



“I BELONG TO THIS PLACE; IN A WAY I PROTECT IT. I WANNA LEAVE SOMETHING HERE FOR PEOPLE IN THE FUTURE, OPPORTUNITIES.”

Forrest Fulkerson Texas State Graduate | Spent time working as a chemist in Qatar (Middle East)

ETHICS AND THE CITY: SAN MARCOS RESIDENT AIMS TO EDUCATE AND EMPOWER

Proposed development on the local Sessom Creek watershed prompted resident and chemist Forrest Fulkerson to spend years researching municipal and state laws, a project that eventually led to an investigation into the ethical practices of the city’s Planning and Zoning Vice Chair Carter Morris.

“When we started Sessom Creek I started noticing, ‘Okay, these guys have a lot more access to our city government than we do, it seems like,’” said Fulkerson of what he believes to be the unequal access to city government that developers and realtors have in San Marcos.

Fulkerson said he filed a complaint against Morris with the San Marcos Ethics Review Commission because of a meeting Morris had with City Councilman John Thomaides, Place 3, at Café on the Square while the city council was deciding whether to approve a large

development near Sessom Creek.

The meeting was a conflict of interest, said Fulkerson, because Morris represented Darren Casey, the developer of the proposed Sessom Creek project, as a real estate agent at the time.

Eventually, the complaint led to Morris being issued a conflict of interest warning in September for violating several statutes of a government ethics ordinance.

This year has been trying on Fulkerson’s conscious and patience, as he’s learned that government change is not instantaneous.

Neither is changing the minds of San Marcos residents, who Fulkerson believed should ultimately determine the rate and type of development in the city.

Understanding of municipal law is important in decision making, said Fulkerson, who has used his experiences with the San Marcos Ethics Review Commission to educate and empower others.

“That’s the one beautiful thing – I taught a bunch of people how to do it, a lot of naysayers have gone, ‘Wow, it does make a difference what you can do if you set your mind to it and if you’re humble enough and you listen’ ... you can learn the law, you can use these mechanisms that are already out there,” Fulkerson said.

The Austin native moved to San Marcos in 1980 to attend Texas State University, formerly Southwest Texas State University, even though he had enlisted in the U.S. Air Force.

He said it was his dad’s decision that he attend Texas State instead, a move that would change his life.

After receiving a bachelor’s in chemistry in 1995, Fulkerson said he briefly left San Marcos for a job opportunity, but when he returned, he noticed the city was beginning to grow. It steadily has grown, now becoming the fastest growing city in the nation.

It’s not the growth of San Marcos that Fulkerson is afraid of; it’s how the city grows that he believes to be critical to the safety and well-being of residents and the environment.

“(Developers and realtors are) determining things that are gonna be there forever and ever and ever,” said Fulkerson. “The headwaters are really nice, and we want to keep them that way.”

Fulkerson remembered a San Marcos almost entirely free of traffic congestion, a walkable city where residents lived without concerns about how housing development would affect its natural resources, like the San Marcos River.

“I belong to this place,” said Fulkerson. “In a way, I protect it. I wanna leave something here for people in the future, opportunities.”

