



## South Frankfort Neighborhood Association **City Commission** **2018 Candidates questionnaire (*general election edition*)**

During the primary we chose to ask the candidates ten questions. The questions are a modified version of those suggested by the Strong Towns organization ([strongtowns.org](http://strongtowns.org)). This October 2018 edition of the document presents only those candidates standing in the general election. Below are the unedited replies received from the candidates, as well as any points of contact they wished to share. **These have not been changed since the primary.**

SFNA will hold a public forum for candidates on Thurs 25 Oct 2018, in advance of the General Election. 7pm at the Frankfort High School Auditorium.

The last page contains links to the primary period video interviews conducted by Cable-10 for Commission candidates. We expect updated video to be posted in the coming weeks: <http://www.youtube.com/user/FrankfortPlantBoard/videos>

The District 1 Magistrate position was won by Sherry Sebastian during the primary.

Sample ballot: <http://app.sos.ky.gov/ballots/Franklin%202018%20General.pdf>

Any errors in formatting or photo size are the responsibility of SFNA.

web: [www.southfrankfort.org](http://www.southfrankfort.org)

Facebook - <http://www.facebook.com/SFNA40601/>

## **Buddy Bennett**

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***Do you think our main street/downtown is healthy and successful? If not, what would you do to change that?***

Growing up in South Frankfort, I believe that 2018 South Frankfort is not as healthy as it should be. I am disheartened by the number of empty storefronts and businesses that have disappeared from Second Street. I believe that this can be changed. Re-energizing downtown can occur by incentivizing new businesses by waiving local taxes and licensing fees during the start-up of the business. This would attract new businesses, entrepreneurs, and those that care about the community to place their business downtown.

***Does the City-County need a municipally owned or partnered conference center?***

Absolutely. Frankfort's central location in the state makes it a prime candidate for such a conference center. By carefully reviewing the available feasibility studies (i.e. CityVision), this type of a business venture will attract opportunity that would draw significant economic interest and tourism. The tourism generated is desperately needed to revitalize downtown Frankfort.

***How do you feel about the transportation options currently available in our city? Do we have enough options? If not, what will you do to increase those?***

Although Frankfort does have a transit system, it can always be improved. Providing more routes to accommodate those downtown to travel further throughout the county would bolster a sense of community and also provide

## **Buddy Bennett**

access for those in the county to travel downtown.

### ***Does Frankfort need a new building or new location for City Hall?***

Absolutely, Frankfort needs a new City Hall. However, in a climate of limited resources and stretched government budgets, city leaders should be the first to sacrifice. A renovation of the current facility would make the most fiscal sense in this climate. We need to focus on attracting business and solid community members to Downtown primarily. Then providing a better City Hall would fall into place.

### ***If you could change one thing in our zoning code, what would it be and why?***

Encouraging and supporting mixed-use development property is crucial to promoting Frankfort as a premier Kentucky city. The blend of residential, commercial, government, and entertainment uses has consistently provided positive economic and social impacts throughout cities in the United States. Applying this model to Frankfort would not only modernize our community, but attract new residents to our city.

### ***How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town?***

I am running for City Commissioner to give residents a voice in Frankfort. City work sessions provide a valuable outlet for community members to voice their concerns and issues. I look forward to listening in those settings. I want to go a step further. Local boards, associations, neighborhood groups, and businesses deserve to have their voice represented and heard. As City Commissioner, I will make every effort to hear to those concerns and bring them to the Commission.

## **Buddy Bennett**

***If someone came to you with a proposal to build a new piece of public infrastructure in our city (road, bridge, etc.) how would you evaluate whether that project was worth implementing?***

I have spent my career in the private sector. I believe this gives me a firm grasp on assessing the viability of potential projects throughout the city. It would be important to first fully research and exhaust all potential funding opportunities – whether that be federal, state or local.

It is also inherently important to maintain the character of our historic city while blending new opportunities that have arisen through a public private partnership. Historic Frankfort structures and locations should be treated with equal importance as any potential new development.

***If elected, what three steps would you take to put our city on a firmer financial footing?***

(1) Residents. Bringing more people into the city as new residents would stimulate the economy and increase revenue through increased property taxes.

(2) Strict enforcement of building codes. By strictly enforcing those codes already in place, this would serve to increase property value and further entice new residents.

(3) Involvement in the Plaza redevelopment. We are at a crossroads. Frankfort residents have a unique opportunity to rebuild Frankfort's footprint. By encouraging mixed-use commercial and residential properties, this would further serve to stimulate the economy and create a vibrant downtown community.

