

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DENTON VOTERS GUIDE

Denton City Council and Mayor Election Denton Independent School Board of Trustees Election May 12, 2012

The Voters Guide for the May 12, 2012 elections includes the candidates for the Denton City Council positions for District 5 and District 6, Denton Mayor, and the Denton Independent School Board of Trustees positions for Place 1 and Place 2. Candidates were asked to reply within specific word limits. Answers exceeding the word limit are abbreviated at that limit, marked with three slashes (///). The League has not edited any responses for grammar, spelling, or punctuation. The candidates are presented in alphabetical order by last name.

EARLY VOTING by personal appearance will be available at the following location and times for the city of Denton:

Joseph A. Carroll Administration Building, 401 W Hickory, Denton
April 30 – May 5: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
May 7 – May 8: 7:00 am - 7:00 pm

For Early Voting by personal appearance locations outside of the city of Denton, contact the Denton County Elections Administration Office at 940.340-3200 or www.elections.dentoncounty.com.

POLLING PLACES on May 12th, Election Day, are by precinct. Voter registration renewal certificates for 2012-2013 elections will be mailed out by April 25th in accordance with recent federal legislation.

For your Precinct and/or for Polling Place locations, contact the Denton County Elections Administration Office at 940.340-3200 or www.elections.dentoncounty.com.

This VOTERS GUIDE is published by the League of Women Voters of Denton, with partial funding from the League of Women Voters Texas Education fund. An electronic version of this guide is available at www.lwvdenton.org. The purpose of the guide is to help eligible voters make an informed decision about candidates in contested races.

The LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DENTON is a nonpartisan organization that works to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate. The League publishes and distributes factual information to help prepare citizens to cast an informed vote. The League takes action on selected governmental issues that it has studied.



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VOTERS GUIDE

Questions for Denton City Council & Mayor

1. What is the most important mechanism for on-going communication between citizens and council members other than citizen appearances at council meetings? Please explain. (100 words)
2. If city expenditures must be reduced, do you prefer a system of priorities, across-the-board cuts, or other? Please explain. (100 words)
3. Do you think the current mechanism for rezoning property sufficiently protects the integrity of residential neighborhoods? Please explain. (100 words)
4. Under what circumstances would you contract out services as opposed to maintaining in-house expertise? Please give 3 examples. (100 words)

City of Denton Mayor

Mark Burroughs

1. We cannot assume that any one mechanism is better, more important or more effective than other communication mechanisms. Society is changing with technology. Councilmembers must make themselves available to citizens through each of the avenues citizens themselves are comfortable with. Anything less risks disenfranchising groups inadvertently. Encouraging citizen involvement on committees, keeping regular open appointments for citizen meetings, regular councilmember appearances at community events/organizations, electronic communications and of course providing dependable access by telephone, mail, etc. - all are important. Fundamentally, it is the attitude of each councilmember toward open, caring, constructive contact that is key to meaningful communication.
2. It must be by priorities defined both by the policymakers responsible for applying community priorities, both short- and long-term, and by the experts responsible for implementing policy. Knee-jerk, across-the-board "cookie-cutter" cuts are mindless by definition and thus may provide some political cover to the elected officials, but risk far more in potential damage to our most essential services through thoughtless cuts.
3. Exceptions exist to every rule, so while current rezoning rules may protect the majority of neighboring property uses, negative examples can always arise. Therefore, the Council must be ever vigilant in ascertaining where protections might have failed or are at risk for failure and be prepared to creatively, proactively address weaknesses as discovered.
4. Because the breadth of City services and activities is so wide, the need for technical expertise arises every day. If a sufficient volume of activity demanding a specific expert background exists, hiring additional permanent staff is very efficient. Examples include hiring the City arborist and a gas well inspector. If the need for expertise is intermittent or for an extremely narrow field of expertise, using outside experts as needed is most efficient. Examples include outside attorneys for federal court, utility rate litigation, etc., and using engineering consultants when designing a water treatment plant and other highly specialized facilities.

