

## **Councilmember Alex Pedersen Remarks For First Swearing-In Ceremony**

for Tuesday, November 26, 2019 (draft as of [11/26/2019](#). [Approx 8 minutes.](#))

[Note: City Clerk Monica Simmons administers the oath of office. CM-Elect Pedersen's wife stands alongside him, then fastens the pin.]

Friends and neighbors, I am honored and humbled to serve as your new City Councilmember here in District 4. *[pause]*

This week is **Thanksgiving**, so I hope we can all pause for a moment to consider why each of us is thankful...*[pause]*

I am very thankful for my family and for my city.

I am thankful for this place -- in the heart of Magnuson Park -- with its waterfront, its artists and athletes, its green open spaces, its majestic trees and, most importantly, the nearly one thousand low-income residents at Solid Ground and Mercy Housing who call it home. I took the oath of office in **this** neighborhood because it represents the beauty, the challenges, and the hopes of our district and our city.

I'm thankful to the public officials who have served our city so well and on whose shoulders I will strive to stand [Note: *identify electeds and former electeds in audience, such as Nick Licata*].

I'm thankful to our Mayor Jenny Durkan and to the brave women and men in uniform who protect our city – the firefighters, police officers, and paramedics. They all serve our city doing jobs few of us would have the courage to do.

I'm thankful for the many candidates in District 4 and across our city who competed for this important job of City Councilmember.

I am thankful to the thousands of voters of District 4 for their confidence in me.

And for those who did not vote for me, please be comforted: I am a public servant, who will fairly and responsibly represent ALL the people of District 4.

I'm thankful for this opportunity to fulfill the promise of our system of district representation– a promise enshrined in our City Charter with these words: *“To ensure members of the city council are closer to the people they represent...”*

I'm thankful for connecting with thousands of voters. I personally doorbelled EVERY BLOCK of our District. That's nearly 25,000 people in over 20 neighborhoods. I'd like to tell you about one of them: She is a mom named **Denise** and she lives in Wallingford. Like thousands of others I met, she opened her door, looked me in the eye and said, "*Mr. Pedersen, we need a City Council that listens, that cares about all our neighborhoods, that gets back to the basics of local government and spends the city's money as responsibly as if it were their own. Less rhetoric and more results.*"

I'm thankful for the diverse and broad coalition of endorsements we received not only from community leaders but also from labor unions, local businesses, and environmentalists.

I'm thankful for our City's Democracy Voucher program which enabled me to refuse all direct donations from PACs, developers, and interest groups -- to be accountable **only** to the people of District 4.

I'm thankful for the thousands of people who used their vote to protest the millions of dollars dumped into these elections by interest groups and corporations. Ironically, that big money hurt the candidates it was trying to help. So no matter which side you were on with a candidate, we were **all** against that big money dump. We can all agree that our democracy is not for sale.

That put us on common ground to prevent it from happening in the future. I'm thankful for Councilmember **Lorena Gonzalez's** creative efforts to keep much of that big money out of future elections. Let us work together to make that proposal as strong and as all-inclusive as it can be.

At the same time, the people of our district -- like **Denise** and tens of thousands of others -- will not let the dark cloud of dark money obscure the problems that continue in our neighborhoods: persistent homelessness, rising crime & prolific offenders, clogged & torn up streets, and a longstanding lack of accountability.

To solve problems, we must hold our city government accountable. Our executive branch spends 6.5 billion dollars every year across 40 departments. Our legislative branch must make sure your tax dollars are getting results. Strong oversight should be the job of every City Councilmember, with every City Councilmember chairing a Committee accountable to the priorities of the people.

- To tackle our biggest challenge, we should keep the City Council Committee on **Homelessness**.

- To protect our environment, we should create a new Committee on **Climate Change** so we can expand mass transit with buses and connections to light rail, preserve and expand our tree canopy here in the Emerald City, and hold our city government accountable to reduce carbon emissions and increase our resiliency.
- To find financial savings -- that we can redeploy to our priorities -- we should create a Committee on **Fiscal Accountability**. Let's not "*tax first and ask questions later.*" If we decide we need additional sources of revenue, we should craft detailed action plans before seeking that revenue.

For the people of District 4, I pledge to keep alive the flame of common sense, to be a voice of reason, to insist on using facts and data. Less rhetoric, more results. The City Charter requires that we take care of the basics of local government. Allow me to read our City Charter's very practical preamble:

*"...the People of the City of Seattle enact this Charter as the Law of the City for the purpose of*

- **protecting** and enhancing the health, safety, environment, and general welfare of the people;
- **to enable municipal government to provide services and meet the needs of the people efficiently;**
- *to allow fair and equitable **participation of all persons** in the affairs of the City;*
- *to provide for **transparency, accountability, and ethics** in governance and civil service;*
- *to foster **fiscal responsibility**; to promote prosperity and to meet the broad needs for a healthy, growing City."*

When making decisions, I will honor not only our City Charter, but also **Denise** of Wallingford and the thousands of other constituents I met. I was forged by the experience of listening to you on your doorsteps. No shouting at City Hall can drown out those one-on-one, heartfelt conversations when you shared your concerns and your hopes for our community.

An election campaign is a time to highlight differences. But governing and leading is time to find common ground and move ahead in a way that brings everyone together to a brighter community and a stronger city.

Thank you and **Let's get to work!**

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