Increasing the number of residents in the heart of our city is critical to the revitalization of Frankfort.

## **Buddy Bennett**

***If you received a \$1 million grant to use for the city any way you wanted, what would you do with it and why?***

As City Commissioner, my first step would be to seek the input of the residents. My hope would be to use this money on a larger-scale project as “seed money” to stimulate further development. Although Frankfort is a “small town,” the ability to use the funds for a major, large scale project would give us the unique opportunity to truly change the face of our community.

***What neighborhood do you live in? Why? Where are your favorite places to spend time in our town?***

Currently, I live in Cloverdale. I bought my house there to be close to family. But I was born and raised on West Third Street and spent my youth on the Kentucky River. I enjoy the Kentucky History Center, Benson Valley Marina, and often frequent the local eateries of downtown.

As the youngest of eight children, I spent my formidable years in South Frankfort. I learned to ride a bike, played baseball on the Capitol lawn before the trees were planted, and became the man I am today in this neighborhood. Frankfort deserves a Commissioner that wants the best for its residents, and is willing to listen and consider the opinions of each and every different group of people.

My heart is, and always will be, in South Frankfort. I would love the opportunity to speak to the South Frankfort Neighborhood Association, and to represent your interests at the City Commission. I look forward to working hand-in-hand with this integral part of the community to continue to make Frankfort a safe, secure, prosperous, and wonderful place to live.

**Lynn Bowers**

**Lynn Bowers - incumbent Commissioner**

**\*\* awaiting reply from L Bowers \*\***

**John R Sower**

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***Do you think our main street/downtown is healthy and successful? If not, what would you do to change that?***

NO, it's not! We need more people living downtown! We can do that by using the Plaza Dev. for mixed housing (residential & apartments) with some commercial and adding a multipurpose Convention Ctr. Housing: We have 3,800 state employees working within 3 blocks of the area in the development. Some come from Shelby, Owen, Anderson & Woodford Counties. We should encourage them to live here by providing housing to fit their needs

***Does The City-County need a municipally owned or partnered conference center?***

Definitely! The Convention Ctr. should be privately owned with some city/county/state and federal incentives. We must put the whole area on the PVA tax rolls!

***How do you feel about the transportation options currently available in our city? Do we have enough options? If not, what will you do to increase those?***

With proper design, one purpose of the Tiger grant is to alleviate intersection problems at Main & Capital Ave., Bridge & Second St. and Taylor Ave.& Second

**John R Sower**

St., as well as providing crosswalk improvements. I am also open to changes suggested by CityVisions. The extension of Washington St. to Mero is a no brainer.

***Does Frankfort need a new building or new location for City Hall?***

YES, and I have one in mind.

***If you could change one thing in our zoning code, what would it be and why?***

We have to comply with State and Federal mandates. If it is a local ordinance, there ought to be some built-in flexibility.

EX: If option A is not practical or extremely expensive then the property owner should have an option B or C or D.

***How do you plan to involve residents in the decision making process in our town?***

City Hall meetings should be televised live and the agenda should be printed in the State Journal beside the city FaceBook page or Web Site at least 3 days in advance. Polling software should always be a part of the planning process.

***If someone came to you with a proposal to build a new piece of public infrastructure in our city (road, bridge, etc.) how would you evaluate whether that project was worth implementing?***

A thorough feasibility study to show that it is cost effective.

**John R Sower**

***If elected, what three steps would you take to put our city on a firmer financial footing?***

We need more people who call Frankfort their hometown! During the last 20 years our population growth has averaged .1%!!! Putting ALL 7.6 acres of the Plaza and more land in private hands would be a big step in the right direction. Some of those 1,500 state employees in the new 5 story building are going to come from outside city limits; that will help. Finally we must partner where we can with schools to further improve our educational system and keep improving and promoting our city parks.

A strong education system is key but family recreation and parks are critical, too...a better quality of life will bring more people.

***If you received a \$1 million grant to use for the city any way you wanted, what would you do with it and why?***

Build-to-suit a multipurpose convention center with breakout meeting rooms, a modern commercial kitchen and in partnership with the YMCA.

***What neighborhood do you live in? Why? Where are your favorite places to spend time in our town?***

I live in North Frankfort in a family home built in 1907 by local craftsmen employed by my grandfather, John R. Sower. My father, Frank W. Sower, was born in the second floor guest bedroom. I bicycle to Farmers Market seasonally, walk around the neighborhood and enjoy activities at the First Methodist Church, First Presbyterian Church, the South Frankfort Presbyterian Church, the YMCA, the Grand Theater, VFW and the Paul Sawyer Library, all of which are within walking distance of my home.

