



# FAMILIES MAKE THE TOWN

## COUNCILWOMAN CINDY MATSUMOTO EMPHASIZES AFFORDABLE HOUSING & OPEN SPACE AS ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS TO PRESERVING PARK CITY

**Park City Municipal Corporation:** What originally brought you to Park City?

**Cindy Matsumoto:** When my husband and I were first married, we moved around a lot—to Seattle, Rhode Island, a few other places. I had lived in Utah in the 1970s and liked it, so in 1992 we decided to come back to settle down and raise our children. It was the best decision we ever made.

**PCMC:** What has it been like to live in town for 25 years?

**CM:** Things certainly have changed. When we first lived here, I commuted to Kamas to teach special education for the South Summit School District. In those days, I wouldn't see another car driving up and down SR 248.

But Park City was really a wonderful place to raise a family, and this is what we need to work like hell to maintain for future generations. My family is becoming the exception, in that all three of my children—who grew up in Park City—have returned to live as adults and raise

their own families. Too few children are able to do this, and preserving this multi-generational experience is what's most important to me.

**PCMC:** How can we do this?

**CM:** It all comes down to providing affordable homes to middle-class families. I was elected

to Council just after Snow Creek opened; look at how successful that development has been. We need more of these kinds of homes in town because they're what keep our

community together. People who live here can start businesses, families, be an integral part of the town's fabric. If we turn into a vacation destination—without a core of people living in town—we won't have a community because we won't have a heart.

**PCMC:** Fortunately, City Council and staff have made affordable housing a critical priority, including setting aside \$40-million to fund it.

“WITH AFFORDABLE, ATTAINABLE HOUSING, PEOPLE WHO LIVE HERE CAN START BUSINESSES AND FAMILIES, BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE TOWN'S FABRIC.”



**CM:** Yes, and this should all go to affordable and attainable housing projects, such as the 1450/1460 Park Avenue development that's under construction. These are a perfect example of homes that can keep families in town while preserving the small-town feel.

**PCMC:** You are in your second term as a City councilwoman. What inspired you to run in 2009?

**CM:** Aside from wanting to help maintain a multi-generational experience for Park City families, I wanted to continue my work in preserving our historic legacy. I had been involved with the Park City Historical Society and Museum, and took a special interest in preserving Main Street and Old Town. Main Street is the jewel of Old Town, and Old Town is the jewel of Park City. We need to preserve our legacy through our buildings—the old mining structures, the original stores and homes.

I made preservation the galvanizing theme of my campaign, and it really resonated with residents. The pendulum had already begun to swing toward more preservation because the residents realized that if they didn't act soon, many of the buildings would either fall down or be torn down. So I received a lot of support for this. I'm gratified to see how seriously the town is taking the stewardship of these structures, but we can't get complacent: we need to remain

vigilant to guard this crucial part of our town's legacy.

**PCMC:** How has your experience been serving on Council for the past six years?

**CM:** I'm happy to say that the entire Council has a good sense of the big picture, and we're in agreement about our critical and top priorities. Having this shared understanding of our town's challenges makes all the difference.



**PCMC:** The buzzword these days is "growth". The word implies different things to different people, and folks have different solutions to the perceived problems. How do you see it?

**CM:** The only way to control growth is to buy up property, plain and simple. And the time to buy is now: no one will

complain ten years from now that you paid too much. The City's done a good job of buying up land, but key areas still need to be targeted for conservation.

**PCMC:** How do you balance this with the issue of providing affordable housing?

**CM:** Density can be employed effectively and judiciously to achieve both goals. It must be used with care because we want to still feel like a small town, but it's a useful tool.

**PCMC:** You own Right at Home, a home

furnishings store in Bonanza Park. Why did you decide to open it?

**CM:** On a whim, really. In 2001, I had just quit my teaching job and two of my friends suggested we open a shop together. The idea just took off from there. I was lucky enough to be starting a business when commercial rents in town were affordable, especially for first-time and small-business owners. I want local entrepreneurs to be able to follow their dreams just like I did, so we also need to be concerned about providing affordable commercial space just as we are about providing affordable homes. I'm heartened by the organic growth I've seen occur—for example, over by the Yard and Blind Dog. I really love the eclectic feel of Bonanza Park and Prospector Square, and I hope that this area doesn't become too proscribed—too cookie-cutter in its look—as it expands.

**PCMC:** What worries you when you think about the future?

**CM:** Probably the same things that worry a lot of residents: pressures from growth and increased tourism contributing to a loss of community. But what worries me most is losing the people who live here—and losing the voters who make the decisions. If we keep losing citizens, we'll lose our constituent base, and crucial decisions will be made in a vacuum.

That being said, I still can't think of a better place to live. Park City still has a better sense of community than most towns. And every time I look up at the mountains, I just feel happy.

**PCMC:** What do you want to accomplish in the next few years?

**CM:** I hope and think we can make a significant

dent in the affordable housing shortfall, and continue to preserve open space. And on a personal level, I hope to be able to spend more time with my grandchildren. My City Council tenure has been one of the most interesting and challenging experiences of my life. It's really been such a privilege to work with both my fellow council members and the City staff. And my favorite part of the job has always just been listening to the residents and getting their feedback. They're why we're in the job, after all.

