

## **For Immediate Release**

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## **EUGENE CHAMBER BOARD ENDORSES KAARIN KNUDSON & RANDY GROVES**

EUGENE, OR, September 12, 2023— The Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has voted to endorse Kaarin Knudson for the 2024 City of Eugene mayoral election and Randy Groves in his re-election for Ward 8 Eugene City Councilor. These endorsements come after a thorough evaluation of these candidates and their vision for the future of Eugene.

Knudson, an architect, small business owner and Founding Director of Better Housing Together, has authored Lane County's first Affordable Housing Action Plan—helping to reduce homelessness and provide housing solutions that bolster economic growth and meet community needs.

Groves, a former Eugene Springfield Fire Chief, has devoted decades to the betterment of this region. His dedicated service extends from Eugene's Budget Committee to Ward 8 City Councilor, and his municipal leadership has made a positive impact that should continue uninhibited.

In recent years, the Chamber Board of Directors had paused the practice of endorsing candidates for elected positions, but recently made a decision to reinstate the policy to recognize those individuals who have a proven track record in understanding the concerns and supporting the voice of our local business community.

The Chamber's Board of Directors took into account a variety of factors before casting their endorsement vote. These factors included candidates' economic development plans, vision for local businesses, and commitment to fostering a vibrant and prosperous community.

"Although the Chamber Board had stepped away from endorsing candidates for the past several election cycles, we wanted to send a message to the community that Knudson and Groves are the right choice. They both share and understand the issues that so many businesses are facing. We've seen them in action. It's obvious they have the passion, the talent and the leadership skills needed to make Eugene the best it can be," said John Barofsky, incoming Chair of the Board for the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce and Owner of Beppe & Gianni's Trattoria.

The Eugene Chamber has worked closely with Knudson through Better Housing Together and its coalition members to address the housing crisis and bring diverse interests to the table in

finding solutions. Matched with her business background, sensible approach and strong leadership skills, Knudson's resolve to strengthen the City's commitment to producing real outcomes makes her an exceptional candidate.

Additionally, the Eugene Chamber has partnered with Councilor Groves on several initiatives spanning from downtown revitalization to urban renewal to solutions for homelessness. He has listened intently to the needs of the business community, and brings a steady, common-sense voice to the table.

While these are the first candidate endorsements that the Chamber has issued since the 2016 election, they will not be the last.

"Our Board is committed to engaging with and supporting individuals seeking to serve in public office who understand the needs of local businesses and prioritize strengthening our local economy. I certainly don't expect The Chamber to endorse in every local race, but if a candidate can demonstrate a strong understanding and willingness to listen to the concerns of our business community and reflect those values in their decision-making process, we want to reciprocate that support," said Eugene Chamber CEO, Brittany Quick-Warner.