



Williamson County Election – August 5, 2010  
Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: **Brian Beathard**

Office/District: **County Commissioner, 11<sup>th</sup> District**

1. What is your motivation in seeking election to the Williamson County Commission?  
How does your background and/or experience qualify you to hold this position?

After being asked by a few neighbors and friends, I prayed about it, talked with my family about it, and decided that it was the right choice. Local government directly affects the most personal aspects of our lives. I care deeply about the future of Williamson County, and I believe my experience in business and my passion for the community will allow me to be a highly effective representative.

My business background will lend expertise to various aspects of maintaining low taxes and the quality of life we enjoy in our County. One example is my extensive fleet asset maintenance and cost reduction experience. I have some ideas on how we can better manage our fleet of County vehicles and repair facilities, and save the taxpayers some money.

2. What should be the top priorities of the Williamson County Commission over the next several years? How would you address and/or fund these priorities?

The Commission's focus should always be on preserving our quality of life, and ensuring that our County is a desirable place to live and work. We should capitalize on clean dollars from tourism, on the employment and tax-base contributions of corporate headquarters, and on the kind of long-range planning that facilitates responsible growth.

When you live in a great place, you have to expect that more people will want to be here. The objective is to make it fund itself in a manner that delivers the necessary infrastructure before it's too late or outdated. We can always find creative ways to work smarter

3. What is your vision of residential and commercial development within the unincorporated portions of the County over the next 5-10 years?

We have to think long-term and manage growth wisely. If growth of some sort is inevitable, then we should plan accordingly. Mixed-use subdivisions like Westhaven offer residential and commercial amenities all in one setting. That type of development doesn't detract as much from the natural beauty of Williamson County,

it helps build a sense of community and it results in less traffic congestion. All of these elements are important to our future.

4. Williamson County has realized tremendous success in terms of economic development and corporate recruitment efforts over the past several years. How would you propose to continue and/or enhance these efforts?

By continuing to do what we have been doing, and by delivering on the promise of my campaign – keeping Williamson County a special place to live and work. Our state and our community are business-friendly, and corporations recognize that it's a great place to live too. By maintaining our quality of life, our low taxes and our great schools, we attract business. If we keep doing the smart things – the right things – the most sought-after companies will come.

5. Do county governments within Tennessee need broader taxing authority granted from the state legislature? Does Williamson County? If so, what specific revenue-generating options would you support?

Yes, I believe that local governments should have the authority to manage the affairs of their local communities. The recession has demonstrated that we're a little too reliant on sales taxes, but at the same time, we've been able to manage by cutting expenses and tightening our belts as we do in our own families.

People want to live here. Companies want to operate here. Developers want to develop here. We need to leverage our attractiveness while remaining competitive. There is a balance, and I believe we can find it without overburdening individual taxpayers.

6. Under what circumstances should local governments exercise the power of eminent domain? Is there a need to limit or expand this power on the federal or state level?

Eminent domain should only be used when there is a clear demonstration of a critical need AND public benefit, and certainly when all other options have been exhausted. The rights of property owners should be paramount in any discussion about the use of eminent domain.

7. How important is the development and preservation of diverse housing options within Williamson County? What role, if any, should county government play in this effort?

I believe in diversity on all levels, and certainly socio-economic diversity is a central element of any great community. The most effective examples I've seen

have been through the efforts of grassroots, non-profit organizations, such as Hard Bargain/Mt. Hope Redevelopment, Habitat for Humanity, the United Community Resource Foundation and the Community Housing Partnership. I'm not sure we need Government to be in the business of social engineering.

8. Do you have issues or concerns regarding the County's current sign ordinance? Please explain.

I think sign ordinances are important from an aesthetic standpoint, but the County seems to manage the process fine.

9. How should elected officials in Williamson County balance the need between economic development and the protection of our natural resources and the environment?

As I mentioned earlier, when you live in a great place, you have to expect that other people will want to live here also. We need to encourage responsible growth, not chaotic, self-serving growth. We need to recognize that part of what makes Williamson County special is its natural beauty and our duty as elected officials is to protect and preserve it. We need to take a look at impact fees and how they can help make the growth that is allowed fund itself in a manner that delivers the necessary infrastructure before it's outdated.

10. Should Williamson County government advocate or promote initiatives aimed at improving environmental sustainability? If so, where should these efforts focus?

As a society, we are gaining a better understanding of our impact on the environment. We've also begun to understand that "green" initiatives can also save money, and that's something that matters to all of us. I am in favor of the recycling options that the County offers and the Blue Bag initiative that the city of Franklin has launched. I also think that more education on the little things – i.e., don't waste paper by printing unnecessary documents – will help people to make positive change AND save money. These things allow everyone the opportunity to do their part.

#### 11. Other Comments

I am running as an Independent because I believe that local government should be immune to partisan politics – these are community issues; the needs are immediate and local. An efficient and effective government saves precious time, resources and tax dollars. Most other counties across the state are non-partisan – Williamson County should be too. The primary election this year served no purpose, but it cost the County about \$75,000. That's an awful lot of money.

I also feel strongly that everyone in the district should know their County Commissioners – citizen involvement is at the core of a representative government. My pledge is an open dialogue, and I will actively seek the opinions

of those in the 11<sup>th</sup> District on policy issues as their elected representative. My home phone number is 656-4661.

### **Contact Information:**

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