

Williamson County Elections – May 4, 2010
Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Steve Smith

Office/District: 12th District, County Commission

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?

I have enjoyed being involved and serving our community since about 1990, first as a Franklin planning commissioner and then At Large Alderman for Franklin. This experience with the city helps me represent the 12th District, which lies within the City of Franklin. My education and experience in banking also provides me with a good background to evaluate and make decisions on county issues.

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?

In this difficult economic environment, the county needs to be very careful in controlling its spending and being good stewards of taxpayer dollars. While we borrow to finance capital projects, like schools, much like families borrow to finance a house, Williamson County has a AAA rating and has prudently managed our debt. The county's responsibility to educate students is something we must live up to and continue to support, as it is one of the main drivers of our prosperity and economic growth. Other opportunities for new initiatives must only be pursued if there are funds available. The basic services of the county such as education, public safety and roads must be maintained.

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

The county's planning and zoning department is doing a good job of preparing plans for various areas of the county for residential and commercial development with appropriate public input. Commercial development will normally seek out areas with sufficient infrastructure already in place and those areas are well defined. The 12th District which I represent is within the Franklin city limits and is essentially fully developed at this point.

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?

The county's economic development program, under Matt Largent, is working to attract quality businesses to Williamson County, as well as help existing businesses to prosper. I have worked on those efforts and continue to support those aims. My work with the

Williamson County Franklin Chamber of Commerce has also been a part of those efforts. I am also on the board of the Williamson County Convention and Visitors Bureau which works to attract tourists to Williamson County. The economic impact of tourism saves county taxpayers over \$300.00 per household on property taxes and is a clean, sustainable industry.

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?

There may be a fee structure that might be needed to support a specific program the county might be required to provide, there are often unfunded mandates from the state or federal government that are imposed on us. Otherwise I feel that Williamson has the taxing authority it needs to provide the services required for our citizens.

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?

I have supported eminent domain in cases where public facilities such as schools or roads need to be constructed. I do not favor condemnation to provide for private businesses.

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 that our zoning and planning ordinances need to be written broadly enough to allow for a range of housing options in our county. We have a range of environments from rural to suburban that demand flexibility in our ability to allow for a mix of housing types and price points. I am not aware of a particular problem in this area at this time.

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

I am not aware of a particular problem with the sign ordinance in Williamson County at this time. While a city alderman, I worked with the sign ordinance to reduce large signage and reduce the number of signs, but achieve a workable solution for those businesses that need temporary or permanent signage to advertise their business.

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

I think in Williamson County we generally have a reasonable balance between growth and environmental preservation. The County Government has made strides to enhance the environment, such as the sewer project in the Grassland area, to eliminate failing septic tanks. There are a number of private initiatives to preserve family farms and the

County has worked with the State on the trails program that promotes the rural areas around us for tourism.

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

The County is working on environmental sustainability through continued advancement on the closure of the landfill and maintenance of the convenience centers to promote recycling.

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