County Council Questionnaire

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Each of the following questions includes a 100 word limit

Briefly describe why you are seeking public office:
I am a Greenville native and have a passion for this community. I have been involved over the past several as an appointed member of the Greenville County Planning Commission. In this role, I saw many areas, especially in the planning and development sector, that have an opportunity to become much more efficient and improved. I feel I have the skillset, experience, and work ethic to bring appropriate change in certain areas and be a leader for District 21 and Greenville County as a whole.

Briefly describe a significant accomplishment that would reflect your ability to lead our community:
I was appointed and served on the Greenville County Planning Commission for the past 4 years. It was an honor to be appointed and this role gave me a taste and prepared me for a lot of issues I will see on County Council. Throughout my career, I have held other leadership positions in different capacities that have all taught me different skillsets that will be of use serving our community. Throughout my life, I have taken great pride in my integrity, professionalism, and work ethic in all that I do. I plan to bring the same qualities to Council.

If elected, after your first 12 months on Council, what do you hope is your most significant achievement?
There are some tangible items that I want to see addressed especially in the development process in Greenville County. I would like to work to address some concerns I have in the Zoning Ordinance and the Land Development Regulations. I believe some strategic changes in these documents will provide an avenue towards smarter growth that will solve some current issues happening on a daily basis. Additionally, I want to bring a culture change to County Council. Over recent years, there has notably been drama and conflict between council members. I want to change that from the inside.

Greenville County is home to nearly 500 nonprofits, ranging from small community centers to large...
Tell us about one of Greenville County's non-profits that you think is doing important work in your community, and what you have done to support this organization's mission?

First, there are many non-profits in Greenville County that I have come across or been involved with that do a tremendous job. Most recently, I have had the opportunity to be involved with the Upstate American Heart Association. Hypertension and heart disease runs throughout my family and I have dealt with first hand. Seeing what this organization does to help combat heart disease is truly impressive. They are creative, passionate, innovative, and hard working. I was privileged to be on their Executive Leadership Team this year and would love to continue to being a small part of their efforts.

How could County Council and Greenville non-profit community better support one another in our shared goal of improving the lives of people in Greenville County?

I think one area that County Council and Greenville County staff could help would to sort of try and act as a communication hub for non-profits in the area. This would allow for a comprehensive list to be accumulated of non-profits in the area which would help ensure that no organizations are forgotten about and that efforts aren’t duplicated. This could potentially showcase opportunities for strategic and unique partnerships that may have not been thought about previously.

Housing

What would you do to encourage the production of more affordable homes for these families? What would you do to support local Affordable Housing developers, including community organizations and private developers (e.g., incentives such as density/parking bonuses, reduced fees)?

I don't think there is a "one size fits all" approach for affordable homes as far as specific incentives go. I think different situations call for different solutions. I am in favor of tax incentives, density bonuses etc. as long as they are done properly. I am also a big believer in initiatives that include both private sector and non-profit housing organizations. I think involving the private sector as much as possible (under the right situation) is a great solution. I have spoken with several housing groups and am excited about some of the efforts taking place.

Transit

Describe the role you believe transit plays in our community’s future growth and success and what role should County Council play in supporting public transit demands?

Transit is vital for Greenville’s future growth. Greenville is going to continue to grow and that should be encouraged. We don’t need to stifle growth but we need to be strategic and thoughtful about it. Transit is a critical part of strategic growth efforts. I think County Council should play a big role. I think we need to look at funding and make sure we are providing proper budget allocations in that area but I also think we need to be innovative and think out of the box on how to maximize the efficiency and reach of transit in Greenville.

Growth
How will you balance the interests of private property owners with the community's broader vision for how to manage growth across the county (i.e. the future land use map)?

This is a great question and is really the backbone of my campaign. I have dealt with this question from many different perspectives and wearing many different hats over the years. I have many thoughts on how to start working towards this. This not a quick fix and will take years to really achieve this balance but we can set the foundation now. There have been some strides taken in recent years but there are still many areas that need help. I would love to discuss this topic in more detail. I need more than 100 words for this one.

Arts

How do you believe the County can further support the arts now – during our economic crisis – and in the future?

This is a very tough questions but one that needs to be addressed. I think the obvious answer is funding assistance. Through creative methods such as grants, favorable loans, federal or state funding mechanisms, etc. the county should try and exhaust all options to help with budget shortfalls of these organizations. Additionally, I think an option would be to try and form additional partnerships with school districts across the upstate. The is could hopefully provide additional income streams as well as additional performance venues, audiences, and participants.

Municipalities

What steps will you take to ensure open communication between these diverse entities, many of whom are independent of Greenville County Council governance authority?

While legally there is only so much we can do to address these conflicts, I think this is an area that truly comes down to culture and relationship building. When communicating with other groups that are independent of County Council, it is very important to develop common goals and interests to work towards. Creating a culture of collaboration versus independent thinking is vital. While this is easier said than done, we need the type of people on County Council that have this type of leadership and line of thinking.

Citizen Engagement

Greenville County Council represents more than 10% of the population of South Carolina. With that comes an incredible diversity of thought and experiences shared by our citizens. Do you seek input from people with different perspectives? In what way and to whom do you turn for input?

One of the priorities of the Greenville Nonprofit Alliance is an increased involvement of non-profit leaders and board members in shaping policy at the local level. If elected, how will you ensure local non-profit leaders have the opportunity to provide a voice in the decisions being made throughout the county?

While I pride myself on always continuing to learn, I don't pretend to know everything. I could never have made it as far as I have without seeking advice and thoughts from many different people and perspectives. I think that is one of the most important priorities a leader should have is to seek out different perspectives to learn from. I would have to check and make sure it is allowed, but to
ensure non-profit leaders have a voice, I would be in favor of having a set number of council members serve on the non-profit alliance board of advisors.