



# MAY 2023 PRIMARY VOTER GUIDE

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## KNOW YOUR CANDIDATES WHEN YOU VOTE

Designed for Voters in Anderson, IN  
Primary Election: Tuesday, May 2, 2023  
Non-partisan Voter Guide  
developed in  
collaboration with:



[communitylensanderson.org](http://communitylensanderson.org)



Heart of Indiana  
United Way

[heartofindianaunitedway.org](http://heartofindianaunitedway.org)



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**Get Informed by following this non-partisan guide.  
Take as little as 15 minutes and as much as 1-2 hours**

## VOTER GUIDE CONTENT

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- Preparing to Vote in the Primary, pages 1-2
- Snapshot of Mayoral Candidates, pages 3-5
- Snapshot of City Council Candidates, pages 6-14
  - At-large, pages 6-11
  - Districts 1-3, page 12
  - Districts 4 & 5, page 13
  - District 6, page 14
- Q & A with Mayoral Candidates, pages 15-29
- Q & A with City Council Candidates
  - At-large, pages 30-49
  - District 1, page 50
  - District 2, page 51
  - District 3, page 51
  - District 4, pages 51-52
  - District 5, page 52
  - District 6, pages 52-55
- Voter Guide Creators' contact information, page 56

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### **PREPARE TO VOTE IN YOUR PRIMARY**

#### **Things to know about primary voting:**

- Primary Election Day: Tuesday, May 2, 2023, 6am-6pm. Choose ANY convenient site.
- If you don't know what district you live in, visit <https://bit.ly/3mxaF9W>
- Absentee info: [in.gov/sos/elections/voter-information/ways-to-vote/absentee-voting/](https://in.gov/sos/elections/voter-information/ways-to-vote/absentee-voting/)
- Early voting has begun. For early voting polling place and hours visit [indianavoters.in.gov](https://indianavoters.in.gov)
- Satellite early-voting centers and primary day voting sites:
  - Alethia Fellowship Church, 2505 Faith Drive.
  - Anderson Zion Baptist Church, 2008 Rev. J.T. Meniffee St.
  - Cross Roads United Methodist Church, 2200 Scatterfield Road
  - First Baptist Church, 907 North Raible Ave.
  - UAW Local 1963, 2840 S. Madison Ave.
- Other primary day voting sites:
  - Anderson Community Schools administration building, 1600 Hillcrest Ave.
  - Lapel Lions Club, 329 South Main St.
  - Main Street Church of God, 4211 S. Main St.
  - National Guard Armory, 125 Scatterfield Road
  - Northview Church Anderson Campus, 1720 E. 22nd St.
  - Parkview Nazarene Church, 911 S. Rangeline Road
  - Wesley Free Methodist Church, 3017 W. Eighth St.
  - Whetstone Christian Church, 5940 S. Madison Ave.

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## PREPARE TO VOTE IN YOUR PRIMARY

### How primary voting works with political parties (Democrat and Republican):

- In Indiana "in order to participate in a party's primary, a voter must have either voted for a majority of that party's nominees in the last general election or must intend to vote for a majority of the party's nominees in the upcoming general election. According to FairVote, which classifies Indiana as an open primary state, this provision of the law is unenforceable due to the nature of secret balloting."
  - (Indiana Code, "Section 3-10-1-6," accessed on Ballotpedia, April 2023)
- The upcoming election is a primary, meaning each voter will be asked to vote for a candidate to advance to the general election.
- Each voter will have to identify the party they want to vote for when they arrive at the polls but the voter doesn't have to declare that party before arriving.
- Each voter will then only see their identified party's candidates when voting in the primary.
- To know what district you are in, visit <https://bit.ly/3mxaF9W> for district maps

## KEEP IN MIND WHEN PLANNING TO VOTE

- **Do your research on the candidates** using this guide and also looking into their websites, social media pages and even emailing them with questions, concerns and comments you have as a concerned citizen.
- **Choose 1-3 elected offices to research and vote for** if you feel overwhelmed about searching all of the candidates. There is no rule that you have to research and vote for every single office.
- **Take your candidate list of who you plan to vote for to the ballot box.** This could be written down on a piece of paper or noted on your phone. Websites like [ballotready.org](http://ballotready.org) allow you to create your list and print it off.

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# KNOW YOUR CANDIDATES WHEN YOU VOTE



## SNAPSHOT OF MAYORAL RACE CANDIDATES

**Role description:** The city executive and head of the executive branch and executive cabinet. Being a part of the executive branch of the local government, the Mayor is responsible for the enforcement of laws and regulations in a city.

