



## Race to succeed Linda Koop in Dallas City Council provides a study in contrasts

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A young newcomer to politics, whose odd name starts with “O,” has been knocking on doors in North Dallas.

Ori Raphael, 29, said a few voters, apparently, still don’t care for that story line. He said doors have been slammed in his face over some perceived connection to President Barack Obama — even though Raphael is a former staffer for U.S. Rep. Pete Sessions, a Dallas Republican.

But it’s his opponent’s associations that are giving Raphael the most trouble as he introduces himself to voters in Dallas City Council District 11.

Lee Kleinman, 53, has racked up endorsements from prominent organizations and politicians, including, perhaps most significantly, the popular City Council member he hopes to replace: Linda Koop, who is barred by term limits from running again. The election is May 11.

Separated by a generation, Kleinman and Raphael stand miles apart on transportation and development issues, and in personal style. It’s become a race between the veteran insider and the young outsider — with each man eagerly embracing his respective role in the drama.

Raphael vows to shake up City Hall and bring Dallas’ government more in line with its increasingly young population.

Kleinman likens Raphael to a “bull in a china closet” and boasts that he learned to navigate city government and get things done during his five years on the Dallas Park Board.

The differences become stark when the candidates talk about transportation — Koop’s specialty. It’s an important topic in District 11, which is roughly bisected by LBJ Freeway and bounded in places on the east by North Central Expressway and on the west by Dallas North Tollway.

Kleinman, who helped put together the city’s bike plan, favors an all-of-the-above approach on transportation. He is more enthusiastic than Raphael about alternatives to automobiles, including rail, streetcars and pedestrian links.

“We’re not going to get anywhere by building more roads and putting more cars on the roads,” he said.

Raphael said fixing potholes and alleyways should take priority over building more bike trails or expanding commuter rail lines.

“Let’s go back to basics,” he said at one candidates’ forum. “People spend their time getting around in their cars. That’s where our focus should be.”

Kleinman shot back, “It’s ironic that you’re calling yourself the young candidate, but you go back to that old Detroit mentality: drive there now.”

Koop said either man would have a steep learning curve if he were to inherit not just her City Council seat but also her appointment to the Regional Transportation Council, the transportation policy arm of the North Central Texas Council of Governments.

“It will take a couple of years of going to meetings to try to get an understanding of how the regional process works and how state and federal money come to the region,” Koop said.

The next City Council member will also have to help wrap up the details of a massive, proposed redevelopment of Valley View Center and surrounding areas. (Both men firmly support it.)

And even though they’d represent a northern district, both have talked during the campaign about the need to reinvigorate southern Dallas.

Raphael said the city should improve the permit process to make it easier to invest in southern Dallas, but said he wants to halt the exodus of tax dollars from North Dallas to other parts of the city. Kleinman said he’s a firm believer in developing the southern part of the city, and has personally invested in the Sylvan Thirty

mixed-use project at Interstate 30 and Sylvan Avenue.

There are some similarities between the rivals. Both are North Dallas natives with advanced degrees from Southern Methodist University. Both speak admiringly of Koop's tenure. Koop, while endorsing Kleinman, has praised both candidates as "very fine men."

And both campaigns have questioned the other's ambitions.

"The voters don't seem to want a very young guy who dreams of running for president," said Kleinman's campaign manager, Ryan Sparks.

Raphael said Kleinman acts like he's running a mayoral campaign.

Money has been flowing into both campaigns. Kleinman raised \$74,886 in the year's first three months. His donors included former City Council members Mitchell Rasansky and Ron Natinsky, and state Sen. John Carona, R-Dallas.

Raphael, who got off to an earlier start, raised nearly \$69,000 since he began his campaign.

Kleinman has the endorsements of the Real Estate Council, the Dallas Fire Fighters Association and Dallas Police Association.

Raphael has been endorsed by his former boss, Sessions. He said his lack of other, establishment endorsements show that he isn't beholden to special interests and has the independence needed to move the city forward.

"People believe we can do more, and that we can do better," he said.

Koop said, however, that the district would be in proven hands with Kleinman.

"Ori is an up-and-coming young man," she said. "But Lee just has the experience under his belt, and he's ready to go."

## The candidates: District 11

### Lee Kleinman

**Age:** 53

**Birthplace:** Dallas

**Occupation:** Business manager and consultant

**Education:** Bachelor's degree, Pitzer College, 1981; MBA, Southern Methodist University, 1991

**Political experience:** Dallas Park Board, 2007-12

**Career:** Chief operating officer, Bridge Metrics, 2012; president, MIDAK Management Co., 2004-present; consultant, The G2 Groupe, 2007-09; business manager, Brightpoint Inc., 2006-07; chief operating officer, Trio Technologies 2002-06; vice president, ProSoft Corp., 1992-97; facilities and administration manager, Babbage's Inc., 1986-90; vice president, FootAction USA, 1981-85

**Website:** leekleinman.com

### Ori Raphael

**Age:** 29

**Birthplace:** Dallas

**Occupation:** Medical technology executive

**Education:** Bachelor's degree, University of Texas at Austin, 2006; law degree, Southern Methodist University, 2012

**Political career:** Outreach coordinator for U.S. Rep. Pete Sessions, 2008-12

**Career:** Vice president, FreshLoc Technologies Inc., 2012-present; Journalist, *Jerusalem Post*, 2006-07; English teacher in China, 2006

**Website:** orifordallas.com

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**Brad Schweig** 2 days ago

I get the impression that Ori is using this as a stepping stone race to move up to the next office. Kleinman on the others and I think is in this for the long haul for the city of Dallas. There is nothing wrong with wanting to move up the political chain, but I like that Dallas has non partisan politics and want a Sandy Greyson or Linda Koop in this office and not a Tom Leppert who just needs this office to boat their résumé for the next one.

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