



FOUNTAIN HILLS TIMES

INDEPENDENT

(/)

Select a newspaper

Main menu

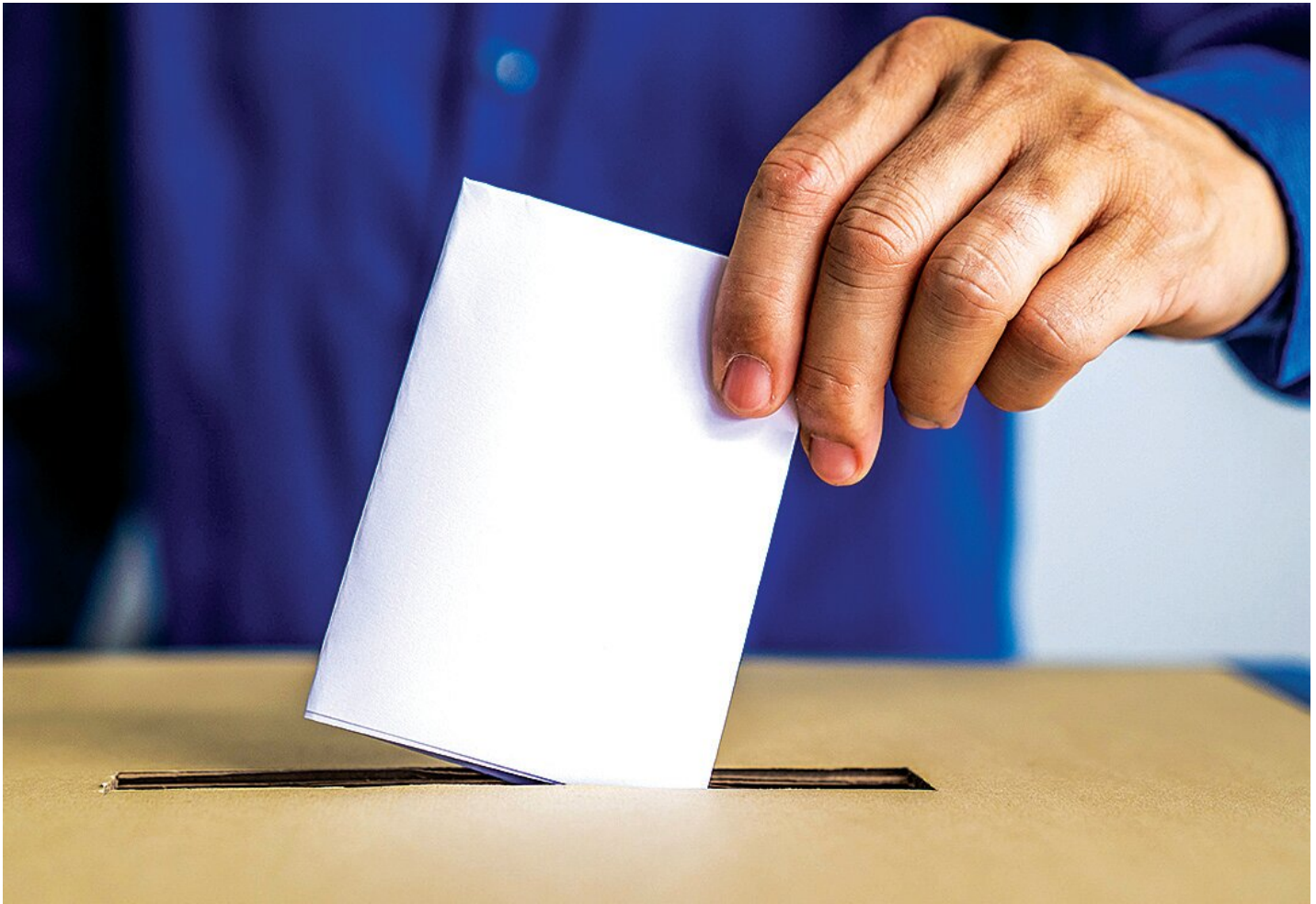


[My account \(/account/\)](/account/)

[Log out \(/login.html?action=logout\)](/login.html?action=logout)

ELECTION

Fountain Hills candidates take part in Q&A: Part three



(<https://gamma.creativecirclecdn.com/yourvalley/original/20230811-154710-ballot.jpg>)

(METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION)

Posted Monday, June 10, 2024 2:02 pm

The field has been set for the 2024 Fountain Hills Town Council race, with three candidates vying for the office of mayor and eight seeking one of three seats available on the council. All candidates were invited to take part in the Fountain Hills Times Independent's four-part Q&A series, with responses to the third question printed here.

