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Each of the following questions includes a 100 word limit

Briefly describe why you are seeking public office:
Public office is a public trust and I can be trusted to listen to residents and understand what they want from their government. I can be trusted to relate to the issues that face residents because I am involved in the business, political, and social fabric of our county. As an attorney and active volunteer, I daily work to bring solutions to the deepest issues that people face. Greenville County is going to continue to grow. My experience in law, real estate, business, and urban planning, as well as my public safety volunteerism, uniquely equip me to lead.

Briefly describe a significant accomplishment that would reflect your ability to lead our community:
Starting and running my solo law firm and small publishing business are great examples of my leadership. Running a solo practice, you have to believe in your community and believe in your ability to succeed. I have consistently employed and trained 5 or more local Greenville County residents while providing clients with excellent legal services. When I realized there was no good place for South Carolina residents to go for accurate gun law, I wrote Shaw’s SC Gun Law - now in its 12th year. Governor McMaster awarded me the Order of the Palmetto for that accomplishment of statewide significance.

If elected, after your first 12 months on Council, what do you hope is your most significant achievement?
The immediate issue is regaining the momentum that our business climate enjoyed before Covid-19 hit. Council must meet frequently and openly to immediately serve our businesses and help get jobs and services back to full capacity in a way that also protects our health. With that in mind, the ongoing issues facing Greenville County are safety and growth management. For safety, I want the GCSO budget to include more uniformed patrol. For growth, Council must address the flaws in Land Development Regulation 3.1 and balance private property rights with infrastructure and quality...
Greenville County is home to nearly 500 nonprofits, ranging from small community centers to large institutions that provide health care, housing, food support, education, arts programming, and so much more. Most recently available data show that nearly 90,000 people in our state are employed in the nonprofit sector and one in three South Carolinians volunteer in a nonprofit organization. Nonprofits and the foundations, companies, and individuals that support them are vital to Greenville County.

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?

As twice past-president of my Lions club, I might be a little partial to the work of the Lions - the largest service non-profit in the world. A highlight was when we provided vision care to a school-aged local girl and she had the entire club crying with joy when she told us her story of going from failing to a straight-A student. Melanie and I have also supported a wide range of local non-profits like Hidden Treasure, Generations Group Home, Strides, Blue Ridge Council Boy Scouts, Upstate Warrior Solutions, Catholic Charities, and North Greenville Food Crisis Ministry.

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?

Non-profits are very effective at uncovering the needs of our community and serving those needs. Government can learn a lot from non-profits. While I do not support increasing taxes or creating new roles that stray away from core government functions, I am open to exploring where county government can partner with non-profits to create efficiencies and remove impediments to a better community.

Housing

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

District 20 is in an ideal position to increase availability of attractive housing through infill and rehabilitation. County Council needs to encourage more housing options by updating its outdated zoning ordinance to allow creative use of existing parcels and structures. Further, communication and transportation infrastructure can open more opportunities to work from home or within an attainable commute - reducing the pressure on land prices. I also believe a cause of the increased cost of housing is permitting complication and sluggishness. I am not for raising taxes to provide affordable housing.

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 can help connect people with work, housing, business and recreation. Greenlink is very well run but it remains underfunded. Being conservative, I tend to think that transit needs to be a private enterprise, self-sustaining, and the costs borne by its ridership. That being said, markets and housing opportunity might be expanded with more transit available. While I don’t see transit as a core government function, I would be open to County Council helping if it is shown by clear and convincing evidence that the county can assist private enterprise in a way that does not burden the taxpayer.
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)?

I have been engaged with that question for most of my adult life. In addition to graduating law school, I earned a Ph.D. in growth management, a master's degree in urban planning, and an undergraduate business degree in real estate. I have litigated land use questions all the way to the SC Supreme Court and participated in national conferences on this question. I am currently appointed by County Council to serve on the Zoning Board of Appeals where we vote on landowners' applications for variances and special use permits. I will approach decisions from a strong private property perspective.

Arts

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

It is very encouraging that we value our arts culture as much as we do. The arts lift spirits and inspire our culture. I try to support the arts through choices of entertainment, recreation and dining. I also know the devastation that the Covid-19 government shut-downs have wreaked. We must put all efforts immediately into helping the taxpayers by focusing on core government functions. This reality will significantly dim enthusiasm for government-supported arts. I am open, however, to building design standards and a requirement that a small portion of projects must include art in a project's features.

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?

Our elected leaders must be able to put the people's business ahead of personality conflicts and differences. I have been very active in our community and forged relationships with many community leaders. I have three times organized events that have brought together a large proportion of our delegation. I also have working relationships and friendships with county staff and the city managers of cities like Travelers Rest and Simpsonville. Last, I have spent considerable time reaching out to all of the special purpose districts in District 20. I am very confident that I can work with all leaders and stakeholders.

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

I have always enjoyed a broad spectrum of friends and colleagues. Most college Thanksgivings I would bring home foreign students and I have been fortunate to travel to many countries. As a Christian, I value everyone and I genuinely take an interest in others - even though it takes work. I have always looked to welcome the new person and try my best to understand him or her. I have learned through client consults that I must first carefully listen and take pains to relate to
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? What they are going through. Only then can I begin to suggest solutions.