

# RAPUNDALO'S ACCUSATIONS AGAINST JANE LUMM—AND THE FACTS

Contributed by Karen Sidney

Second ward incumbent Stephen Rapundalo recently unveiled his campaign website. It contains some very misleading statements, especially about his challenger's record.

## 1) Labor Costs.

**Claim:** Rapundalo states that he “led the successful overhaul of the city's outdated and expensive labor contracts,” while his opponent “voted to support the rich labor contracts and buyout provisions that have cost taxpayers much over the years.” To support this claim he cites Lumm's 1997 vote for a police contract.

**Facts:** The contract Lumm supported had below-inflation wage increases of 1.5%. Those increases were less than the wage increases the police received in their 2009 arbitration award, under Rapundalo's watch.

Rapundalo's claim that Lumm supported buyout provisions ignores his own record. It was Rapundalo who introduced an ordinance change for an irresponsible \$6.7 million police early retirement program in 2009.<sup>i</sup> This was a high price to pay for reducing the size of the police force.

## 2) Legacy Costs

**Claim:** Rapundalo claims to have saved “millions of dollars” from his leadership in reforming healthcare and pension plans.

**Facts:** He neglects to mention that these costs skyrocketed under his watch. During Rapundalo's tenure, the bill for city benefits doubled. The combined unfunded liability for the pension and retiree healthcare plans was over \$200 million on June 30, 2010. When Lumm left council, the total retiree healthcare plan liability was about \$50 million, and the pension plan was overfunded by \$63 million.

The implication that Lumm did nothing to reform benefits or improve efficiency is false. She pushed to modernize benefits and for advance funding of retiree healthcare.<sup>ii</sup> She also worked to establish a competitiveness steering committee that would lower costs by introducing more competition into the provision of city services right up to her last council meeting.<sup>iii</sup>

## 3) Parks Maintenance

**Claim:** Rapundalo criticizes Lumm for voting against allowing Ann Arbor residents to vote on the parks maintenance millage, citing her vote on August 4, 1997.

**Facts:** Lumm wanted to split the parks maintenance and repair millage proposal into two separate ballot issues to give voters as many choices and as much information as possible, so on August 4 she voted against the single package.<sup>iv</sup> At the next meeting, Lumm presented her two-proposal alternative, which was defeated. She then voted to submit the

single millage proposal to the voters.

**For his part**, Rapundalo refused to live up to the promises Council made about parks spending before the people voted on the 2006 parks millage. On May 21, 2007, Council considered an increase of \$638,900 in general fund parks spending to bring it in line with the 2.2% increase in other general fund spending, as had been promised. Rapundalo voted against it.

#### 4) Recycling

**Claim:** Rapundalo accuses Lumm of consistently opposing recycling and environmental programs citing votes in 1995 and 1997.

**Facts:** The votes he cites were about how to deal with budget deficits. Lumm preferred cost cuts to tax increases. The cuts she proposed included halting work on an “education center” at the landfill, requiring a business plan for the recycling drop-off station showing proposed net savings, and eliminating \$30,000 in spending on a new commercial solid waste recycling program. During her time on council, Lumm supported many environmental programs. For example, in 1997 she voted to extend the solid waste education contract with the Ecology Center.<sup>v</sup>

#### 5) Infrastructure

**Claim:** Rapundalo claims Lumm “neglected” our roads, water and sewer systems and pats himself on the back for securing funding for the Stadium Bridges.

**Facts:** On Rapundalo's watch, residents have had to put up with bridge lane closures for two years--and the third worst roads in the state--while the streets millage fund amassed a \$30 million surplus. Our public services director says the city is not replacing the water and sewer pipes as fast as they are wearing out.

#### 6) Housing density

**Claim:** Rapundalo claims Lumm “supported dense development projects” in neighborhoods because she wanted to allow some accessory dwelling units (granny flats).

**Facts:** Granny flats are simply apartments carved out of existing dwellings. They are nothing compared to the over-the-top neighborhood developments Rapundalo has supported such as City Place/Heritage Row, 601 Forest and 42 North Maple.

#### 7) Safety

**Claim:** Rapundalo claims Lumm “opposed making neighborhoods safer” because in 1995 she voted against spending \$5,000 to implement the recommendations of the Commission on Increasing Safety for Women.<sup>vi</sup>

**Facts:** Lumm was trying to come up with a variety of expense cuts to avoid a tax increase. Lumm's other votes show she supports safety for women, such as her 1997 vote for a contract with Safe House.<sup>vii</sup>

Under Lumm's watch, Ann Arbor had adequate police and fire staffing. During Rapundalo's tenure on the City Council, these safety personnel have been cut by 23%, while all other categories have been cut by only 8%--a ratio of nearly three-to-one.

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<sup>i</sup> Council minutes, 5-4-09, pages 8-9.

<sup>ii</sup> Council Minutes, 6-2-97, pp. 23-24)

<sup>iii</sup> Council Minutes, 7-7-97, page 10; 11-5-98, page 11-12.

<sup>iv</sup> Council Minutes, 8/4/97, p. 26

<sup>v</sup> Council Minutes, 8/4/97, p. 8.

<sup>vi</sup> Council Minutes, 5/25/95, p. 3.

<sup>vii</sup> Council Minutes, 9/15/97.