**Scott Tippett**

**Scott Tippett - incumbent Commissioner**

Facebook campaign page: <http://www.facebook.com/Tippett4Frankfort/>



***Do you think our main street/downtown is healthy and successful? If not, what would you do to change that?***

It's a mixed bag, we have had some success. We need to continue assisting entrepreneurs, especially for those wanting to develop existing storefronts and other locations in the urban core.

What is needed to support existing business and new business in a growing population is to increase demand for goods and services. Encouraging population growth needs to be the City Commissions top economic priority.

It's time for us to develop consensus over the Capitol Plaza Area, through open-ended community discussion. The Capital Plaza redevelopment project is a golden opportunity to create a mixed-use development that will encourage more people to move downtown, increasing demand for goods and services.

***Does The City-County need a municipally owned or partnered conference center?***

I think that the exact scope of the project should be up for public discussion; but yes I think that a City/County owned civic center/convention center is the way we should go. I believe that for this project to be worth the investment we must ensure that the new facility is flexible enough to serve a variety of purposes so that it provides an economic boost to the city.

**Scott Tippet**

***How do you feel about the transportation options currently available in our city? Do we have enough options? If not, what will you do to increase those?***

For the existing population, yes, but more can be done to accommodate new markets like the bourbon tourist and the state government employee. I think we also need to keep a close eye on this as the population grows and changes and respond accordingly.

***Does Frankfort need a new building or new location for City Hall?***

The short answer is that we need to do something to modernize City Hall. A new or updated Fire Station is a must. We are currently looking at options and should choose the one that does the most long-term good at a reasonable price. I am reserving my final opinion until the experts have made their recommendations and given us our options.

***If you could change one thing in our zoning code, what would it be and why?***

I would like to see a low-interest loan program created that would help low and middle-income homeowners meet the zoning code, especially in the historic zones of the city. This would help existing homeowners and encourage more citizens to move into the city, using existing housing stock.

***How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town?***

I think continuing and expanding public meetings, like the one held at T Boat Marine/Vatter Building, on a wide variety of topics is a good start. Personally, I make an effort to attend as many neighborhood association meetings as possible and am open to engaging citizens on social media, email and by phone as needed.

***If someone came to you with a proposal to build a new piece of public infrastructure in our city (road, bridge, etc.) how would you evaluate whether that project was worth implementing?***

This is a vastly complicated question; but here are a few things I would do. Ask, "Is it feasible? Is it needed? Is it financially possible? How would the people of

## **Scott Tippet**

Frankfort benefit?” If these questions answered positively, there are still a large number of things that would need to be done. Two of the biggest and, in my opinion, most important are: Getting public input and professional advice on key areas like funding, law, and engineering.

### ***If elected, what three steps would you take to put our city on a firmer financial footing?***

Frankfort is in a strong financial position at the moment. Long term, we should encourage non-state government business to settle here so we are less dependent on state government. We must continually look for better, more efficient ways to spend tax dollars.

### ***If you received a \$1 million grant to use for the city any way you wanted, what would you do with it and why?***

I would start the low-interest loan program that I talked about in #5. We must encourage home ownership and investment in the city.

### ***What neighborhood do you live in? Why? Where are your favorite places to spend time in our town?***

I live in South Frankfort. There are a lot of places where I like to spend time, but Juniper Hills Golf Course and eating (sometimes too much) at the wide array of locally owned and operated restaurants in Frankfort are some of my favorites.

## **Katrisha Waldrige**

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### ***Do you think our main street/downtown is healthy and successful? If not, what would you do to change that?***

At this time, I feel Frankfort has become stagnant and complacent which has placed our city in an unhealthy, non-successful and vulnerable situation in many ways. As a candidate for Commission, I believe Frankfort has great potential and holds great opportunity for growth if properly placed in the hands of leadership that isn't afraid to stretch the bar and willing to embrace innovative ideas. As a part of the City's leadership if elected, I would want a thorough evaluation of where our city stands at the moment, take advantage of our community input, construct a competitive and future focused strategic plan and set goals and deliverables our community can follow and that keeps our leadership engaged, accountable and on track for a Thriving Frankfort.

