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The Desert Sun

Aug. 14, 2013 | [1 Comment](#)

## Desert Hot Springs City Council hopeful did not qualify for ballot



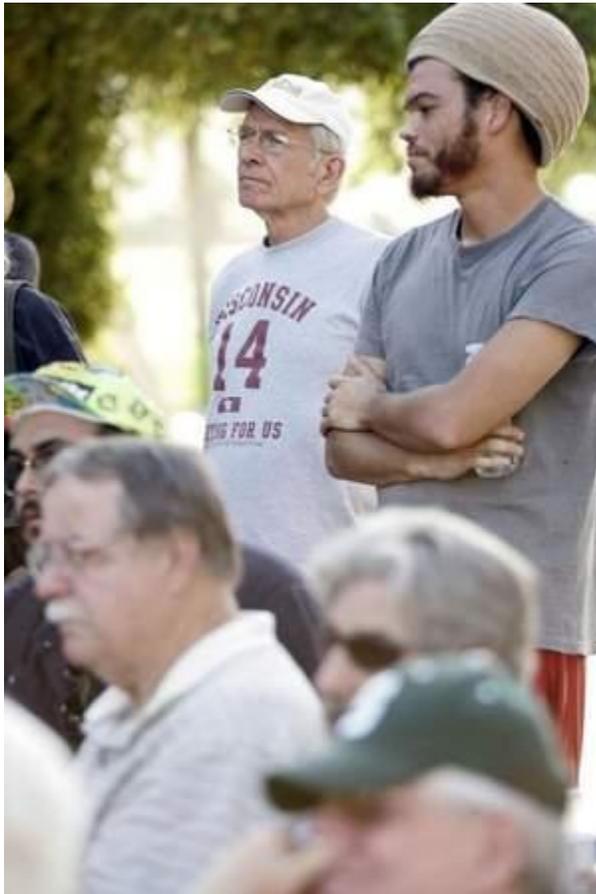
*Steven Kong speaks at a Veterans for Peace rally in Palm Springs in this undated file photo. / Omar Ornelas/The Desert Sun*

**DESERT HOT SPRINGS —** City Council hopeful Steven Kong will not be on the November ballot after he failed to submit the necessary 20 valid signatures before the deadline.

**Kong filed the paperwork before Friday’s deadline. But a check of the signatures found he didn’t meet the necessary benchmark to qualify, the city clerk’s office reported on Wednesday.**

**That leaves four names on the Desert Hot Springs council ballot: Mayor Pro Tem Scott Matas; Councilwoman Jan Pye; challenger Joe McKee, who has served on several city committees; and challenger Robert Bentley, who has run for council and mayor before.**

**Kong was a political newcomer who made news as part of the Occupy Coachella Valley movement.**



**He had launched a website and, just last week, told The Desert Sun he was “just getting started on the path to win.”**

**He said on Twitter that he plans to pursue a write-in candidacy. The qualifying period for such campaigns starts on Sept. 9.**

**“The turmoil on the city council must end,” Kong wrote in an email last week. “We have to all focus on the issues. And we must solve the problems in our city.”**

**Desert Hot Springs also has a mayoral race on the Nov. 5 ballot.**

**Only one other Coachella Valley city — Palm Springs — and a handful of water and special districts hold their elections in the odd-numbered years.**

*Steven Kong (right) attends an October 30, 2011 Occupy Coachella Valley meeting in Palm Desert. / Crystal Chatham/The Desert Sun*

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