

Selecting New Mayor Is Like A TV Sitcom

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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It has been amusing to observe United Russia's and the Kremlin's selection process for the next mayor of Moscow.

We are already accustomed to the fact that Russian politics resemble a television sitcom. Since we cannot take part in or influence that process, at least we can be thankful that the authorities make the show entertaining. Many thanks to the director, screenwriter and stagehands for their work.

Each of the four mayoral candidates fills his or her own niche well. Lyudmila Shevtsova, who oversees social programs in her capacity of deputy mayor, symbolizes the commitment to responsible social policy.

Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Sobyenin could bring experience as a federal manager.

Transportation Minister Igor Levitin could help lessen the horrendous traffic jams in the city.

Former Moscow Deputy Mayor and current Nizhny Novgorod Governor Valery Shantsev could bring the valuable hands-on experience of managing a city the size and complexity of Moscow.

One of Russia's historical traits is to support the "kind tsar" in the Kremlin who, the argument goes, makes wise, benevolent decisions for the welfare of the people. In this spirit, backers of Vladimir Putin supported his decision in 2004, when he was president, to cancel direct gubernatorial elections.

Under the new system in which governors are appointed from Moscow, United Russia presents a purely decorative list of candidates to the president. In reality, the choice does not depend on that list and was probably made beforehand — and not necessarily by the president. But in this highly choreographed play, the list paraded before the public should have the appearance of legitimacy.

The ancient Greeks developed the term "kalos kagathos" — fine and good — to describe moral and physical perfection. The brilliant rulers who created this list of mayoral candidates provide us with a shining example of true kalos kagathos.

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