### ***Does The City-County need a municipally owned or partnered conference center?***

I believe Frankfort and Franklin County need a multi-functional self-sustaining event center that will bring a plethora of diverse events, entertainment and competitions to the City year around. I would have to evaluate where our city is financially and accessible man power to make a complete decision on a partnership. However, based on logistics I have seen I believe it would be a positive move for the center to be a partnership with the City and County as this

## **Katrishia Waldrige**

helps with man power and financial obligations to get the project off the ground and operable. A successful center such as this should be self-sustaining in due time easing the stress on City and County. Another piece I would address to assure positive revenue and self-sustaining, is hiring a professional entertainment team to be the operating force of the daily usage operations. I feel having a professional team that understands event space thoroughly and abreast to year around events will keep the center fully occupied for a consistent flow of revenue traffic in Frankfort.

***How do you feel about the transportation options currently available in our city? Do we have enough options? If not, what will you do to increase those?***

Grateful for the transportation we currently have however there is always room for improvement and growth. I have spoken with several residents that use our public transportation and have gathered additional routes would be useful, the access of bus stops for our physical challenged and placing bus stops closer to living areas to support and encourage riders. Our transportation is important and the means of quality of life for family's and to make bus stops more accessible helps us as a community to do our part in their quality of life.

***Does Frankfort need a new building or new location for City Hall?***

The City Hall is a very old, non-attractive building and seems to be limited. I feel a new building would be a great expansion to welcome a more community welcoming and engaging atmosphere, a wider range of collaboration working with departments, and sets standards for the city growth and innovative ideas. Our city hall doesn't speak life into the city at this time nor does it say they are welcoming and thriving. Our City Hall needs to be Thriving and moving in the direction we would like to see Frankfort as a whole moving towards.

## **Katrisha Waldrige**

### ***If you could change one thing in our zoning code, what would it be and why?***

One thing I would want to change is the red tape and timely process one has to matriculate through for economic development opportunities, etc. Given a proper evaluation with the appropriate departments, we would have to construct an effective, efficient and timely process to assure all legal guidelines are met and to assure code are met as standards are set to regulations. If surrounding areas can get a business approved, operational in a timely process, we as Frankfort should be able to do the same here in our City. We have to focus on Frankfort's future and integrity rather than personal issues that disable our city's growth and opportunity to THRIVE.

### ***How do you plan to involve residents in the decision making process in our town?***

I believe the On the Table's hit this question right on the head. I attended at least 8 On the Table's and from each gathered great information, innovative ideas, viable concerns and met some impeccable people who hold Frankfort near and dear to their heart. I gathered Frankfort is tired of just being listened to and tolerated, they want to be heard and they want deliverables or at least some show of progress. They want a leadership who cares for Frankfort as they do, who will be engaged and who is for Residents and not personal gain or power. I think a community committee that would meet with the commission regularly to discuss issues, concerns or praise growth would be a way to keep the community's voice active and relevant. I also feel On the Tables could be held quarterly or twice a year to keep the community engaged and involved in decisions being made in the community. When holding the Commissioner Title, I understand I am offering myself to be your voice, to push your concerns for answers and to uphold the position with integrity even when I personally don't agree. I have a commitment to speak on the behalf of my residents, keep them informed and abreast to working progress and to work hard for Frankfort. Family First, Frankfort Focused: Let's Grow Together.

**Katrishia Waldrige**

***If someone came to you with a proposal to build a new piece of public infrastructure in our city (road, bridge, etc.) how would you evaluate whether that project was worth implementing?***

In concern of new City infrastructure, I would evaluate the need, the usage, how this would affect or improve the quality of life for our Residents and surrounding areas and how our city would benefit from the plan and would the project be future focused. All departments in the city would be a part of the evaluation team to provide logical and accurate information from their areas that would affect them positively or negatively. This would be the proactive way to insure proper planning to avoid oversights that could lead to be costly for the city.

***If elected, what three steps would you take to put our city on a firmer financial footing?***

Steps I would take for a firmer financial footing for the city would be first get an evaluation of budgets, past spending, year-end budgets and future spending. Secondly, I would evaluate our spending cost and access how we could have cut cost and planned for unseen cost. Thirdly, I would access a team of grant writers that their main focus would be consistently writing for grants to save our city money year around. A final step would be adhering to budget and all contract expenses. This will eliminate recalculating signed contracts in the mist of the contract that becomes very costly to the city and accrues unforeseen and frivolous spending. Always recalculating signed contracts can show weakness, instability and could be seen as a weak government. We must set our standards and stand our ground as we would in our own personal business. Our City's integrity isn't just Frankfort, Frankfort Residents, Frankfort leader but how we do business with our outside constituents as well, we must demand the same from our constituents when they agree to do business with our City.

