

EDITORIALS APRIL 20, 2016 6:01 PM

Westlake fight should end with Wheat as mayor

HIGHLIGHTS

Northern Tarrant County town doesn't see much turnover in mayor's office

Colin Stevenson, resident less than two years, wants to oust Laura Wheat

Heated battle, but Wheat's right



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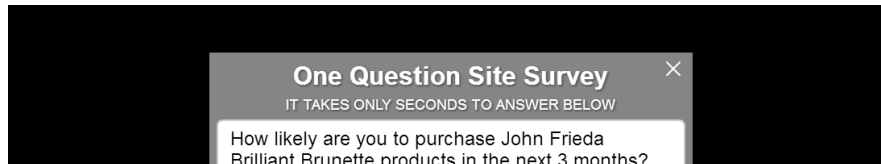
Westlake, population around 1,100 in northern Tarrant County, has seen its share of heated political battles, but not about who should be mayor.

The wealthy community, average home value \$1.5 million (and some much higher), has had only three mayors in four decades.

Small-business owner Laura Wheat, 58, has been mayor since 2008. Attorney Scott Bradley held the position for 14 years before that. Before Bradley, retired pilot Dale White was mayor from 1976 to 1994.

Now accounting firm partner Colin Stevenson, 53, wants to hand Wheat an early release.

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A Westlake resident for less than two years, he's launched a scathing attack on Wheat's record.

Westlake residents treasure huge residential lots and open spaces. Wheat prides herself on having led the creation, with community input, of a comprehensive plan to hold the line on future development.

Stevenson attacks her for allowing a mixed-use development called Entrada to proceed, including condominiums and a large outdoor amphitheater.

Westlake is the only municipality in Texas with its own charter school, Westlake Academy. Wheat is a longtime supporter of the school and as mayor has chaired its board of trustees. She cites its high academic standards and ratings.

Stevenson wants to name an independent board to run the school in place of the town's Board of Aldermen.

He also decries the town's debt as far too high, although he acknowledges it's mostly to support Westlake Academy. Wheat says it's not high by state standards, and in relation to the town's tax base supporting the debt, she's right.

The *Star-Telegram* Editorial Board recommends **Laura Wheat** for mayor of Westlake.



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