Neil Durrance

1. Our city is not so large that council members or the mayor should not be available to speak with citizens directly and listen to their concerns and acquire their input. We should also take advantage of the city's website. It is often difficult for citizens to know which department they should direct a question, this can be resolved by having all questions sent to a staff member who will direct it to the correct department and then return the answer to the citizen. This should allow for questions directed to the city to be answered in 24 hours or less.
2. I would prefer a system of priorities. However, the public health, welfare and safety should never be compromised. Basic city services of police, fire protection, utilities and transportation should be the top priority. Yet, there are many other areas of savings which have not yet been considered in each of these and other areas. For example, we have many policies in the area of utilities usage and load capacity, which if implemented, could reduce both cost and the necessity of expansion of future capacity and utilities bills of citizens.
3. No. At present we do not provide sufficient notice to the residents, or their neighborhoods, regarding changes in zoning and other effects such as utilities and transmission lines. Our city must adopt a policy of protection of neighborhood integrity. This policy would identify, coordinate and represent a clear and necessary policy for protection of residents from the invasive forces which would threaten the unique nature and lifestyle of our citizens.
4. This city has many assets, and there are few times when we should need to spend tax payer dollars on outside "expertise." I would seek consultant services only if the area of expertise is beyond that required of staff, and then, only if staff cannot attain competency on a timely basis. Three examples of contracting out of services I would employ would be: 1) bond attorneys in acquiring bonds voted on by the citizens on the bond markets; 2) rate structuring for utilities to comply with State Public Utilities Commission and Federal law; 3) independent auditing services.

Donna Woodfork



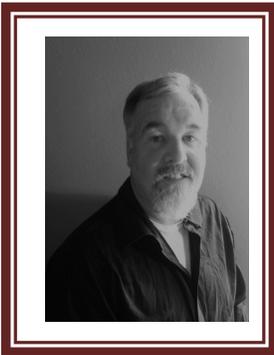
1. I would ensure that there is an ongoing reporting system that would allow citizens to report directly to me as future Mayor of the City of Denton if a citizen may feel that he or she has not received adequate customer service, I would place in all City of Denton Buildings waiting areas, a form that will allow citizens to write up their detailed complaint regarding the level of customer service that he or she receive and develop a zero tolerance for any staff member or city employee who improperly provide citizen-centered customer service while completing their daily job duties.
2. I prefer a system of priorities. I system of priorities will allow me to address the issues that immediately impact the lives of our citizens either directly or indirectly. I will ensure that the issues related to the safety and well being of citizens is addressed first. For example, creating free options for youth when school is out would positively impact the crime rate among youth, juvenile detention rates and the cultural educational development of our youth. Adding an extra fireman on each fire truck to ensure the fire team safety is a priority.
3. No, the current re-zoning code is not sufficient for the integrity of the growing residential neighborhoods of the City of Denton. With respect to entrepreneurs and small business owners who existed before the new zoning codes, it is our responsibility to ensure that our citizens are empowered with the knowledge

necessary to ensure a smooth less complicated understanding of the current code system. I would like to meet with more residents who have been directly impacted by the current change in re-zoning and analyze if a different coding system would be more adequate for the City of Denton.

4. The three examples in which I would contract our services as opposed to maintaining in-house would be when we do not have the expert knowledge of the subject area or project, when we need additional staff for a short-term project and when we may need to reduce permanent positions due to economic changes. With the creation of new technologies and communicational devices, as a city, we are able to accomplish less with fewer employees but long-distance access to consultants and industry experts. Utilizing out-sources contractual services will allow us to balance daily expenses toward long-term financial goals.

Denton City Council, District 5

Larry Frederick



1. Talking to the council at meetings is the worst way to communicate with them and is mostly a last ditch effort to be heard before voting occurs. Many citizens that approach the council feel ignored and put off because they only have 3 minutes to voice their opinion and no response is given by the council. The best way to communicate is in person because councilmembers are present before and after meetings. As your city representative I'd be willing to talk any time. Phone calls, emails, Facebook interactions are all easy ways to communicate today. "Engage Denton" is also available.
2. Costs of labor, materials and contract services are all factored into the Municipal Cost Index. The overall price mix for these have all gone up and will cost Denton more to do business. I believe in being fiscally responsible. City revenues currently are able to meet the expenses and even purchase a \$1,000,000 piece of property without a plan on how it will be used. If expenditures must be reduced in the future then I'm for a system of priorities. Public safety is my main priority. Every attempt should be made to retain city employees; one of Denton's greatest assets!!!
3. The planning department has created Small Area Plans to protect neighborhoods. Rezoning of residential properties, particularly on the boundaries of established neighborhoods, which results in commercial development is one symptom of neighborhood destabilization and decline. Our citizens currently have to go to city hall to fight to maintain the integrity of their neighborhoods. Those living around Houston Place and Oak Street have recently needed to scramble to protect their homes. The Bell Ave. area is also under siege by TWU investors. A new Denton Plan should address ways to protect homeowners from investors wanting to control our citizen's neighborhoods.
4. Our city staff and employees are very talented and able to take on a wide variety of challenges. At times contracting out is necessary. For instance leasing specialized equipment for a specific job rather than making a large purchase. Another example would be if it were more cost effective to outsource services – being good stewards should always be priority. Finally if there were some emergency beyond the in-house area of expertise, putting the safety of the city and our citizens is paramount.