**Katrisha Waldrige**

***If you received a \$1 million grant to use for the city any way you wanted, what would you do with it and why?***

If given a \$1 million grant I would cover the cost of the Splash pad in South Frankfort so that construction could start right away for our youth to have another summer option. Our youth are limited in options of involvement in our city and its time we focus on our children because they are our future and will be future residents. If we want people to stay, build families here we have to offer them reasons to stay and a quality life that is competitive to surrounding areas. The remaining money, I would either give it to parks and recreations to expand the waterpark or to the construction of another water park on the Westside or I would start an incentive program for entrepreneurs to support startups here in Frankfort and to increase Frankfort business options downtown. I would want the money to be used in a way that the city will see the money comeback as ongoing revenue.

***What neighborhood do you live in? Why? Where are your favorite places to spend time in our town?***

I live in the Thistleton/Collins Lane area. I live there because of the convenience to the Westside, quick access to downtown, safety of being nestled in between two schools, and the environment is a quiet and a family welcoming neighborhood. Since my canvassing I have met several neighbors and we have decided to get together and plan a few neighborhood events this summer to support family and neighborhood engagement.

## **Eric Whisman**

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### ***Do you think our main street/downtown is healthy and successful? If not, what would you do to change that?***

I think you our Main Street has great potential, but has yet to realize it. We have many wonderful local businesses but but we need greater diversity and more options to provide the array of goods and services that our community requires to create a stronger, more viable Main Street. This is one of the main reasons I developed “The Market’ last year to build an event that drew people downtown for the express purpose to shop and eat, and encourage new businesses to establish and grow. Also, my hope was to draw new established businesses to Frankfort to experience our town and possible invest by opening a new business.

If elected I want to build on their previous work by developing a small business center in addition to our Main Street group. A few years ago three of the top 15 cities with the fastest growing startups in the nation were in Kentucky. The common thread among these groups is a dedicated position providing small business guidance. This center would provide help to local small businesses and new start ups to provide needed advice regarding any number of issues associated with establishing and maintaining a business in our downtown. My hope is that this center would further support our existing Downtown Main Street Program to continue the important work in the four target areas of design, promotion, organization and economic development.

## **Eric Whisman**

Further to have viable local businesses we must have buildings renovated and equipped to house new tenants. New businesses always start in old building and we must continue to renovate and refine our historic core to provide the opportunity for new startups to build and grow. I will support continued and expanded funding for downtown investment to see our many under utilized properties able to reach their full potential. Frankfort has incredible small business owners, but many more of our people would like to start their own business. Each day I speak to people that say they want more eateries, breweries, and shopping downtown meaning we don't yet have what our community needs. We can do a better job to support our citizens to start new ventures and we need to more fully support Main Street to create a more vibrant downtown.

### ***Does The City-County need a municipally owned or partnered conference center?***

The demolition of the Frankfort Convention Center is truly a loss to our community for the size space that the center afforded us. That said, our community needs a space to hold special events and conferences as we have already lost local graduations and many small to mid size conferences that have been relocated to Lexington. I propose that we make better use of the facilities that we do have for the time being like those at Kentucky State University while we explore what our community can reasonably afford in a new facility. The former Convention Center was built as a basketball arena and functioned poorly as a venue for events of any scale. Since our State government chose to remove this facility, I would suggest our elected officials push for assistance from the State for a new facility when we know how it will be supported. A flexible conference center rather than arena could make financial sense for our community. Recently my research has shown that State Government owns the conference areas, restaurant and parking garage attached to the Capital Plaza Hotel, as well as the land on which it rests. I would like to explore several options for a new facility, but I believe one of the most viable options would be to built a new conference center addition to the Capital Plaza Hotel's existing facilities that could support our hotel and our downtown. This facility could be built on top of the current underground parking and work in tandem with the existing facility

## **Eric Whisman**

which the state already holds an invested interest. The former Convention Center as a stand alone facility was limited, but a new facility attached to the hotel complex that will remain from the former Capital Plaza may well serve the need of our community. While this is but one option, I would like to see creative new projects explored to see how we might benefit from them as a community.

***How do you feel about the transportation options currently available in our city? Do we have enough options? If not, what will you do to increase those?***

Frankfort's current transportation options are greatly underutilized and I believe under serve the needs of those who use them. In discussing the options available with members of the community I'm continually told that an entire day it must be reserved to go to medical appointments or the grocery. Many bus stops are poorly connected to the rest of our town and our topography makes access to some of these services difficult for the disabled. Anyone who has seen on of our busses is a witness the underutilized service. I can't help but think we can do better for our community.

