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2021 Edmonds City Council Candidate

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1. Do you favor a regional or a local approach to addressing issues such as housing and homelessness? If your answer is “a regional approach”, do you hold fast to that answer even where regional solutions such as a push for a massive increase in urbanized density, incentives and tax breaks to developers shift the tax burden to residents, including seniors and those on fixed incomes? How would you intend to listen to citizens and protect the character and fragile environment of our city from competing regional interests?

If you favor a local approach, how will you “protect the character and fragile environment of our city” and counter the shifting of tax burden from developers to Edmonds citizens while ensuring a policy that reasonably increases housing availability?

This question is not an “either” / “or” question. All Edmonds decisions must be viewed first and foremost with an Edmonds focus that is inclusive of our entire geographic and demographic populations with maximum opportunity to engage and hear from those that live here and will be directly affected by policy changes that have the potential to impact both the quality of life and the financial burden placed upon them.

Within that focus, issues that require a broader Regional lens because they are either dependent on Regional partnerships like our transportation futures or are issues that are not solvable alone like our homelessness and mental health needs, must be considered and evaluated when needed. Every single decision, local or regional, must be scrutinized to weigh the benefits against the needs and costs to ensure we are exercising the financial accountability and responsibility to our already overburdened tax payers and the many seniors and those with disabilities that are on fixed incomes. As a CPA with a Masters in Accounting and a former global auditor for a fortune 500 company, I am the only candidate in this race with the financial experience and expertise that will provide an immediate value to protecting our public funds.

2. Edmonds’ government seems to have devolved into an unelected staff and City Attorney more frequently proposing and even advocating for legislation. Few even reside in the City by which they are employed. Should unelected staff have a heightened level of influence and power in creating legislation? How should that be managed and where should Edmonds’ citizens fit into that legislative process?

Public input is the foundation of good government and must always be the priority when considering policy and legislation. Staff must be qualified to hold the position they are hired for and provide information that is based on research and facts data. The reality is that this is not always the case and because they report to an elected administration, there is a real risk that the data provided and presented can be done so to reflect the position of the administration instead of an unbiased one. I value the professionals that work for our city at all levels and I believe for the most part they have

nothing but doing what is best for our city, but we must have a check and balance. That check and balance is our public participation and our council who make the Legislative decisions. I think that staff should provide input and data points but make an official recommendation. Once they have provided input on a policy proposal, it should be weighed in on by the public and then vetted by the council in a separate meeting than one that any motion to approve would be held. I also believe that the council has a responsibility to the citizens to perform due diligence on their own to verify or refute what has been provided by staff. This is the very check and balance that should be expected of our council.

3. RCW 36.70A.140 requires a city with a Comprehensive Plan to ensure “continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive land use plans and development regulations...” In contravention of this law Edmonds government has been lacking in how citizens are engaged in its “consideration and response to public comments”. (RCW 36.70.140) Examples include Citizen Housing Commission polls written with predetermined outcomes, poll outcomes being discounted when the results did not conform to a certain agenda and a refusal to read aloud public comments submitted in writing to Council meetings against the spirit and intent of the Governor’s Proclamation 20-28 which states that any virtual public meeting “(b) provides the ability for all persons attending the meeting to hear each other at the same time.” What will you do as a Council member to ensure continuous public participation in a genuine and transparent manner?

I am committed to constant outreach and engagement with our community at all corners, both inside and outside of the bowl. This is what is missing and needs to be our first priority! I support regular Town halls in various locations so that those that can’t attend the scheduled council meetings can be heard and engaged. I believe that any poll or survey asked of our residents and businesses be done with the most transparent and scientific means available so that the results are not tilted in the favor of the administration or one group's interest.

I also believe that the voices of our community should not be suppressed and if there are procedural barriers to continuing public comment, these barriers should be suspended by rule to allow for the additional public comments. We seem to be in a cycle of only using procedure when it is convenient to suppress the community while ignoring the very rules that govern our meetings which end too many important topics not getting the appropriate discussion and deliberation they deserve. This leads to rushed judgements and decisions that harm our city and leave us vulnerable. Case and point operating without a permanent Police Chief.

4. Rank the following issues in order of your priority for Edmonds. Detail your ideas about how to address each of the top three. Please be specific.

___Affordable Housing

_3_Equity and Inclusion

_2_Protection of the Environment

___Economic Development

1 Public Safety

Each of these issues must be a priority for our city. Ranking them in order suggests that one is somewhat less important than the other. They are all important but to satisfy the question I submit the following:

1. Public Safety – We start by giving our community the confidence that we can make decisions that are in their public safety interest by confirming a permanent Chief of Police based on a process that seeks out the most qualified candidate and vets them as thoroughly as possible to ensure they will lead our brave men and women with professional and skill. Second, we engage the community through regular events that allow citizens to be heard and a process to track and follow complaints, concerns, ideas that are submitted to administration. Many of our residents feel ignored and issues as simple as speeding and traffic mitigation in neighborhoods that are brought up are not responded to in a timely fashion. As a Council member I will provide a constant check to this accountability and advocate for timely response.

Communication is key.

2. Protecting our environment is critical. We only have one planet. I think that finding the funding for projects that enhance our environmental position and responsibility are just one element of what I bring to the table on day one. It's not enough to fund environmental initiatives and cleanups, we must constantly educate our community on the importance of our environment and relationships to our existing gems like our marsh and few remaining old growth parks like HUTT. I will support and continue to partner with organizations that educate and clean up our community so that the people that live, visit and work here have another opportunity to work alongside and discuss their ideas with the city government.

3. Equity and Inclusion must be an element in everything that we do and all of our policies so that everyone has equal opportunity to enjoy our city. As a business owner on HWY 99 and a member of the minority community myself, I understand firsthand the challenges that are faced by these populations. When we make decisions, they need to be made for EVERYONE, irrespective of what part of the city they live in or their financial position or where they come from. We have a welcoming community and when elected I will continue to reach out to both those currently engaged and those who are not so that our city government is reflective, relevant and accessible to everyone.

4. 4/5. Economic Development and Affordable Housing are no less important than the previous three responses but I am answering them together because they are somewhat dependent on each other. I believe we need to address the growth we are facing. We have both a responsibility to do so and an urgent need too. Our government is dependent on funding sources and our businesses create opportunities for jobs and critical revenues. We need to look at solutions that make sense in areas like HWY 99 corridor to create mixed use opportunities that can provide diverse housing options and new businesses at the same time establishing a vibrant uptown core that can double as a cultural center and

welcoming destination for surrounding cities. This will support housing and create economic opportunities and protect the unique character and charm that we all love so much.

Our issues should not be treated as an "us" or "them" approach. The council has to prioritize working together and listening to our community, and when we do this, we can truly create policy that works for everyone and is decided on what's best for the city, not on partisan lines!!!