

The 2008 City Council elections for the City of Denton will be held on Saturday, May 10; early voting begins Monday, April 28.

The chamber's Local Relations Committee asked each announced candidate to list their three most critical priorities and how they would propose to address them.

MAYOR

JUSTIN BELL

1. Over the past decade our city government has been reactive rather than proactive. Our city has survived this myopic policy because of prosperous economic conditions induced by the baby boomer generation. Over the next decade we will see a decline in spending from the boomers when they transition to a fixed income. We will also see a surplus in housing as they downsize into smaller homes or retirement communities. We must take proactive measures to curb government spending and increase recession proof industries which will contribute to a steady tax base, as well as create and retain demand for housing.
2. Our city leaders spend money like a spoiled child abuses their parent's credit card. It is unbelievable that our city would hire a lobbyist in an attempt to raise the state sales tax cap. This action could have deleterious effects not only in Denton but the entire state. Given the current economic conditions, any type of tax or fee increase will have a negative impact upon our economy. I will guide our city council to enact strict spending limits and decrease taxes.
3. Given the amount of revenue the City of Denton receives, we should have superior infrastructure in place. These improvements must be functioning before development of new areas begin, rather than after new developments have become operational. One current council member suggested that we should restrict growth until the infrastructure catches up. As you can imagine, this is not an option! Now is the time for a proactive policy to create a superior system of infrastructure which will serve our needs well into the future.

www.justinbell2008.com

MARK BURROUGHS

1. Vision vs. Reality. Our long-term development goals are not being implemented. As the 9th fastest growing City in the U.S., Denton is changing. The City must welcome change but protect itself from its pitfalls: deteriorating roads and facilities, strained city services, under-maintained public and other property, higher taxes and fees. The Denton Plan foresaw this. Its goals envisioned using planning tools to encourage healthy growth while minimizing adverse symptoms. We must refocus City attention to match up those goals with the regulations implementing them and actual outcomes. Clearly there is a disconnect now, and action must be taken.
2. Development Processes. Our City's development/planning processes are in real need of improvement. We are reputed as user-unfriendly. Without corrective measures, we risk our short- and long-term economic development future. Without quality economic development, growth will not pay for itself, leaving us, the current citizens, to pay that price. We must rebuild our key City staff dealing with growth issues . . . and we must be committed to hold on to them. Over the last couple of years, Denton has seen a wholesale loss of talent in planning, finance, engineering, code enforcement and other departments. The results are negative
3. Community Involvement. Denton's citizens spoke loudly only a few years ago to say that our neighborhoods, history and other unique qualities must be protected. The way to define and implement this Vision is for the City to promote the highest levels of citizen involvement as issues arise. The opposite has occurred. Council meetings rarely see meaningful debate on all sides of issues. Unanimous votes are routine. City boards and commissions have been marginalized. While this may be efficient, it's counter-productive to the Council staying in touch with its citizenry and disrespects citizen participation in the process. This must change.

www.markburroughs.com

DARAC FAVRE (Did not respond)

PERRY McNEILL

1. These three issues are all wrapped around a single word, **GROWTH**. It is coming and how we approach it will determine Denton's future for the NEXT generation. This has to be a cooperative effort between Government, Education (all 3 levels) and Business/Industry. With this cooperative effort we can attract quality commercial entities and quality residential development. We have to set the standards that represent the citizens' desire for a high quality of life while developing and implementing City approval processes that are sensitive to the fact that "time is money for business firms". These are not mutually exclusive goals.
2. We must become **PROACTIVE IN DEVELOPING INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORTATION**, utilities (electric, water, wastewater and drainage) to anticipate where various types of development will occur. I have led the Council in sequestering the gas well revenues to use in activities that will return investment to the City for projects such as infrastructure construction. We must **INSIST** that our utility rates be competitive with our neighbors, TXU, etc., if we intend to accomplish my goals in (1). We currently have the **LOWEST** electric rates in the Metroplex with our other rates being **VERY** competitive. This is good for existing and new business.
3. **PROTECTION OF EXISTING COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL/RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS** is **CRITICAL** in dealing with this exponential growth. We must always be mindful of what's here as we move forward. The combination of **OLD** and **NEW** makes Denton unique and special. Current re-development and infill procedures are woefully inadequate to entice the type of activity that our citizens have very clearly stated they want to see in existing parts of our Community. This process is underway and can be brought to fruition within the next quarter. The Chamber's role in Denton's current success was critical and must continue in order to achieve these goals.

PLACE 5 (at-large)

PETE KAMP

Transportation issues are not simply about mobility, but also about our quality of life and our air quality. As we continue to grow, we need to build new streets, maintain our aging infrastructure, widen I35E, build our downtown multi-modal station before the arrival of DCTA, and continue to expand and develop projects at our airport. I have been very involved with all transportation issues for over four years as Chair of the Council Mobility Committee, member of the Regional Transportation Council, Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition, Tex-21 and NASCO Executive Board Member, and others. I have been influential achieving hundreds of millions of dollars in funding for Denton and I am very committed to continue these endeavors.

Our economic development measures and property maintenance codes need to work together so we can achieve a better living environment for our entire community. These procedures are also about our quality of life and should be incentive based. We need to protect the unique qualities of our different neighborhoods, downtown, and historical areas. At the same time, we need to encourage sustainable, quality developments and projects. In just the last few years, Denton has seen the valuable additions of Granite Business Park, Aldi Corporation, Business Air, JetWorks, Sally Beauty word headquarters, Razor Ranch, new hospitals, many new retail additions and medical facilities. We have more meaningful, knowledge based jobs than ever before in our history and I absolutely will continue my efforts to attract quality businesses to our city and maintain our commercial base.