I have always believed in the potential of mass transit and I think we took a step back by removing so many local transit rails that once connected our cities. While large urban cores like Chicago and New York have wonderful train lines, some other cities are now exploring reliable mass transportation. Just last year the Northern Kentucky/Cincinnati area installed a traditional trolley system like Frankfort once had at the turn of the last century. Smaller communities have reverted to subsidized ride-share programs that are better able to meet the specific needs of its customers.

Frankfort is a small town, but I believe our size creates opportunity for us to be innovative and set a new standard for what is possible. As such I would like to review our current transportation options and see what new options might be available to us that better use the financial and human resources we are able to provide to serve those that need them. I will always be an advocate of exploring mass transit systems from Frankfort to reconnect Lexington, Louisville, Cincinnati and beyond. While this idea is certainly a distance into the future, I believe we can better serve the needs of our local community now by reviewing our current system and creatively adjusting our services.

**Eric Whisman**

***Does Frankfort need a new building or new location for City Hall?***

Frankfort's City Hall was an affordable solution to a need for more space in 1955 as our city population nearly doubled from 1950-1960 with great growth of State Government. A series of three c1910 gas and service stations were renovated and became City Hall using funds available to the commission which has served the community for over 60 years. That facility has served many roles in those years, but the recent departure of the Plant Board gives us the opportunity to envision something new.

The current City Hall is in need of a renovation and our City needs a more attractive facility as the crowning jewel of the Capital City that meets the needs for our staff. For years our Frankfort Fire and EMS staff have begged for a facility that will provide a better and more safe work environment and I find the current building dated worn and in need of a new vision.

I would support a solution to develop a deal with Kentucky State University to reclaim the former Federal Courthouse/Library that was purchased from the City but yet to be paid for, to renovated into a new City Hall. The current City Hall could then be fully renovated to provide a larger Fire Station 1 that does not require relocation, or more land to be used for untaxed City purposes. This could be one but one option that I believe would be the most fiscally responsible solution for our city. However, I would fully support exploring other options that would allow us to meet the needs of the community, provide our Fire & EMS a place they so need and give us a respectable City Hall.

***If you could change one thing in our zoning code, what would it be and why?***

Our current Zoning code is antiquated and in need of an update. As a preservationist by trade, Frankfort is the only City in the state of Kentucky to my knowledge to have a system of base zoning for all districts types, be it commercial, residential, historic or otherwise. We need to modernize our systems and better plan for our future. Many of our zoning guidelines are good, but are poorly related to our citizens who have consistently had problems understanding our processes. In addition, our zoning poorly relates to the future

## **Eric Whisman**

that we all want. Currently, we have to make a special dispensation to allow residential units in commercial zones that were historically residential. We discriminate against our poorest property owners while providing few to no assistance for those that need it most. We push for code enforcement, fine properties and demolish building that still hold value, but refuse to make zoning changes that would allow those places to be renovated and again serve our community.

I have advocated for change for years that would help property owners get assistance to renovate properties and encourage investors. Far too often I hear complaints about our zoning and frustrations about our processed. This has to be change if we want to move forward. I would like to change many things zoning codes including the way we zone properties. I would like us to define city boundaries for infrastructure expansion like sewer connections, and designate underdeveloped parts of our city as priority areas for redevelopment like vacant former shopping centers that dot our landscape.

I am encouraged that the City is currently in process to hire a new planning director for our City. I hope we are able to find someone knowledgeable and skillful in helping us develop new tools and guidelines to assist our future development. As a community we need oversight to ensure that properties are maintained and appropriately developed, but

### ***How do you plan to involve residents in the decision making process in our town?***

As a citizen, I have worked for several years to provide input about the decisions made by our elected leadership and give my expertise in the process. One of the main reasons I chose to run for this office was due to my concern and great frustration in the exclusion and disregard for the publics opinion at City Hall.

The City Commission has long been closed to the public and there has been a lack of willingness by some departments to work with interested citizens. This must change and will be a main focus of mine if elected. We must open up City Hall to our citizens and draw upon the vast skill set afforded to us in the people of our town. I'm angered at each City Commission meeting I attend that the front door

## **Eric Whisman**

of the building is locked with no note to state that interested parties must enter through the rear door. This contributes to the perception among the community that they are removed from the local decision making process.

