

Broad Street Brief - February 16, 2023

CITY HALL

2023 Mayoral Race Update: First Republican Enters the Race; Candidates Discuss Strategy, Governance Around Pressing Issues

Earlier this week, Councilmember David Oh resigned his at-large seat and officially announced that he is running to become the 100th mayor of Philadelphia. Though he is the 11th candidate to enter the race, he is the first Republican to do so. Philadelphia's next mayor is very likely to be a Democrat, but former Councilmember Oh hopes that his qualifications and the city's current political atmosphere will help him overcome the 7-to-1 voter registration advantage enjoyed by the city's majority party.

Meanwhile, the rest of the candidates have continued to unveil policy proposals for the city's most pressing issues. For example, the prevalence of drug use and selling in Kensington is a perennial issue that the next mayor will no doubt continue to grapple with, making candidates' plans to improve conditions in the neighborhood a focal point of their campaigns. However, critics of many plans put forth by the candidates thus far argue that too many of them consist of strategies that the city has already tried that have failed to make any significant positive impact, and that some are not specific enough to be actionable.

What's more, at least three candidates — former Councilmembers At-Large Derek Green and Allan Domb, as well as local grocery store owner Jeff Brown — have floated the idea of circumventing the authority of District Attorney Larry Krasner by referring gun-related criminal cases directly to state or federal prosecutors.

What You Need to Know About the At-Large City Council Race

The record 11 candidates in the Philadelphia mayoral race have taken up a lot of attention. However, the races for the 17 seats on City Council — all of which are up for grabs — are equally high stakes. As many as six new council members could be elected, and the Working Families Party is gunning for both of the at-large seats reserved for members of a minority party, which had traditionally been safely held by Republicans until Councilmember Kendra Brooks' historic win in 2019. More than 30 candidates are vying for the seven at-large seats alone. The Philadelphia Inquirer has a [rundown](#) of the players involved in the at-large race, as well as what is at stake — and for whom.

Center City District CEO Paul Levy to Step Down After 32 Years

Last week, Center City District, the nonprofit neighborhood development corporation established in 1991, announced the retirement of founding CEO Paul Levy. Levy will be stepping down at the end of this year and handing the reins to current Vice President for Parks and Public Realm Prema Katari Gupta, who will help oversee efforts as the district continues to bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nearly 37,000 Applicants Competed for City's 10,000 Available Housing Choice Vouchers

Last Friday, the Philadelphia Housing Authority announced that 36,767 had applied for the opportunity to be on the waitlist to receive a housing choice voucher, only 10,000 of whom will be randomly selected. The overwhelming number of applicants highlights the severe demand for affordable housing options in the city, as rents continue to rise and become less affordable for



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low-income individuals and families. The Authority announced earlier this year that it would be opening up the waitlist to apply for housing choice vouchers for the first time in more than a decade, with a two-week application period ending February 5.