**Incumbent:** This is the person who currently holds an office.

**Note:**

- Names placed in alphabetical order, by party. Information obtained through candidate campaign materials, social media, candidate websites, and directly from candidates.
- Relevant employment and experience history is in each candidate's words with some structural revisions from Voter Guide creators to keep consistency of flow in the guide.
- "Stated priorities" information retrieved from materials distributed by candidates.
- \*\* Denotes candidate was contacted to provide this information, with no response. Also denotes information provided was found by the creators of this Voter Guide. If no information was provided, no information was found using reasonable research.

### Republican Mayoral Candidates

- **Jon K. Bell (R)**
  - Email: [jkbell@gmail.com](mailto:jkbell@gmail.com)
  - Website: <https://votejonbell.com/>
  - Relevant employment and experience history: Dedicated to public service but along the way has worked as a machinist, a hired hand on a Nebraska cattle ranch, in an accounting office for Agriculture; has worked in business development and construction management of multi-million dollar projects; and is a retired police officer from Anderson currently working for Community Health Network and finishing up his second term as an Anderson City Councilman.
  - Stated Priorities: Improve public safety; improve transparency in city government; and bring new jobs/opportunities to Anderson.

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## SNAPSHOT OF MAYORAL RACE CANDIDATES



### Republican Mayoral Candidates Continued

- **Robert Jozwiak (R)**
  - Email: [rojozwiak@gmail.com](mailto:rojozwiak@gmail.com)
  - Website: <https://republicanrob.com>
  - Relevant employment and experience history: Worked for an international chemical company for 5 years after graduating college; was honorably discharged after serving 6 years in the Army Reserve; owned and operated a successful construction company for 30 years.
  - Stated Priorities: Creating jobs in high-tech/industries; removing illicit drugs from the street; and preventing increases in utilities and taxes.
- **Carol Miller (R)**
  - Email: [carol.miller2004@gmail.com](mailto:carol.miller2004@gmail.com)
  - Website: <https://www.millerformayor.com/>
  - Relevant employment and experience history: A business woman for 35 years, primarily in the real estate industry. Experience has included: Real Estate appraising, leasing, and tax appeals; management and leadership; negotiating contracts; researching; and decision-making.
  - Stated Priorities: Quality jobs and training; paving, blight, water lines; neighborhood stores and services; respect and response to residents; support of police and firefighters.

### Democratic Mayoral Candidates

- **Thomas Broderick Jr. (D)**
  - Incumbent
  - Email: [mayorthomasbroderick@gmail.com](mailto:mayorthomasbroderick@gmail.com)
  - Website: <http://mayorbroderick.com/>
  - Relevant employment and experience history\*\*: Lawyer for 36 years, Madison County Councilman, city attorney, incumbent mayor since 2016.
  - Stated priorities: None provided in candidate materials.

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## SNAPSHOT OF MAYORAL RACE CANDIDATES



### Democratic Mayoral Candidates Continued

- **Rodney Chamberlain (D)**

- Email: [rodney.chamberlain@att.net](mailto:rodney.chamberlain@att.net)
- Website: <https://chamberlainformayor.com/>
- Social Media: <https://www.facebook.com/Chamberlain.Mayor>
- Relevant employment and experience history: Worked 26 years for the Anderson Parks Department, 3 years serving as the Superintendent of Parks. Served for 3 terms on the Anderson City Council as a member at-large. After working with the city, served as a life coach for The Excel Center for 3 years. Currently works as an Administrator and Community Engagement Liaison with Assurance Health System, a senior inpatient site for psychiatric care. He is also the lead regional hospital trainer for caregivers serving dementia patients and their families.
- Stated priorities: Be transparent; strengthen small business; enhance quality of life amenities; invest in the future of our youth; work with our educational systems; support our seniors; improve neighborhood redevelopment; and increase safety.

- **Tony Watters (D)**

- Email: [watters4mayor@gmail.com](mailto:watters4mayor@gmail.com)
- Website: <https://watters4mayor.weebly.com/>
- Social Media: [www.facebook.com/WattersTony](http://www.facebook.com/WattersTony)
- Relevant employment and experience history: More than 30 years as an Anderson Police officer holding the position of officer, detective, major and Chief of Police before retiring in 2020. A member of the Democratic Party for 30 years, serving as Precinct Committeeman and Ward 2 chairman. Member of the F.O.P Lodge #48 for 34 years; 35-year member of the Delaware 46 Masonic Lodge; 10-year member of the Harley Owners Group.
- Stated Priorities: Bring jobs to Anderson that pay living wages; establish a strong working relationship with the city council to make government business open and transparent; keep citizens informed and encourage their participation in the decisions that shape our future; make our community safe again by addressing overall safety, drug problems, homelessness, and work tirelessly to improve the quality of life for all residents and crackdown on landlords that fail to follow city codes.

