

# **Announcement of Candidacy for Atascadero City Council by Len Colamarino**



I have decided to run for a seat on the Atascadero City Council in the upcoming November election. Within a couple of weeks after the filing period begins on July 14, I expect to file the necessary paperwork to qualify as a candidate.

After I launched the UpGrade Atascadero website (<http://www.upgradeatascadero.org/>) in February of this year, numerous individuals suggested that I run for City Council. Among them were three of the five sitting members of the Council, who offered the suggestion with what I sensed was an underlying message that I should "put up or shut up." I have considered that reaction to my outspokenness, and taken it to heart. Having concluded that I cannot "shut up," I have decided that I had better "put up." I am therefore entering the race for the three Council seats that are up for election in November.

Running for City Council is the next logical step in the movement I launched when I set up the UpGrade Atascadero website. Upgrading the city's management is a vital step in the effort to UpGrade Atascadero. Few enterprises succeed without skilled, capable and focused management, and that is especially true when there is a crisis such as that which is now facing Atascadero. It has become obvious that the incumbent Council members are not up to the task of managing this city of 28,000 people and reversing its declining fortunes, and that Atascadero needs individuals like me to step up and serve. My deep background in sophisticated business and legal matters will enable me to bring the kind of professionalism and skill that is needed to the City Council in order to meet the complex challenges that are now facing Atascadero.

By stepping up to run at this time, I am also hoping to encourage other talented and accomplished Atascadero residents, who have until now been uninvolved in local government, to step up with me to help our city complete its transition from the small town that it once was to the mid-size city that it now is. I contemplate a day in the future when we will look back on our success in reversing Atascadero's current downward trend, and see that the turnaround started when we began to upgrade the city's management by putting more qualified individuals on the City Council. I am hoping that this declaration of candidacy on my part will prove to be one of the major milestones in that progression.

I am also running at this time because I think that the current members of the Council are too preoccupied with partisan political interests. They are so focused on preserving or regaining power for their respective political factions that they are often putting factional political objectives ahead of Atascadero's best interests. I am neither a member nor an opponent of either of the vying political factions, but like many other Atascaderans, I see how the factional power struggle is dragging Atascadero down. So I am stepping up as an independent candidate, offering proposals to advance the interests of all of the residents of Atascadero. I expect to find support from the many citizens of Atascadero who are uninterested in the partisan conflict, and who want dedicated professional representation of the interests of the entire Atascadero community. I also expect to draw support from a large number of thoughtful and fair-minded individuals on both sides of the partisan divide who will recognize the merits of my vision and accept my offer of leadership because they see that it will advance the interests of our whole community.

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A goal of my candidacy is to raise the standards for City Council campaigning. With my extensive writings in the last few months on the UpGrade Atascadero website (<http://www.upgradeatascadero.org/>) and on the Five Syllable City blog (<http://blog.upgradeatascadero.org>), and with the detailed candidate platform statement that I am providing, Atascadero voters will find more information about a candidate and his proposals than they have ever before been given. In addition, with my history of educational achievements and career accomplishments in business and law, I hope that my candidacy will raise the bar for those who consider calling themselves qualified to take on the formidable challenge of managing the affairs of a mid-size city in modern-day California.

Beyond this, by voluntarily limiting financial contributions to my campaign to \$500, I want to set a precedent for doing what is right when asking the public to entrust you with the power and responsibility of an important elected position. Only with such a cap on financial contributions can the public be sure that a successful candidate is coming into office without owing all kinds of favors to supporters who had the money to make large monetary contributions to his or her campaign. If a candidate is serious about doing what is right, instead of just doing whatever appears helpful to win an election, he or she will not wait for the law to impose a limit on gifts of money to his or her campaign. People or organizations who can afford to make large financial contributions should have no greater say in the electoral process than those who don't have that kind of money.

At the age of 57, I hope to follow the achievements of my career in the private sector with achievements in the public sector that will benefit our community for years to come. My wife and I have come to love Atascadero in our three and half years here, and we plan to spend the rest of our lives here. In stepping up as I am doing now by declaring my candidacy for City Council, I am seeking to start a process of accomplishment that will make the long-discussed, long-delayed revitalization of Atascadero a reality. I want to play a major part in bringing about tangible, meaningful improvement for our community.

*Len Colamarino*

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## **More About Len Colamarino**

Len Colamarino is a resident of Atascadero. After living here for some three years, Len became active in civic affairs due to his growing concern about the problems plaguing Atascadero's commercial and government sectors. While he will remain content in Atascadero regardless of what is done about those problems, Len started the UpGrade Atascadero website (<http://www.upgradeatascadero.org/>) on the premise that it will be a service and benefit for all parties concerned if Atascadero's commercial and governmental failings can be remedied.

Len's professional background is as a lawyer, having practiced business law in New York City for almost thirty years. After graduating in 1976 from the University of Pennsylvania Law School, where he was a staff editor of the Law Review, Len went to work at a large Wall Street law firm. Upon developing his own corporate clientele in the early 1980s, Len started a boutique corporate law firm with two other partners. That firm, Colamarino & Sohns, LLP, located in Midtown Manhattan across from St. Patrick's Cathedral, at 645 Fifth Avenue, was where he maintained his practice until he relocated to California at the end of 2004. Throughout those years, Len enjoyed a sophisticated general business practice that embraced, among other things, dispute resolution, including litigation and arbitration, corporate governance, finance, drafting and negotiating of contracts for many kinds of transactions and international law. His practice also acquainted Len with numerous industries and exposed him to various kinds of businesses.

Before attending law school, Len majored in economics, and minored in political science and history, at the State University of New York at Buffalo. He received his B.A. in 1973, summa cum laude, and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and Omicron Delta Epsilon (an honorary economics fraternity).

Len has served as a director of numerous corporations, and continues to serve as a director, as well as a member of management and legal officer, for several corporations in which he has an interest as a principal, none of which are located in San Luis Obispo County.

Len was born in Rochester, New York, in 1951. He is married to Katrin Colamarino, who maintains a consulting practice directed at non-profit organizations, as well as a busy schedule of local volunteer activity.