

Hopi Stosberg

Below are my responses to the questionnaire from the Chamber Advocacy Team. Please let me know if you have further questions. Thank you.

1. If elected, what are your top 3 priorities as a City Council member? (200 words)

1. **Affordable, family, housing.** There need to be more evenly distributed upper, middle, and lower income housing options throughout Bloomington. A more varied housing market will result in improved community relations and greater understanding and shared goals. Additionally, incentivizing missing middle housing development so more citizens are able to afford ownership should be a housing priority.
2. **Furthering connections between city and school government and sharing focus on common goals.** There are a number of overlapping goals related to equity, environmental stewardship, and citizen accessibility shared between Monroe County Community Schools and Bloomington city government. These two organizations are natural partners and the two entities should be working together to meet common goals.
3. **Improving transparency and options for community engagement with council.** The current organization, timing, and procedures of council meetings are not convenient for citizens with limited resources of time and money. Meetings are lengthy and it is not easy to predict when an agenda item will be addressed. Not everyone has the evening flexibility to wait, potentially for hours, in order to address the council. This issue, among others, means that the community feedback received at council meetings is not representative of the diversity of the Bloomington population.

2. What concerns do you have about the business community and economic development in Bloomington? (125 words)

In order to have a thriving business community and options for economic growth, there needs to be a thriving, livable community. Attracting and retaining entrepreneurs and employees requires adequate housing, childcare, educational opportunities, a sense of safety, mobility options, and the vision of a future in Bloomington. Affordable housing is in short supply. Finding rental housing with lease start dates unconnected to the academic calendar is incredibly challenging. Buying a home remains outside the possibility for many full time employees in Bloomington. Finding open and affordable preschool and childcare openings is not easy. There have been attacks motivated by hatred and discrimination, which does not communicate a feeling of community safety and security. The looming threat of climate change affects all of that.

3. What solutions would you propose to address these concerns? Specifically, what would you do to promote a positive business climate? (125 words)

Housing ends up being most central to those challenges. Without affordable housing, employees can't afford to live in Bloomington. That forces a more sprawled population, making more car travel necessary, exacerbating climate related issues, and making it harder for employees to get to work. Programs focused on the missing middle housing market that will increase home ownership across several economic categories in Bloomington is where I would like to start.

4. What do you think is our community's biggest opportunity? What is its biggest threat? (125 words)

As a small city Bloomington has a lot of opportunity and possibility, but the biggest opportunity has to be Indiana University. The presence of the university, as an international attraction, means that Bloomington has a far broader cultural understanding than most of the Midwest. With that cultural understanding come opportunities to build community, establish niche businesses, and utilize an energetic student population in our networks of social service. The biggest threat we have is maintaining our systems to support that population. Unfortunately housing has become increasingly costly and hard to find and buying a home can feel out of reach to those seeking to establish themselves here.

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