MIKE SUTTON (Did not respond)

PLACE 6 (at-large)

JERRY MOHELNITZKY

- (1) The primary issue facing the city is fiscal accountability. There are too many situations emerging with regard to cost overruns in a system without checks and balances. Unfortunately when these situations have occurred it is too late to remedy. We need a proactive council not the current council's reactive position. A fiscally accountable city council assures that taxpayers have a representative voice in

addressing the needs of the city. My style of management is one that seeks to eliminate the surprises when the bills come due.

- (2) Open and Collaborative government is one of the cornerstones of my campaign. I believe that it is crucial for government to be transparent to the citizens of Denton. Without that transparency our democratic principles lie in the balance because it creates distrust and dissatisfaction. Unfortunately city government can create an “us against them” mentality. No one is well served by that mentality. It is my belief that the City of Denton has an obligation to serve the citizens and to be accountable to the citizens. Open Government creates a clear understanding of this accountability.
- (3) Our city has fallen into a trap of reacting to situations rather than thinking proactively. An effective city government is one that is able to see into the future and project the needs of the community and to act on those needs long before they reach a crisis stage. I will provide this kind of visionary leadership by talking with all segments of the community, working with city staff and by utilizing my 40 years of experience in helping the companies I work for to plan for the future. Denton must become a proactive not reactive city.

www.jerrymo.com

JOE MULROY

1. Enhancing Denton's Quality of Life. Great companies choose cities for the community environment in which employees live. Schools, parks, recreational programs, libraries, cultural events, and most importantly neighborhoods contribute to this equation. Neighborhood preservation and revitalization are watershed challenges that define our community's vitality and determine the future desirability of living in Denton. Community services, neighborhood planning, code enforcement, and infrastructure rehabilitation require refocused budgetary and community attention to enhance our quality of life to benefit those who live here or may choose to live here. Great neighborhoods are the foundation for Quality of Life and Quality Economic Development.
2. Growth Management is an ever-changing, all-encompassing challenge that must always balance long term objectives and short-term realities. Identifying water, wastewater, solid waste, and power resources 30 years out is a given. Environmentally friendly, sustainable practices relieve demand as we improve. Future land usage is still conflicted as higher-density, less sprawl, New Urbanism is introduced against traditional “bigger is better” mindset. Fuel costs, public transit, community amenities and open spaces contribute to a broader not only acceptance, but desirability of New Urbanism

for many city dwellers. Our comprehensive plan must be continually updated for community sustainability.

3. Quality Economic Development is essential for community commerce and ability to fund our future enhanced Quality of Life. The challenge Denton now faces is "selectivity". Even though we are now "on the map" and many enterprises are contemplating involvement here we must not lessen our efforts to attract and/or retain top tier corporate citizens such as our recent successes with Aldi and Jostens. Our challenge is to aim high for knowledge and skill based companies of permanent tenure that will contribute to our community as a whole, as well as our tax revenues.

PLACE 2 (special election)

RUDY MORENO

1. Denton County is the 53rd fastest growing in the nation according to a recent study. What some communities see as an opportunity really becomes the primary issue facing the city – growth. The underlying challenges involve effective planning for transportation, maintaining the character of Denton, maintaining property standards, being more efficient in working with developers, and maintaining essential city services such as fire and police protection, maintaining streets, sanitary and storm sewer systems. The council should stress that Denton is worthy of the growth by encouraging quality development, while at the same time facilitating the development process once projects are approved.
2. City Fiscal affairs have come to the forefront in recent weeks. Council's responsibility begins with gaining a full understanding budgeting process and approval at the beginning of each year. City Manager should periodically update the Council with budget to actual comparisons. Significant variations should be carefully detailed. In-house projects, especially building projects, should be monitored very closely. The council must maintain oversight while remaining a policy maker. These issues must be discussed during regular council meetings, not just during council work sessions, else council and staff cannot be accountable for their actions.
3. Communication with the Citizenry is also very important. First and foremost a council member should be fair-minded, impartial, and willing to listen to all sides of an issue before forming an opinion. Periodic town

hall or neighborhood meetings where citizens can meet with their council person face-to-face are the best method of communication. Being available at all times through email, phone or written communication is a must. The council may want to re-consider items that are automatically approved on the consent agenda and allow the public more opportunity to speak on those items.

www.Rudy4Denton.com

JOHN RYAN

1. An open and accountable government is essential to a solid relationship between the council and the citizens and businesses in Denton. I intend to hold monthly meetings for District 2 similar to the meetings which currently take place in District 1. I would like the City to make most commonly requested documents, not currently available, available on the City's website. I would like the City to have meeting notification emails for all Council and Citizen's boards meetings. Ultimately check and balance policies must be in place in order to make sure the system is working properly.
2. It is very important as the city grows we insure the growth raises and does not lower the standards of living in Denton. We must promote higher standards for health and education as well as environmental issues. Denton has a unique situation in the fact that seven of the top eight employers do not pay taxes, which means the burden is spread thicker on homeowners and small businesses. This makes it much more important that city leaders understand the effects of new fees and regulations. A diversified tax base lessens the burden on the citizens.
3. Excellent code enforcement and street maintenance are essential to Economic Development. Our code enforcement staffing level is 40% of most cities our size. It has been a lack of foresight and deferred maintenance for a very long time that has put us in the position we are in today. I have a plan by which four new code officers can be hired without affecting other services, increasing ad valium taxes or fines. At a federal level we are concerned with budget deficit at the local level we need to be concerned with maintenance deficits and deferrals.

www.ryanfordenton.org