

The Greater Iowa City Area Home Builders Association

2020 Coralville City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Name of Candidate: **Barry Bedford**

Please respectfully consider answering the below questions and return them to Karyl@HBAofIC.org by Monday, September 21, 2020.

1. Why are you running and what are your priorities if elected?

I am running for City Council because I believe that I can help the City in several unique ways. I have been a resident of Coralville for 47 years. My wife Roxie and I have raised three children and currently have 13 grandchildren; most of whom live in this area. I served the residents of Coralville as a peace officer for more than 43 years; over 28 years as the Chief of Police. I retired in 2017 and have since obtained certification as an executive life coach and leadership consultant and trainer. I also have been a professional expert witness relating to "Police Practice" in matters before the Federal Court. For the past three years I have volunteered in the southeast area of Iowa City working with people who are homeless, of low income, and food insecure. I helped them to attain food and shelter, provided personal coaching and budgetary assistance, and met many of their other needs by referring them to resources within the community. I also serve on the Salvation Army Advisory Board and help with serving evening community meals.

Strengths

I have a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and Master's degree in Public Affairs, both from the University of Iowa. During my career I have developed personal strengths and skills, including commitment, problem-solving, conflict management and resolution, excellent fiscal management, effective communications, mediation, listening, and high personal integrity; all of which I can bring to the Coralville Council. Working together, I believe the city we love can become even better, and a place we are proud to call our home.

My Priorities are as follows:

A. Recover Fiscal Stability

I believe the most pressing need the Council will face in the next year involves the financial condition of the city. The COVID-19 virus and the shutdown of much of our local economy and business community has coupled with a recent derecho and resulted in significant financial hardships to individuals, businesses, the City budget and City's financial resources. City employees have been furloughed, positions unfilled, and services to the public have been reduced. The lack of anticipated income through the hotel-motel taxes and events canceled at the convention center and the new arena have further exacerbated the fiscal issue. I will use my 28 years of balancing city budgets and familiarity with the budget process to help steer Coralville to a firm fiscal position.

B. Cultivate community trust

Community trust in cities and police departments are in decline, both across the nation and in Iowa as well. We must strive for real progress in uniting all members of our community; effectively rebuilding and enhancing the trust. 43 years as a Coralville peace officer taught me how to cultivate community trust: through real relationships, honest conversations, and genuine acts of service.

C. Advance racial and social justice

Community life in Coralville must reflect the truth that every man, woman, and child is created equal by God and should be afforded the respect, dignity and equal treatment that God and the Constitution have granted them. As Chief of Police for 28 years, I practiced these values by building a diverse Police Department, educated and trained to serve Coralville's diverse community.

2. How would you facilitate a continued favorable economic environment for your community?

I am very business friendly. I grew up in a home where my father had a small business. I experienced firsthand the emotional trauma of a failed business and my dad's personal bankruptcy, and I saw his pride return as he built a second business into a successful heating and air conditioning contractor in West Des Moines. Small business is the backbone of our economy and one of the mainstays of our society. We need to encourage small business development and help all of our neighbors achieve success.

I also believe that the City should actively recruit high quality businesses with good paying jobs to our community. This creates more opportunity for people to earn a living wage and allow them to live in our community and rent or buy homes here and shop in local businesses.

3. How do you feel about the current government regulatory environment and how might you improve what is currently in place?

While working for the City, I sat on the subdivision review team. I learned that there are many regulations imposed upon developers and contractors. I think there is value in having regulations that are meant to ensure the safety of building owners and those who occupy the structures. I also believe that the developers and the City need to work together to create safe, efficient and attractive developments.

All that being said, I am not a fan of regulations just for the sake of having them. As I will say below, we need to listen to the needs of the business community and view them as community partners and engage them in honest conversations about matters that are important to them, including regulations that they believe are unnecessary or unfair.

4. What are your thoughts on TIF funding for projects that enhance economic growth and are you favorably disposed as to how this has been utilized by current and past councils?

In short, I believe that Tax Increment Financing (TIF) can be very beneficial to a community when used for economic growth; as it has been to Coralville over the years. I am generally favorably disposed to using TIF in this manner. However, it can have drawbacks and should be used with comprehensive evaluation and some caution. Development using TIF often requires the City to borrow money to make a major infrastructure investment with tax payments from the development repaying the debt. If multiple TIF areas are used, it could create significant debt for the borrowing city and must be monitored closely with a specific plan in place for retirement of that debt.

As I mentioned above, the economic devastation as a result of the Corona Virus, the derecho and the resultant economic impact on businesses and residents have impacted the City budget negatively as well. I am not aware of all the factors that went into previous City Council decisions regarding TIF. I am aware that a debt structure plan has been in place for some time. However, the recent events have made the next year or more extremely important for the City to evaluate its long term fiscal stability, create a new debt service plan and implement it to remain fiscally sound.

5. How do you plan to address the issue of affordable housing in your community?

We need to provide housing that is affordable for people in our community. We should continue to pursue funding opportunities, when available, to support owner-occupied housing rehabilitation and down payment assistance. We should also support partners building apartments with low income housing tax credits or work force housing tax credits.

6. How do you plan to engage our membership to further enhance our area?

Coralville must be a *Reliable* and *Responsive* partner. Reliable means that we keep our fiscal house in order, process all applications and permits on time, and maintain transparency in policy making. Responsive means listening to the needs of the business community and seeing employers as community partners. We need to approach new business development with an open mind and engage in honest conversations.