



Candidate Questionnaire, Whitewater, WI Municipal Election, April 2, 2019

Councilmember at Large: Incumbent - Patrick Singer

Q1. What motivates you to want to become or seek another term as a Common Council member?

I have had the privilege of serving Whitewater citizens for the past twelve (12) years on the Common Council. During that time there has been much change within our community – both opportunities and challenges.

I have always worked hard to advocate for the citizens I represent. Given the dynamic makeup of Whitewater, and our status as a predominately university driven community, the need to look at all sides of an issue is paramount.

There is still much work to be done on issues that will continue to improve the quality of life in our community – and I look forward to work the next two years in that capacity.

Q2. What aspects of your background will help you best represent the people of Whitewater on the Council?

The past twelve years have allowed me to continue to gain knowledge on our community and its needs. As was previously stated, I have always tried to advocate for the needs brought to me by constituents and other councilmembers.

For the past ten years I have been selected by my peers to chair the Common Council. I apply the same philosophy in that responsibility as I do as an individual councilmember. The need to make sure all voices are heard (both citizens and councilmembers) is important to ensure that our municipal government is as responsive as it can be.

One of the consistent themes in the past several years has been the need for the City of Whitewater to communicate more effectively with our residents. We have created the Community Involvement Commission to create a conduit to develop strategies to proactively message and engage the members of our community.

The investment in the Polco citizen engagement platform has been another angle that the city has taken to gain feedback on the direction of the city.

Finally, we have a section of our Council agenda dedicated to the City Manager providing an update on activities within municipal government and the city as a whole.



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Q3. What aspects of Whitewater's resources are most likely to stand the city in good stead going forward?

The fact that we are one of a handful of municipalities within the state that have a UW System comprehensive university within its borders is a resource that this municipality has enjoyed for a long time. This also brings its unique challenges that we are consistently confronted with - but the benefits to the city and region do outweigh the challenges.

The recruitment of a full service grocer or co-op to our community is one of the most important priorities we as a community are focusing on. Without this important provider in our city, the ability to grow in other ways will be compromised.

The lack of a four-lane highway that services the city is another limiting factor to maximizing our location between Madison, Milwaukee and Chicago. We are the only city that has a UW System comprehensive university that does not have four-lane highway access. When recruiting businesses this is one of the biggest factors (above taxes and regulations) that put us at a competitive disadvantage. There is a renewed effort underway to advance the expansion of HWY 12 to four-lanes that would turn a barrier in to a resource.

Q4. Do you think the city should be doing more to encourage the sharing of roads in the city between automobiles and bicycles? If so, what would you recommend?

Several years ago the city adopted a Bicycle and Pedestrian plan that was driven by a dedicated group of community members representing cycling and recreational interests. This plan is available at the following URL for those interested -

<https://whitewater.recdesk.com/RecDeskPortal/Portals/114/Whitewater%20BPP%20-%20Final%20Plan.pdf>

This plan has been what the Parks & Recreation and Public Works Departments utilize when reviewing projects for adherence to the goals set forth. From the Common Council perspective we have approved aspects to projects to promote safe bicycle access while at the same time balancing issues surrounding on-street parking and access to businesses and homeowners who have frontage to the roads.

We have also made investments in multi-use trails to ensure an additional network of safe transit options for cyclists within the community.

I believe we need to continue to follow the guidance of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to ensure that cyclists have safe options for transit around our community.



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Q5. Do you think the city should be doing more to promote all-electric vehicles? If so, what would you recommend?

As the market evolves and the price of all-electric vehicles continue a downward trend I believe that private entities will see a potential benefit to offering charging stations at their locations. The current ownership of all-electric vehicles within the city would be an interesting statistic to gauge the current demand for potential charging stations.

There are only a handful of charging stations, mostly on the UW-W campus, within the city currently and I support making an investment at the Innovation Center to add a station there as well.

Q6. Should public locations like City Hall be encouraged to have signage in both English and Spanish?

Walworth County has one of the highest populations of hispanic residents within the state which means we as a community should be understanding of how we communicate to a population where english may not be a primary language. There has been a dedicated group of citizens meeting on a regular basis to review and make suggestions on how the community can improve the experience of this underrepresented population. I would like to hear from that group to see if this would make a meaningful impact.

Q7. Are you satisfied with the city's involvement in working with the University to choose the next Chancellor?

I have viewed the recruitment process that the UW System has employed in selecting the next Chancellor to be very open and inclusive of many aspects of our community. The community representative on the Search & Screen Committee, Kelly Davis, has been very engaged with the process and taken feedback on what kind of an individual would best serve not only the needs of UW-W but also understand the needs of the community and the partnership that needs to exist between the campus and the community.

I look forward to working with the next Chancellor to address the opportunities and challenges that having an institution like UW-Whitewater brings to the community. The actions the University takes do not exist in a vacuum and can have wide ranging impact on our community and its residents.

Q8. How do you think relations are between the citizens of Whitewater and the police force?

I am appreciative of the leadership of Chief Aaron Raap who has taken proactive steps to making sure there is openness and visibility to the department. Policing can inherently adversarial due to the fact that these officers are enforcing laws - which is why it is important that our police officers understand the dynamics of the community and its needs.

Chief Raap and the entire department are very visible in the community and make efforts to engage our



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citizens in a manner that builds trust in the individuals and practices within the agency. This is a continuous activity that must be sustained to help our officers perform their jobs the best, but also affirm confidence from the public in the department.

If anyone ever has a complaint or issue with the department - I would encourage them to file a complaint with the department using the following information -

<https://www.whitewater-wi.gov/Faq.aspx?QID=65>

Q9. What, if anything, should the city be doing to encourage the sort of downtown commercial and cultural activity to attract visitors and new residents to Whitewater?

The City has been very supportive of the tremendous work that Downtown Whitewater has done with the Whitewater City Market, as well as other activities that promote the downtown and the community at-large (i.e. 4th of July Festival, Holiday Lights, East Gate Sculptures). This group has evolved over the years to adapt to the changing economics and has been invaluable as a marketing and tourism promoter.

We also have the Greater Whitewater Committee's Discover Whitewater Series Half-Marathon and 5K that showcases our community to visitors and potential new residents.

The City has been supportive of both of the above organizations with in-kind time and materials support, in addition to financial support.

Q10. Is the proximity of agricultural land to the city something to be welcomed or should building be encouraged for the sake of the tax base?

Agriculture has been in Whitewater's DNA since its inception and is still an important sector to be acknowledged. The market for growth, whether that be for residential single family or commercial/retail development should dictate the conversion of this land in concert with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

There are many factors to consider when evaluating a development opportunity, but I believe that where appropriate we should encourage redevelopment of existing land within the city that is blighted but work with potential developers to showcase all options that may include undeveloped land.

At the end of the day there needs to be a balance between interests of community and private development. I have tried to always be cognizant of that when considering proposals that I have voted on. As the City, we cannot force a development in to a place where it does not make financial sense to a developer to succeed, while at the same time not approve a development that is requested if it does not fit the community need and character.