California Avenue gym was opened.

-- A fight over the fate of the former Running Horse site was averted.

-- Neighborhood parks got more programming.

-- Work began on a west Fresno specific plan. It "will forever change the face of west Fresno," Baines said.

The voters' decision could affect who sits in the mayor's office early next year.

Mayor Ashley Swearingin is running for state controller. If successful, she would resign before heading to Sacramento. The council president would serve as mayor until a special election is held.

Baines, if re-elected, is in line to be council president in 2015. However, council rules currently don't permit first-year council members to be president. If Swearingin wins and Baines loses, then District 4's Paul Caprioglio is in line to be next year's president.

"You definitely want to be mindful of the fact that, in a few months, someone else will be elected by the people to lead the city," Baines said. "I don't want to be just a caretaker, but I don't want to do any initiatives. I'll evaluate where we are, what initiatives are taking place, making sure that those initiatives that I'm in agreement with continue to move forward."

Hunt ran for mayor in 2012. She speaks often at City Council meetings, where she champions west Fresno issues.

Hunt said she's a strong supporter of the police and fire departments. She said a revitalized west Fresno will lead to safer, more stable neighborhoods. This, she said, will mean less demand for police services.

"We've got to get more police out there working for the people," she said.

Hunt said she remembers when west Fresno was full of retail activity. She said the area needs more stores and consumer services such as banking.

Hunt said she doesn't believe city officials when they say the city is short of money.

"Money isn't tight," Hunt said. "They just move it around. Whenever they have projects they like, the money is there."

Hunt said millions in the past 30 or 40 years were targeted for west Fresno from Community Development Block Grants and the now-disbanded Redevelopment Agency. She said she thinks much of that money never made it to the area.

"Where did all that money go?" Hunt said. "I want to find out."

Rashad said he wants to dismantle undemocratic government policy.

"There must be checks and balances to ensure that government works for the public," he said.

Rashad said infill development can work "if executed by responsible individuals who really care about the future of the community."

Rashad said public safety is an important issue.

"It's time we as a community address the violence in our community," he said. "At the root of violence, you'll find an economic element. As a city council member, I believe we can eliminate a lot of violence in the streets by creating economic platforms for the brothers and sisters in the community. By giving the people the opportunity to earn money and create services, we can eliminate a lot of the dysfunction in our community."

Rashad said he wants more opportunities for local businesses.

"We have enough corporate entities in our communities, but not enough local businesses," he said. "I plan to adopt a grant program specifically designed for start-up small business development in the District 3 area."

### **Fresno District 3 council candidates:**

**NAME:** Oliver Baines

**AGE:** 38

**OCCUPATION:** City Council Member

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree, criminology, Fresno State

**FAMILY:** Married, one daughter

**WEB:** [oliverbaines.com](http://oliverbaines.com)

**FACEBOOK:** [facebook.com/VoteOliverBaines](https://facebook.com/VoteOliverBaines)

**TWITTER:** [#OliverBaines](https://twitter.com/OliverBaines)

**NAME:** Barbara Ann Hunt

**AGE:** 67

**OCCUPATION:** Community activist

**EDUCATION:** Associate of science degree, human services, Fresno City College; certificate of completion, alcohol counseling; masters/governance, California School Board Association.

**FAMILY:** One son, one daughter, 10 grandchildren

**WEB:** None

**FACEBOOK:** None

**TWITTER:** None

**NAME:** Eddie Rashad

**AGE:** 32

**OCCUPATION:** Petitioner/Businessman

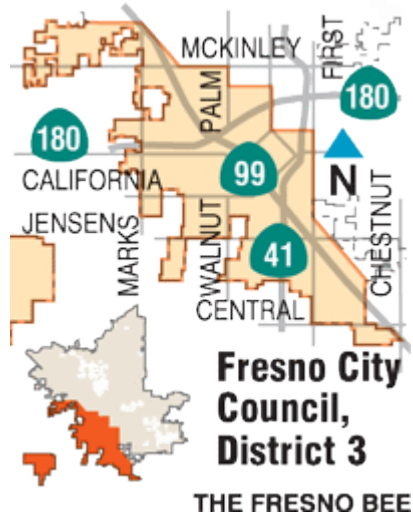
**EDUCATION:** Certification in entrepreneurial ventures from Fresno City College; currently enrolled at Fresno State.

**FAMILY:** One daughter

**WEB:** [www.eddierashad.com](http://www.eddierashad.com)

**FACEBOOK:** facebook.com/pages/Eddie-Rashad

**TWITTER:** None



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