Candidates for town council include Clayton Corey, Matthew Corrigan, Gayle Earle, Henry Male, Peggy McMahon, Art Tolis, Robert Wallace and Rick Watts. Candidates for mayor include Joe Arpaio, Ginny Dickey and Gerry Friedel.

As a reminder, July 19 is the last day to request an early ballot and July 23 is the final day to mail back early ballots. July 26 is the final day to vote early in person with July 30 being Election Day, with polls scheduled to close at 7 p.m.

Voters may visit BeBallotReady.vote to verify their registration status and to make sure their personal information is accurate.

Question: Do you believe that housing in Fountain Hills is available for everyone who wishes to live in the community? If not, how can this be addressed?

Mathew Corrigan (council)

Word use is important here. Everyone who “wishes” to live here may live here if they can pay the market price. As of 5/14/24 there are 12 single family homes for sale here from \$400-\$500,000, 28 condos for sale from \$225-\$645,000, and 158 Apartments and houses for rent from \$1,400-\$7,500.

Like everything in life, “available” is determined by market price and whether our income allows our wishes and desires to afford them. Many who live here now, worked all their lives to afford to live here.

The second question, “How can this be addressed?” There are opportunities for first time home buyers. 1. grants 2. low and no money down loans 3. no penalty IRA withdrawal 4. HUD first time buyer 5. VA loans 6. Indian Home loan guarantee program of 1992. 7. First time buyers’ loans (28% paid less than 5% down in 2022). 8. Talk to a trusted local realtor here in Fountain Hills. 9. Many young and ambitious adults purchase “fixer uppers” (FHA section 203(K) loans. 10. See #8. Work with a Fountain Hills realtor.

Ginny Dickey (mayor)

When my family moved to Fountain Hills, we had a two-year-old and a newborn, later adding a third son. MCO placed regular ads featuring the young people who chose this fledgling desert community as their hometown.

One of the results from decades of being a beautiful, safe, charming place was the gradual rise in property values... a positive outcome, no doubt. However, it is now fairly cost prohibitive for some on fixed incomes, educators, first responders, local employees, and even some of our kids and grandkids to live here.

Residents feed business success, sustain a healthy school district, add to non-profit involvement and volunteerism, and provide an overall rich quality of life.

To thrive and grow in a way that encourages and attracts a multi-generational population across a wide spectrum of experiences and interests... while enticing current residents to stay... the town should promote a variety of housing solutions.

As identified in the voter-approved General Plan, we can continue to support creative development investments and commercial upzoning that offer mixed-use, single and multi-family purchase and rental options while preserving our unique character. They are not mutually exclusive. There is room for all to live in neighborhoods that suit them.

Gayle Earle (council)

This is a complicated question.

Many of us moved here because housing was available and desirable within our means. It was not our first home but has been a place we aspired to.

The facts are the cost of housing is high everywhere, not just in Fountain Hills. This can make it challenging for some people wanting to move here or several other areas in the Phoenix metro area.

The average priced home in Fountain Hills is currently \$660K. Current listings include several homes under \$260K and over 30 listings under \$400K.

In today's market the average cost of renting is \$2K - \$3K, which a renter must qualify for.

The school district has three properties that could be sold and zoned for single family homes. With a smaller home on a smaller lot there could be homes available like the first home many of us started with.

The State Trust land could be built out too. One of the issues has been who would pay for the utilities that need to be bought into this area. One option is to make it a "Community Facilities District" the same as Eagle Mountain.

Gerry Friedel (mayor)

People have different needs and wants, social nightlife, daylife and they will choose where to live and work based upon what fills their needs. Fountain Hills offers different options to those that want to live here, from apartment rentals to condo rentals/purchase, and of course single-family dwellings.

