

Friend First to Toss Hat into the Ring

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

As we told you Friday, former Kodiak Island Borough Assemblyman Jerrol Friend has announced his intention to run for borough mayor. He made the announcement on Facebook Thursday afternoon.

Friend is a self-employed general contractor. He served two terms, or six years, on the assembly, and spent over a decade on the borough's Planning and Zoning Commission.

He said his first objective if elected would be to use modern technology to help citizens get new ideas into the public forum.

"I think that the borough needs to move forward and bring some of the new technology that's out here and available. We get a lot of people that have great ideas. I'm finding this as I do these home inspections. People have some really good ideas, but these are the people who are not real vocal. They don't like getting in front of the podium and talking. They're not comfortable doing that. But man, I've heard great ideas and concerns from people, and those concerns need to get out and be presented to people. And I think by doing different things with the media, social media, the internet, it's out there, and we need to start using that a lot more."

Another plank in his platform is to try and make Kodiak a more affordable place to live, particularly by lowering the cost of land by opening up more borough property.

"And I don't see that opportunity for young people or for people in general, that they can get where they can afford to get a piece of property and have an investment in Kodiak. I mean the young people right now can't hardly find a place or get into a place for under \$300,000. And we need to change that. So I'm hoping for open discussion through the internet and everything to help fix those solutions." He said by having more private property on the tax rolls might lead to lower the mill rate.

"If we can get a larger tax base out there we might be able to drop our taxes a little bit. We need to make things (and) we need to be able to give opportunities to businesses and get the competition out there a little better, to make it more affordable."

As for why he would like to oust long-time Mayor Jerome Selby, Friend says the assembly needs more collaboration and less managing.

"Jerome's been in politics for a long time. Jerome's been the manager from when we had a strong manager, where the borough actually hired him and he was working there. Years ago they decided they wanted a weak mayor, where the mayor was just kinda the swing vote and brought the information in. And I see Jerome is still directing the assembly and trying to be the strong mayor."

Friend said he'd be better and bringing information to the assembly members from all sides of an issue

and use common sense in making decisions.

The municipal elections are on October 1st.