Pete Kamp



1. The most important mechanism for on-going communication between citizens and council members is direct communication. I like to speak with citizens either on the phone or in person. Emails are fine for some, but I prefer personnel contact. I am very available to anyone who wants to meet or talk about issues, concerns, or ideas.
2. If city expenditures must be reduced, I prefer a system of priorities. I have been on council when the city manager proposed across –the-board cuts and it did not achieve a satisfactory outcome. Some positions were eliminated in departments that did not have a critical impact on the budget and other areas could have been reduced that would have made more sense. Health, safety, and welfare should always be considered when making critical choices. Police, Fire, and Utilities cannot always reduce their budgets like some other departments.
3. I am very much in support of protecting the integrity and character of our neighborhoods. The current mechanism for rezoning property has sufficiently protected our residential neighborhoods on many occasions since I have been on council. However, I am in support of reviewing the codes to make sure we are protected in the future.
4. There are several circumstances I believe contract services are necessary. Engineering, transportation, and law related issues sometimes require specific areas of expertise that is not available in-house. Plans for a building or a park have vastly different requirements than plans for streets or traffic logistics. Just as in our private lives, a different lawyer would be needed for family business vs a civil or criminal case. Unfortunately, our city also has many cases that require outside counsel in areas of the law that we do not have in-house.

David Zoltner

1. In my experience, council members are usually responsive to direct email or telephone. Communication, alone, is unfortunately often ineffective. The larger question is the mechanism for monitoring communication between council members and staff. In other words, are council members respecting the public's right to know by strict adherence to open meetings law? Appearances at council meetings are too often reactive after secret decisions have been made in spite of citizen input. "Communication" by itself, may not be worthwhile if council members aren't willing fully consider what their hearing.
2. Across the board cuts typically lead to severe unintended consequences. It would be unwise to apply uniform cuts to programs that have been marginally maintained, or even cut previously, while other non-essential or over-funded categories exist. (Some salary classes, for example) The only equitable approach would be to evaluate each program independently to establish priorities and fund accordingly.
3. It very much depends who is asked this question, where they live, and who the petitioner might happen to be. For example, neighborhoods do fairly well in cases where little known, private petitioners are seeking the rezone. The Bell Historic district has recently been successful in this regard. On the other hand, larger or more powerful developers are often the winners – case in point UNT athletic facilities and traffic issues with Denia Neighborhood- and in all likelihood a new convention center at UNT no one wants or needs outside city hall.

1. It would seem appropriate to outsource extremely large or technical projects such as a new electrical substation or large transmission line, for example.
2. It also might be necessary to retain outside legal services in the case of critical lawsuit where city legal staff may not include experienced trial lawyers.
3. It would NOT be appropriate, however, to outsource consultant services if similar work could be done in house where city officials were merely attempting to avoid responsibility for a controversial or publicly unpopular decision.

Denton City Council, District 6

James King

1. Email and Phone. It seems that the groups or individuals who were most concerned with being effective and successful used email, phone calls, followed last with appearances before City Council.
2. I would prefer a system of priorities.
3. I think our process is cumbersome and unpredictable for all participants.
4. When it is more cost efficient to outsource. When we do not have the expertise in the staff. When the task is very brief and possibly needed in hurry, and there may not be adequate staff availability.