We currently have over two dozen homes listed below \$400k. The median home price is \$669,000 compared to Scottsdale at \$850,000, which is appealing to a broader spectrum of buyers.

Everyone who wants to live here should be afforded the opportunity. We still have room to grow - it is possible that the state trust land if master planned correctly could be a nice entry level development of approximately 1,500 homes that could fit very nicely with the town. Another

opportunity to look at perhaps for entry level subdivisions might be some of the parcels of land that the school district owns.

They may at some point want to consider options for these parcels and if done right could be a nice addition and fit for our community. Keep in mind there are several moving parts that will need to be addressed, like infrastructure cost, timing, cost of funds, rates and more.

Henry Male (council)

The housing market is perpetually fluid. FH residents are fortunate to have our homes appreciate in value essentially year after year. That's good for the current homeowner. However, if a young family was hoping to land in our safe town, those starting out on their journey will perhaps find our town beyond their financial reach. This is a dilemma that doesn't have a quick solution. I think we all agree that more families filling our wonderful schools would bring new vitality and energy to our town. Affordability is in the eyes of the beholder.

A \$350,000 mortgage for 30 years at a rate of 6.5% is approximately \$2,200 per month before tax, insurance, HOA fees etc. If a person earning \$65k per year (about \$5,400/mo) will net about \$3,500 take home (presuming taxes takes 1/3) will then be left with about \$1,300 per month to pay a car loan, insurance, utilities bills, gas, health insurance and of course groceries. Adding that up doesn't leave much to line your pocket.

Whether stagnant or growing, FH needs workers to staff our current and future businesses and to earn the residency of those workers, affordable housing deserves serious discussion and ultimately, support.

Peggy McMahon (council)

Serving on our Town Council for over three years has taught me that many important factors must be taken into consideration before developments, including housing, are appropriate for Fountain Hills.

Housing is a complex and challenging issue that demands community input and careful consideration and planning. Planning that involves innovative and balanced growth that fits the needs of our community is essential in order to achieve needed economic vitality and support our community so that it thrives. This includes reasonably priced rents and a diversity of housing choices that will attract young professionals and families to Fountain Hills, providing our community with a stronger workforce and better financial support for our businesses.

The housing challenge in Fountain Hills also requires a multifaceted approach that considers the unique needs and circumstances of our community. It's not just about providing additional housing; it's about fostering inclusiveness and sustainability so that we all thrive.

Because housing is such a huge part of our community, I want to hear from our community and be part of that conversation before adding more housing developments in town, which is one reason why I am seeking a second term in office.

Art Tolis (council)

Currently, housing availability in Fountain Hills is insufficient to meet demand. The recent addition of apartments at the Target Plaza is a positive step toward addressing this issue by providing transitional housing options. Many seniors, who no longer need large homes, seek convenient, minimal maintenance living arrangements. The downtown apartments have proven beneficial, freeing up single-family homes for new families and increasing housing inventory.

The current higher-interest rate environment complicates the housing market, deterring potential buyers. To maintain property values and prevent an oversupply of homes as the population ages, it is crucial to develop diverse housing options. This includes leveraging commercial zoning for residential use, as part of our strategic plan. The council's initiative to allow residential development in commercial zones can create mixed-use spaces, addressing housing needs while revitalizing commercial areas.

Incentivizing mixed-use projects, streamlining the approval process, and partnering with developers for housing options is an essential step. By doing so, we can ensure Fountain Hills remains a vibrant, dynamic, and desirable community for all, adapting to the evolving needs of its residents.

Robert Wallace (council)

Addressing housing affordability and availability in Fountain Hills is essential to ensure that all residents have access to suitable living conditions. Implementing smart zoning policies can allow for a diverse range of housing options, accommodating different needs and preferences. For example, mixed-use developments can combine residential, commercial and recreational spaces, creating vibrant, walkable communities. Providing incentives for affordable housing in new developments can encourage builders to include more affordable units in their projects, increasing the availability of cost-effective housing options. Supporting first-time homebuyer programs can help individuals and families achieve homeownership, contributing to community stability and personal financial growth.

Additionally, encouraging the development of senior living communities is vital to meet the needs of our aging population. These communities can offer tailored amenities and services, allowing seniors to live independently while receiving necessary support.

