

## Questions for Candidates for Mayor and Board of Aldermen for the City of Frederick

Full verbatim answers (without any editing for syntax, spelling or grammar) will be provided on the Chamber of Commerce website as a part of our effort to inform our members in preparation for the upcoming election.

Please provide a 250-word introduction in addition to your specific responses to the questions below.

I am proud to call Frederick my forever home! I was born at Frederick Memorial Hospital and I graduated from Governor Thomas Johnson High School. My hometown is a passion of mine, I enjoy the cultural, economic and geographic diversity this County has to offer.

I believe strongly in giving back to the community. I have served on the Board of Directors for the Maryland Ensemble Theatre as well as been a member of the Rotary Club of Carroll Creek and Frederick County's fine Chamber of Commerce, and I am a Leadership Frederick County Graduate.

For 13 years, I served as Vice President of a small business in Frederick and I have been a homeowner in the City for 11 years.

I look forward to this new foray into the world of local government.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my answer to these thoughtful questions.

Responses can be in the form of a word processor program attachment or embedded in an email. Email responses should be sent to [rweldon@frederickchamber.org](mailto:rweldon@frederickchamber.org), and must be received by **COB August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017**.

The Frederick County Chamber of Commerce recently led a fact-finding trip to Greenville South Carolina. The trip included Chamber staff, Board members, Chamber Partners-in-Trust, the County Executive, senior staff from the Mayor's Office, economic development staff from both the City and County, along with others. The purpose of the trip was to study the experience, strategies and partnerships that have led Greenville to an economic renaissance in housing, job creation and urban revitalization. Several themes emerged, but Greenville Mayor Knox White often remarked that a visionary, focused local government was essential to their success. It is within that context that we offer you the following questions. Unlike some questionnaires, we understand that **some of these responses will require more than a 100 word answer**. Therefore, we encourage you to express yourself fully on each question.

### **Introduction:**

**KATIE BOWERSOX**

1. With the significant annual carrying costs, totaling over \$1 million, and the immense price tag put on the costs to fully develop the property as a regional park, how do you propose to make the Hargett Farm property an asset to the taxpayers of the City of Frederick and where do you expect to raise the money to improve the property with an estimated price tag approaching \$100 million?

I question whether or not the Hargett Farm should be such a big budget item. Will it definitely bring income into the county? It seems to me that the major concerns of the city should be to address the issues that we know will bring business into the city- better infrastructure and lower taxes.

2. Blight has been an irritant for downtown residents and merchants for many years – how do you propose to address the situation to deal with examples like the Asiana building and other underutilized properties in the retail district? Unaddressed blight threatens to undermine the morale of property owners trying to keep and maintain a momentum for progress. What is your position?

There are laws in place to govern these types of situations- they should be more strictly enforced, along with fines and property liens. Blighted properties are a burden to our local business owners and an eye-sore for residents and visitors.

3. Do you consider the tax/equity – sharing equation between the City and the County to be one which is fair to city taxpayers and if not, what do you intend to do about the situation? What is your position on the level of City taxes relative to services, and do you agree or disagree that City taxes are a hindrance to being competitive in attracting business, and residents, why or why not?

I need to gather more information on this subject in order to make a statement.

4. Route 15 continues to be a traffic bottleneck which impacts all City residents and our businesses – what steps do you propose the City should take to address the problem?

This is more than just a local City/County problem. Route 15 is not only a bottleneck that impacts traffic, but a very dangerous stretch of road. I feel we need to get additional funding from outside of our county- since Route 15 is a DC commuter corridor and critical to DC jobs- to widen the road and make it safer.

5. Please provide one positive concrete idea to address the groups of homeless or disenfranchised who loiter for hours at a time around some of our more valuable public assets (Carroll Creek Linear Park, Baker Park, and the public library to name a few). What can be done to ensure our residents and businesses continue to use such assets or locate there.

We all love our parks but it has been brought to my attention that many residents avoid these areas due to our homeless/disenfranchised residents. We need to come up with a solution that

is fair to all. It would be a multi-step process involving law enforcement and the creation or expansion of a local agency that can help provide shelter and food in exchange for jobs.

6. Assuming you had the support, what one measure would you implement almost immediately upon being elected to office?

Lower property tax and reduce the amount of regulations preventing businesses from opening in the city.

7. What can the City do that it is not already doing to attract new businesses to enhance the assessable base within the City?

Please refer to my answer above.

8. What is your position on the East Street planning effort? How familiar are you with the corridor planning efforts currently underway? What would you like to see done differently with regard to the future of East Street?

I think that East Street has been long neglected. It is a few blocks from Market Street but feels like a different town. I work on East Street and I see how several new businesses have already had a positive effect on the aesthetic. Continuing with the corridor planning will help the existing businesses on East Street and within a considerable radius.

9. The State of Maryland recently decided to relocate the Department of Social Services out of the William Donald Schaeffer Building on All Saints Street. Moving those critical human services and programs may hamper client's efforts to access them. What can the City do to help ensure continued access to critical services? What is the City's responsibility in this regard, if any?

The City and the County should work together for solutions that provide public transportation to critical services.

10. How do you as a candidate for office feel about the role of the City regulatory agencies (permits/inspections/planning/zoning/historic preservation)? Do you believe that City departments have an obligation to accommodate citizen and business owner requests that are legal, legitimate and appropriate? Do you think this is something that is already in place, could use some guidance, or needs a lot more focus and vision from the City elected leaders?

Yes, the City departments to have obligations to citizen and business owner requests. The development of a volunteer committee or panel can help review these agencies for common-sense practices and make recommendations.

11. With the vibrant growth of downtown in recent years, Frederick has become a weekend destination for people from across the region. What types of investments do you feel the City should make to attract businesses and skilled workers to relocate to the City of Frederick permanently? Are there internal processes that you feel the City can improve upon to position it to be more attractive to prospective businesses and residents?.

The City can make investments into roads, parking and creating incentives for new and expanding businesses. Potential residents should not only be enticed by jobs, but by exciting places to rent that are within walking distance of downtown or their place of employment.

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