We have to include our people to foster new and innovative ideas that will help us prosper. I would propose to develop working groups of citizens to help guide all major local projects. I will demand that staff draw on the expertise of our community and regularly provide progress reports for projects with citizen reviews. I want to make local government more open, transparent and connected to the community by insisting that all public meetings be live-streamed to the community in multiple platforms, and not just to local cable subscribers after key decisions have already been made. I will insist on a new website that is regularly updated with pertinent information, where our citizens can find current agendas for all public meets so that they can attend and make comments about items of interest. We can easily do all of these things and modern technology allow us the opportunity to bring people into the process like never before. The desire of our public to serve is great and for too long we have been shut out of the process. By making a few key changes I believe our residents will feel more fulfilled and engaged in making decisions that will benefit us all.

***If someone came to you with a proposal to build a new piece of public infrastructure in our city (road, bridge, etc.) how would you evaluate whether that project was worth implementing?***

Each city project comes at great public expense and will be a decision I consider fully. The need in our community is great and we have to be strategic in funding projects that make the largest impact for the least cost. Our town has done a good job of developing strategic plans that engaged citizens but languish on the shelves of City Hall rather than guiding our actions. These plans should drive our efforts and be developed so to envision a future Frankfort with goals set for 5, 10, 25 and 50 years from now.

If elected I will to push to hold a series of Commission meetings to be listening sessions that allow the community to voice their needs and desires in a public forum. I want to use this input to develop a list of infrastructure projects that can then be used to update our community comprehensive plan. In addition, I would

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like to develop a scale that goes beyond the current fiscal impact statement that will rate projects according to the communities need and our ability to institute them. By developing this system, I would hope that all future projects might be treated in the same fashion for consideration and judged on a scale comparable to others in the community.

Each year the City Commission set goals that seem to drive the efforts of staff with little regard to our many community plans. This makes for a continually shifting focus that does nothing toward accomplishing long range goals. Instead it creates a reactionary management plan that shorts of us of potentially greater projects. Many times Frankfort has created acceptable fixes to problems that might benefit from larger scale planning and more targeted projects.

Communities across the country are on the verge of financial collapse because of their lack of planning and overbuilding of public infrastructure that municipalities can never afford to maintain. While it's terrific that our town is the recipient of a TIGER grant to provide much needed infrastructure repairs to Second Street, those resources are becoming ever more scarce. We have to think long term and be more strategic in our actions to repair, build and maintain our public infrastructure so that we do not loose our ability to provide the other amenities that we desire for our community. Therefore, each project that comes before the City Commission must be thoughtfully reviewed and compared to our long range plans before taking action.

### ***If elected, what three steps would you take to put our city on a firmer financial footing?***

The City of Frankfort has strong financial resources but we must use those wisely. In the 1970s a contract was negotiated with the State government to provide \$100,000 a year to the City in lieu of taxes for their vast land holdings and use of local municipal services like Fire & EMS, policing and more. That amount has not been increased in more than 40 years and if adjusted for inflation should be more than \$400,000 today. While we are fortunate to be the home of state government, we must require that they pay their fair share or divest of property and other holdings in the City. We can have successful negotiations, but the Commission must be firm and make educated demands. While taxes on state

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worker's income is a primary revenue generator for our city, we all know those positions are being cut as will the revenues to the city. We must plan for this change now. The state should contribute their fair share to Frankfort and we must regularly review their contribution amount. By researching the physical costs of hosting state government we can ensure that our City is fairly compensated for the services we provide and remain on sound financial grounds into the future.

A second primary revenue stream for the City is local property taxes. While these revenues have remained relatively consistent for years, we have many areas of the city that are suffering from a lack of investment which will eventually dwindle property tax revenues. We need to use all resources available to us and provide incentives to encourage the renovation of properties throughout the City. Two years ago I brought in a Louisville group to invest in Frankfort. They took on several projects and completed renovations of the former Bridgeport school which was planned to be low income elderly housing, as well as nine housing units in South Frankfort. Many of the houses were facing demolition and most were vacant. Their investment has returned these properties to use by the community, providing needed houses that is modern and safe, and their investment has meant the increased property taxes for formerly low-value parcels. This type of investment is needed all over the city to renovate buildings, reinvigorate community, and return needed property taxes. Many federal and state incentives can be used to do this work at no cost to our city. We must make these resources more readily available to those wishing to invest in Frankfort and further provide additional local incentives as necessary. By doing so, we can stabilize local property values and in return our city will recoup long term revenues that help provide for a more stable financial future.

