

7. What is your approach to balancing rural character with economic opportunity and residential growth? Is growth necessary?

Dennis Faber's Response

Balancing Rural Character with Economic Opportunity

I believe following our Smart Growth Plan is the best approach, and here is why: The Wisconsin Legislature passed a law requiring every community to develop a 2035 Smart Growth Plan. I was the Town of Salem appointee to represent us along with the City of Kenosha, Pleasant Prairie, Bristol, Paris, Brighton, Wheatland, and Randall, plus the Southeastern Regional Planning Commission and the University of Wisconsin.

The Town hired a professional planner and budgeted \$400,000 to create its Smart Growth Plan. Thirteen neighborhoods were planned, and all neighborhood citizens were invited to participate. Public hearings for all thirteen were held, and citizens' concerns were addressed.

This should not be dismissed - it is extremely well done and should be the starting point for our future development. We do not have to reinvent the wheel, just fix a few flats every once in a while.

Is Growth Necessary?

Yes, if it's the right growth. There are those who think the Village should do more to promote development. Our Business Park is the best type of growth, with lower maintenance costs and maximum tax revenue.

Residential growth, in my opinion after many years on the Town and Village Board, happens when the economic stars are aligned to make it profitable - land cost, construction costs, and interest rates. These developments produce revenue for the Village, but remember the Village only gets from 18% to 25% of your tax bill.

The TID residential development the Village is currently scrutinizing is estimated to have an assessed value at completion of approximately \$50 million - BUT that is after 20 years (TIF life) without any general fund tax revenue. With a Village mill

rate of \$3.00 per thousand, that would result in \$150,000 in revenue annually. However, in 20 years, the neighborhood will likely need maintenance, which could use up that tax revenue - so there is a lot to consider.

Steve Dunn's Response

The bottom line is that without growth, everybody's taxes will go up. With smart growth, we have a better chance of maintaining our rural character without making it too expensive for our residents to continue to afford to live here.

Low-density development at a controlled pace would be best. While I wish it wasn't true, the reality is that in 30 years we may not have the farm fields we see now - but hopefully some hobby farms, equestrian farms, and housing developments of 3-10 acres will still allow for the rural appearance and charm.

Adam Miller's Response

Growth is desirable because it supports economic vitality and strengthens our tax base. But it must be guided by community values. I support orderly, sustainable growth - not growth for its own sake - so we can protect our rural character while still moving forward.

Kerry Verenski's Response

Growth is necessary to maintain a strong tax base.

To keep the tax burden manageable for residents, we must support growth that is thoughtful and controlled. This allows us to preserve our rural character while encouraging responsible economic opportunity and residential development.

James Woodke's Response

If we have no growth in the Village, our revenues will stay flat because they are based on growth. Is growth necessary? I will answer YES, if the growth is smart and balanced.

Residential growth can be large, medium, small, single-family, or multi-family.
Commercial growth can be large, medium, small, or mobile. If growth is managed in a smart and balanced way, it can be good for the entire Village.
The Village needs to have a plan that has achievable objectives and goals.