For him, it started with his family.

Cupertino City Council candidate Jon Willey had more or less kept to himself until he amassed a following with his 28-year-old son, Kai, when he was going to live out his life in his neighborhood of Knochel Ranch, and he was fine with that.

All of that changed when he had kids and they started going to school.

When Willey’s wife Anne went to the local credentialed elementary school to drop their son off, she received a package to cut out. And she received 30 minutes later, the family would have to send their children to a school farther away.

“Wow, that was a wake-up call,” Willey said. “That’s the start.”

Following this, adult Hill Property Company (AHPC) began proposing Stark Hill Phase project in 2011. Recognizing how crowded the local schools already were, Willey took his experience in engineering to Cupertino City Council meeting, where he explained to the council the impact that new apartment complexes would have on traffic and the school population. After attending more outreach meetings, Willey backed off, having realized his concerns — until AHPC started construction and he looked at the numbers.

The health club that had been there two years ago was a two-story office building. From there, Willey dug deeper into the original plans, and found inconsistencies between the plans that were approved by the City Council and the plans that ultimately went through.

“You see, that’s a violation,” Willey said. “The planning department said, ‘We’ve approved it, so there’s no violation,’ but it does not conform to what was approved. A lot of these don’t conform to the general plan.”

Later, when AHPC raised enough and proposed a new recreation plan for Willey in 2014, Willey went concerned about the 3.5 million square feet of office space that it would add because the added workers would further clog traffic in the local schools. This concern only grew after those concerns went to the Honn family, who approved the plans, with a record from then-mayor Gilchrist. But it had been a few weeks when political action committees started. Cupertino 360 was founded by former candidate Lou Green, who approached Willey after one of his presentations and asked him to join. Willey, who saw that his own goals aligned with 360’s, accepted the invitation and has been attending meetings ever since.


As Willey’s involvement in local politics continued, he left increasingly on the city council had an intense in looking at the very vision it was meant to serve. This sentiment, and his evolving philosophy that a government should uphold democratic values and listen to its citizens, is what prompted him to challenge the city council. In particular, the decision made by Honn and Wong regarding Voltis recreation concerned him greatly.

“I don’t feel the majority of the City Council, who I have been, and then the council now are listening to the residents,” Willey said. “And from their actions, they seem to be heavily biased towards the developers and what the developers want.”

If he wins, as in the Cupertino City Council, Willey intends to be transparent with Cupertino residents. That means, for example, showing them analyses of how many workers are going to come to renting in how much new traffic will be generated with each new development project. Willey sets his first priority as getting input from residents, something that he feels has been lacking in the past. Each input is something that Willey has deemed essential to democracy itself.

“Trust, as we are so more important responsibility for our elected officials than to represent the people,” Willey said. “If I’m on the City Council, I will be representing the people.”