Finally, we need to encourage more local businesses development. Every community needs shopping and services, but those that are locally owned and operated return far more local investment than those owned by out of town parties. Recently the announcement of the closure of PicPac shocked the community. I jumped into action and helped the owner find a way forward to remain open and provide a much needed service to the community. As an example, this locally owned and operated grocery store returns great investment to the community in the form of property taxes, payroll taxes, and local employment, not to mention sales of locally produced goods that keeps more of

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the customer's money in our town. These dollars go much farther than those spent at a national retailer and help establish a stronger local economy.

As I mentioned before, I want to invest in our community first to build resources for small local businesses like PicPac to help them thrive. In 2017, I established "The Market" as a community outreach tool for the local Odd Fellows. But this effort was multi-faceted effort intended to also help support local businesses and encourage local makers to build a business. Out of this effort, more than 20 local business licenses were established and I hope that many of them might grow to become future brick & mortar stores. This fostering of local business is a way to develop our current future businesses that will support our community, drive shopping and tourism, and help build a stronger local economy. Supporting local first will generate many returns to the city, add local jobs, building community wealth and generate greater dividends to the city.

By working to support local businesses, investing in the people and the infrastructure of our town (including our housing stock and commercial buildings) and demanding our fair share from those that use our precious resources, we will create a more stable future where our City finances are able to better perform for us all.

### ***If you received a \$1 million grant to use for the city any way you wanted, what would you do with it and why?***

If I had a million dollars, we could do so much! While I have many potential projects, I would first reference the needs of our community and see where the investment would most effectively perform based on the reviews I stated in a previous question. However, if I had to choose a way to spend the cash, I would like to divide among several projects. First, I would give the largest amount to our local schools. We do a great disservice by not adequately investing in our future generations. I would set aside these funds to allow every child in our school system better access to education and to choose an educational experience in a field of their interest outside of our community. By exposing our children to new ideas beyond the traditional classroom, we are expanding their horizons and allowing them to dream. I would hope this would encourage them to have new ideas and learn how they can be part of the greater world.

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I am a product of the local school system and was afforded few opportunities in my public education to experience the world that I know would have benefited so many of my classmates. Thanks to several teachers interest in my abilities, I am now able to run for the City Commission and make a measurable impact for my community. I would hope this financial investment in our children would return the same results, helping kids realize their future potential and giving them insights to how they might live their lives. I would hope that this investment would return benefits to our community within their lifetime as they build lives in Frankfort and beyond.

From the remaining, I would establish as a fund for the citizens of Frankfort to choose how to spend. I think our community could greatly benefit from a designated amount of money set aside by the City Commission for use by our citizens in funding a project of their choice. This would encourage citizen participation and creativity which I think all of us would benefit from the results.

### ***What neighborhood do you live in? Why? Where are your favorite places to spend time in our town?***

I live in a historic fixer upper the heart of downtown and wouldn't have it any other way! Though I grew up in rural Franklin County in the Bald Knob area, I have always enjoyed the wonderful social environment of Downtown. Many of my efforts are focused on our community and my proximity to everything within walking distance allows me to do and experience more. My home has become a center for many friends to enjoy what Frankfort has to offer and I often find myself talking with tourists giving local tips in my walks from one place to the next. I love spending time in our downtown core but I love all of our community.

As a native of Frankfort and now Vice-Chair of the Franklin County Trust for Historic Preservation, I am familiar with nearly every part of our county and enjoy each section for its history, natural beauty and friendly people. I enjoy spending much of my free time helping promoting our town, be it giving tours of downtown or on the river, developing new events, or volunteering. I have traveled many places and lived in larger cities, but Frankfort holds a special place in my heart as my hometown and as a place that molded my views of the world. It has given me

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so much and I feel called to give back. I am happy to try to do so by running for City Commission and I hope to be a conduit to help make the changes that will benefit our town and our people.

## **FPB videos: *Meet the Candidates Series*** **Primary edition 2018**

Bowers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8P8hIADEwk>

Bennett: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4YP1UNUUmjo>

Sower: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PRUbDn\\_mnZk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PRUbDn_mnZk)

Tippett: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jUbrQZYdzM>

Waldridge: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jekO1pCtUhQ>

Whisman: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDZ8M8GEBEY>

We expect updated video to be posted in the coming weeks:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/FrankfortPlantBoard/videos>

The District 1 Magistrate position was won by Sherry Sebastian during the primary.

Sample ballot:

<http://app.sos.ky.gov/ballots/Franklin%202018%20General.pdf>