By implementing these measures, we can ensure that Fountain Hills remains an inclusive and accommodating community where people of all ages and income levels can find suitable housing.

Rick Watts (council)

Fountain Hills is landlocked, has a limited number of lots and land prices along with the topography make housing costs significantly higher than the average cost of housing of many surrounding locales in the Phoenix metro area. Facts that we simply need to accept. Fountain Hills was planned as an upscale family friendly community as are numerous other cities and towns across the state and country.

Anyone that can qualify for a mortgage, loan or is paying cash should be able to purchase the home of their dreams in Fountain Hills.

Adherence to local zoning ordinances, HOAs, NPOA restrictions are what make Fountain Hills a beautiful community and adherence will ensure that we retain that beauty into the future. Our housing market is driven the same as any other market or commodity, supply and demand. Whether single family residences or multi-family housing, land and construction costs along with demand are and will be the driving factors.

My family and I worked hard, planned, saved and ultimately were able to achieve our goal of moving to Fountain Hills. I intend to protect what we all love about Fountain Hills to the best of my ability.

Joe Arpaio (mayor)

The premise of this question is that anyone who wants to live in Fountain Hills should be able to. I disagree with the premise. For example... I may want to live in Martha's Vineyard, but I can't afford it. Fountain Hills is first and foremost a single-family residential community. The majority of citizens are retirees or near retirement. They have worked hard to be able to live in a community like ours. I love our community and will strive to protect this as a livable community for our residents and winter visitors. That said, residents desire amenities like restaurants, grocery stores and other shopping. Those businesses require workers. It's unreasonable to expect all workers to commute to Fountain Hills for service and retail jobs. That said, there has to be some accommodations in terms of multi-family housing units. But I'm opposed, in general, to large developments.

Clayton Corey (council)

Currently, housing in Fountain Hills is not fully available for everyone who wishes to live here, particularly regarding the variety of housing options. To address this issue, we can promote mixed-use developments that integrate various types of housing, providing more options and fostering vibrant neighborhoods.

Offering incentives such as tax breaks, grants and expedited permitting for developers who include a range of housing in their projects can encourage the construction of more accessible homes.

Updating zoning regulations to allow higher-density housing and developing smaller units can increase availability for a broader range of residents. Collaborating with private developers and non-profits through public-private partnerships can leverage additional resources to create a variety of housing options.

Establishing a community land trust can maintain long-term availability by holding land in trust and ensuring it is used for community-focused housing. By implementing these strategies, we can work toward ensuring Fountain Hills offers housing options that meet the needs of all residents, promoting a welcoming and inclusive community. Let's ensure everyone who wants to call Fountain Hills home has the opportunity to do so. #FountainHillsFuture ClaytonCorey.com.

Subscribers make this story possible.

**Support the journalists of Independent Newsmedia
(<https://www.fhtimes.com/subscribe/?lclid=515824>).**

Keywords

candidates (/search_mode/keyword/browse.html?search_filter=candidates), questions (/search_mode/keyword/browse.html?search_filter= questions), #3 (/search_mode/keyword/browse.html?search_filter= #3)

OTHER ITEMS THAT MAY INTEREST YOU

Primary Election information for Fountain Hills (/stories/primary-election-information,517929)

Primary Election information for Fountain Hills (/stories/primary-election-information,517423)

Mayoral candidates field questions in Fountain Hills (/stories/mayoral-candidates-field-questions,516832)

Fountain Hills candidates take part in Q&A: Part three (/stories/candidate-questions-3,515824)

MOST POPULAR STORIES IN FOUNTAIN HILLS

Clayton Corey announces he is Fountain Hills Town Council candidate (/stories/clayton-corey-announces-he-is-fountain-hills-town-council-candidate,473189)

Robert Wallace seeks Fountain Hills Town Council seat (/stories/robert-wallace-seeks-fountain-hills-town-council-seat,473159)

Rick Watts announces bid for Fountain Hills Town Council (/stories/rick-watts-announces-bid-for-fountain-hills-town-council,471381)

Candidates show interest in Fountain Hills council race (/stories/candidates-show-interest-in-fountain-hills-council-race,471290)
