

*1. For at least 10 years, the City has been pursuing a plan to halt sprawl and densify the Central City (through mixed use zoning and mixed use growth centers, etc.) with the thought of increasing revenues and making it more efficient to provide city services.*

*We represent single family neighborhoods. What is your plan to preserve our single family neighborhoods?*

As someone who grew up in the single family neighborhoods of Wedgwood, it's very important that we preserve those areas. We should not be afraid to invest in the central city and use mixed growth zoning to appeal to new residents, but we should never do so at the expense of those who already live away from the city; being always be mindful that in a city as large as ours, there is great diversity and we must be aware of the concerns and considerations of both those who live in the immediate areas of the city as well as those who live on the outskirts. To preserve that, zoning laws must be used that promote sprawl and growth and new housing developments in places where we see the desires from new families to grow and thrive and prosper. A city dedicated to those ideas will bring in new residents and new people who wish to live away from the more chaotic and hectic elements of the city life. Currently, we see people moving to surrounding areas (like Crowley, Burleson, and areas of Arlington) to get away from the hustle and bustle of the downtown areas. By expanding our building and zoning to include undeveloped land in the western and southern portions of our city, we can appeal to both those who wish to live quieter lives and those who wish to be a part of the growing urban life in the downtown districts.

*2. The City now has over 2,000 gas wells within the city limits, one approximately every half mile. We have more than 800 miles of gas gathering pipelines under our streets. The City's position for many years has been that there isn't much they can do to regulate drilling. Now we are seeing gas wells in the middle of neighborhoods and even perhaps soon in the Stockyards.*

*What is your view of the City's role in protecting the health, safety and welfare of citizens when it comes to gas drilling? Is the City's 2008 Gas Drilling Ordinance providing for the health, safety and welfare of Fort Worth citizens? How will gas drilling impact the City's tourism and neighborhoods?*

Any candidate for mayor or city office will tell you that there is nothing more important than the health, safety, and welfare of our citizens. The fact that so many people still feel disturbed by the gas drilling proves that a) the city ordinances and stances are not good enough and b) the next council and the next mayor must go through and revise, update, and rethink key portions of the ordinances to better protect our families. The city has an important and direct role in protecting the health of our citizens through its zoning laws and providing of leases to the gas companies that drill here. If any of those companies are found to be misleading the people or participating in conduct that violates their original commitments, they should be held accountable. As for tourism and the neighborhoods themselves, the gas drilling could be detrimental if health concerns become *the* main focus in the future. People might become leery of coming to a city known for pollution and indifference to its health codes. The neighborhoods themselves might become afflicted by health problems that cannot be reversed. In the end, if the drilling becomes bad for Fort Worth, it must be stopped until a safer and better alternative can be found.

*3. A big issue for neighborhoods over the last couple of years has been the tendency of the City to issue new ordinances or new policies which affect neighborhoods – but not to include neighborhoods in the development of those policies and ordinances. What is your stance on involving the experience and knowledge of neighborhood leaders in policy development on the front end, so that neighborhoods are not always in a reactive mode?*

One of the key provisions of my campaign has been the inclusion of communities in the planning and execution of policies that affect them. No one knows those areas better than the community leaders and their expertise and guidance would be absolutely critical in a) formulating better policies for those neighborhoods and b) letting the people know that their city government is more inclusive and transparent than it has been in the past. People must be trusting of their government and know that their best interests are always at the heart of every policy decision made at city hall. To that end, involvement of the community leaders is absolutely paramount.

*4. How much tax revenue has the City given up in tax abatements and other tax expenditures? What portion of the city's deficit is represented by tax expenditures? Is this a significant issue?*

I honestly do not have the numbers for any tax issues in front of me, and even if I did, the city of Fort Worth has not been able to give concrete numbers on any of these issues when asked for by citizens. However, any issue of deficit that is caused by either tax abatements or expenditures must be reviewed closely by the council because, at the end of the day, it is your money that is being spent.

*What is your plan to inform the citizens about tax abatements which are working (i.e., producing promised jobs, etc.) or not working? When we don't have enough revenue to fund core neighborhood services such as libraries and parks, is it a good idea to continue tax abatements? In the case of Neighborhood Empowerment Zones, is it a good idea for neighborhoods to continue them when strategic plans for them have recently been discontinued?*

Citizens should have access to all information pertaining to the city's use of taxes through either a website, a telephone service, or frequent publications on the city's website or in the local newspapers. As for any discussion about continuing tax holidays or Empowerment Zones, these must be taken on a case-by-case basis, with a constant outlook for the economic growth they can generate held against the revenue not being brought in by the continued lack of tax dollars. However, there is not one magical answer or panacea that can solve every issue and, again, these must be examined, debated and discussed individually as they come along.

*5. Presently, the Fort Worth City Council appoints members of the City's Ethics Commission. Because of that, do members of that commission have a conflict of interest hearing cases involving ethics complaints against members of the City Council? Does the City Council have a conflict of interest in serving as the Appeals Board – even on complaints about its own members – from the Ethics Commission? How would you make the Ethics Commission more independent?*

There is certainly a conflict of transparency and honesty when the people charged with overseeing the ethics of a specific group are themselves appointed by that group. Although one would hope that such a commission would be able to function with independent judgment and character, there is always the fear of being tainted by the personal factors that contributed to their appointment. As such, if elected mayor, I would definitely press for an independent way of appointment to the ethics commission, perhaps having the city manager appoint the members and disallow the council to serve as the appeals board in any matter concerning the council's activity. Likewise, I would seek ideas from the community, listening to citizens' concerns and complaints on this issue. If the people of Fort Worth do not feel that their city is being as open as possible, then how can those same individuals have faith in their government?

*6. If elected, will you continue to work at the job you have now? If so, can you be a fulltime mayor and also do that job?*

Since the position of mayor only pays about \$29,000 a year, I would seriously consider continuing my job as videographer on a part-time basis. However, I would always be cognizant of the fact that my fulltime job of mayor comes first and any activity outside that job would have to be determined only when I know for certain that I had the time to devote to it. Otherwise, serving the people and the public interest always comes first.