

New Haven alders may reboot Democracy Fund proposal

By [Evan Lips](#), *New Haven Register*

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NEW HAVEN >> The Board of Alders will meet Monday night to review a committee recommendation to withdraw a 2011 proposal that would give alder candidates access to the city's Democracy Fund, the campaign finance system that gives matching funds and public financing grants to mayoral candidates.

A recent memo from the city's Office of Legislative Services notes that it was former Alder Darnell Goldson, D-30, who in January 2011 proposed offering the fund to alder candidates.

"Though a working group was formed and met several times to work out details, it never produced an actual ordinance," the memo states. "This matter is moot in that the state-enabling legislation for the Democracy Fund applies only to mayoral elections. The state Elections Enforcement Commission would have to expand the current pilot program of 2007 to include any other offices."

Joe Rodriguez, a former alder who now serves as legislative liaison to the board, told alders at last week's Joint Aldermanic Affairs/Legislation Committee meeting that Mayor Toni Harp has yet to sit down with alders and review Goldson's proposal. He advised alders serving on the committee to support "pulling the proposal back."

The committee voted unanimously to do so and tonight will ask the full board to do the same.

Rodriguez said one idea is to hold a general workshop to focus on drafting a new proposed ordinance.

Alder Adam Marchand, D-25, added that it would be helpful to take a closer look at the financial impact that could happen if the fund is offered to alder candidates.

"Not just to the city but there's a threshold as to whether or not the funds would make a difference and encourage more people to run," Marchand said at the meeting. "I think it's worth more discussion."

Supporters of the fund say candidates opting to use the fund agree to [various campaign fundraising and spending restrictions](#). Candidates who signed up for the fund are banned from accepting \$1,000 contributions, the individual state limit. The fund limits individual donations to \$370.

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