Mike Sutton

1. As an active member of the community and owner of a highly visible business in the heart of the community I would encourage reaching out to me through all available means of communication. In terms of the most effective political action in the city, I have long been a proponent and circulator of petitions carrying forth the will of the constituency. Additionally, I will make myself available on, at least, a monthly basis for town hall style meetings in the community events room of my business.
2. All potential budget reductions for the city should be targeted toward the needs of our growing community. Reductions should focus on the largest and most cumbersome municipal services. Expenditures on code enforcement, debt expanding efforts to attract large business to Denton and expansion of city beaurocracy would be the first cuts I would focus on as a member of the council. Additionally, I would favor increased taxation of large businesses which compete with Denton's local outlets to avoid cutting our city's services to the detriment of the community.
3. I am in favor of increasing the adherence to rezoning procedures as written in the city code. The tendency of the present council has been to circumvent the process of notifications to neighbors of proposed rezoning. The council has also consistently made decisions which favor industrial and commercial interests over the interests of the directly affected community. Rayzor Ranch neighbors, while invited to contribute opinions of the construction of natural gas wells near their homes, were continually put off to quell a rising discontent with the project. The city council pushed through the proposed zoning for the potentially dangerous wells.
4. While I understand the importance of maintaining an eye on the fiscal position of the city, I would prefer to maintain most city services in house. The economic ramifications of city staffing and service decisions being outsourced during a rate of such high unemployment may fall disproportionately on the citizens of

Denton. Already Texas has seen outsourcing of public services to foreign and domestic private corporations in the operation of toll roads and highway construction. Many examples of outsourcing efforts have been the center of controversy and have not benefited the local communities they are meant to serve.

VOTERS GUIDE

Questions for Denton Independent School Board of Trustees

1. What are your qualifications for the office you seek? (50 words)
2. What is the most important mechanism for on-going communication between citizens and school board members other than citizen appearances at board meetings? (100 words)
3. If DISD expenditures must be reduced, where would you make the cuts to have the least impact on the classroom? (Administrators? Class size? Programs such as sports, fine arts, technical education, or others?) (150 words)

Denton Independent School Board of Trustees Place One

Barbara Burns



1. I have advocated for children as a parent, teacher, and community leader who has attended almost every school board meeting in the past seven years. I understand the needs of an individual child, the challenges and rewards of a classroom teacher, and the achievements and issues of the district.
2. The most effective mechanism for communication is personal contact. Board members make themselves accessible for one-on-one conversation by attending functions throughout the district; they welcome opportunities to meet with parents and community members. Board members also have email addresses and phone numbers so citizens have ways to contact trustees. Being accessible to citizens and their concerns plays a vital part in a trustee's decision-making process. The board of trustees is a governing body that flourishes when many points of view are synthesized in efforts to do what is best for our children.
3. DISD has lost millions in state funding and has done what I would do: trim but not eliminate programs. DISD has taken some innovative approaches to being cost-effective and cost-efficient by building two schools with green features, retrofitting lighting and HVAC units at all campuses, and using bio-diesel fuel for buses. When central administrators retired, other administrators assumed their duties. The district chose to rehire teachers and keep all programs, knowing that different children have different needs.

Keeping all programs—whether it is Reading Recovery, choir, or basketball—is vital because educators know that all programs offer developmental opportunities for students. Education is not a “one-size-fits-all” mentality. Children should have the chance to reach their potential and realize their dreams. Education is an investment in the future. I support cuts which have the least impact on the classroom.

Sheryl English



1. Currently serve on Denton ISD Education Improvement Committee, Legislative VP For Denton PTA Council, Juvenile Impact Volunteer and Juvenile Advisory Committee with Denton County Sheriff Department, City of Denton Human Advisory Committee, Chair. Realtor and business owner and mother of 3 children Currently attending Denton ISD Schools.

2. Board members and administration need to be more visible to the parents who's Children they are entrusted with daily. Parents don't necessarily want to complain, However they do want to be part of the process. A partnership with teachers and Administration and the community to make sure that children receive the education They deserve and making it easier on the teachers who

teach them with the current Situation we face. The most important people in this equation are the children, first and foremost. We have a fiduciary responsibility to the parents, taxpayers and stakeholders in our community to have ///

3. Denton ISD definitely has line items on its budget that need to be reviewed and some Have been reviewed and adjusted in many areas. However, we need to find other items within the budget that are causing a deficiency and facilities that are not self sustaining and causing a loss to the district before we start looking to the items mentioned above. The district also needs to look into non-traditional resources to generate income into the district, so it's not so dependent on government in the event more funding cuts are ahead and doesn't cause the local taxpayers additional increase in taxes

Denton Independent School Board of Trustees Place Two

Unopposed Candidate Declared Elected Trustee

Jeanetta Smith

You may bring this VOTERS GUIDE into the voting booth!
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