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# KNOW YOUR CANDIDATES WHEN YOU VOTE



## SNAPSHOT OF THE CITY COUNCIL RACE

**Role description:** The City Council is a part of the legislative body of local government. It is referred to as the "Common Council" in Anderson, IN. The Common Council is responsible for the creation of new laws and regulations in a city. With the help of the Mayor, the common council helps create new laws. (City of Anderson Administrative Codes)

There are six districts in Anderson, with one council member per district and three at-large council members, totaling nine members in all.

**Incumbent:** This is the person who currently holds an office.

**Note:** Names placed in alphabetical order, by party. Information obtained through candidate campaign materials, social media, candidate websites, and directly from candidates.

\*\* Denotes candidate was contacted to provide this information, with no response. Also denotes information provided was found by the creators of this Voter Guide. If no information was provided, no information was found using reasonable research.

### At Large Republican City Council Candidates (3 can be selected when voting)

- **Pete Bitar (R)**
  - Email: [pete@electricjetaircraft.com](mailto:pete@electricjetaircraft.com)
  - Website: [petebitar.com](http://petebitar.com)
  - Relevant employment and experience history: Built, operated and/or sold 7 companies in Anderson; 15 patents awarded, 3 more pending; Madison County Chamber of Commerce Board; Indiana Chamber of Commerce Board; built, operated and sold Anderson's first and still only existing private business incubator; Purdue Anderson's Entrepreneur in Residence; was appointed by 2 Governors to serve on various Boards for the State of Indiana; served 4 years in the US Air Force; built and flown 23 different aircraft designs; has been married to his wife for over 26 years, and has 2 great kids.

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## SNAPSHOT OF THE CITY COUNCIL RACE AT-LARGE



### At-Large Republican City Council Candidates Continued

- **Tiffany Harless (R)**
  - Email: [harless4council@gmail.com](mailto:harless4council@gmail.com)
  - Social media:
    - Twitter @ harless4council
    - Instagram @ harless4council
  - Relevant employment and experience history: Presently works for the Anderson Township Trustee's Office as a Case Worker, serving the public, particularly the lower income population. Prior to that, was employed with Aspire and served the severely mentally ill population in Madison County as a Life Skills Coach and a Care Coordinator. Has obtained 3 degrees, 2 are Psychology degrees. Almost ready to start working on her dissertation for her doctoral degree in Psychology as well. Candidate has served many years in customer service; has been a new hire trainer; has factory machine work experience and certifications as a result of that work.
- **Rachel Lee Landers (R)**
  - Email: [rachelleephotography@gmail.com](mailto:rachelleephotography@gmail.com)
  - Website: <https://www.rachelleelanders.com/>
  - Social Media:
    - Facebook: personal page, 100% public posts, under "Rachel Lee Landers"
    - Campaign page under "Elect Rachel Lee Landers"
  - Relevant employment and experience history:
    - 1988: Graduated high school from Madison Heights High School
    - 1992: Graduated from Ball State University with a B.S. in Psychology
    - 1993-94: Residential Counselor of the chronically mentally ill at The Center for Mental Health
    - 1994-99 and 2008-09: Residential Counselor of at-risk youth at the Madison County Youth Center
    - 2001-present: Photographer at Rachel Lee Photography
    - 2004-11: Cubmaster at Cub Scouts with the Boy Scouts of America
    - 2004-present: Philanthropist and Volunteer
    - 2008-09: Substitute Librarian at Indiana Christian Academy

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## SNAPSHOT OF THE CITY COUNCIL RACE AT-LARGE



### At-Large Republican City Council Candidates Continued

- **Rachel Lee Landers (R) Continued**
  - 2009-16: Homeschool Teacher at White River Christian Co-op
  - 2015-present: Travel Agent at Travel with Rachel Lee
  - 2022-present: Founder of Larry's Legacy: In Memory of Larry "The Can Man" Van Ness
- **Larry Lee Savage Jr. (R)**
  - Email: [warrrior57111@yahoo.com](mailto:warrrior57111@yahoo.com)
  - Relevant employment and experience history\*\*: none found.
- **Mark Turner (R)**
  - Email: none provided
  - Relevant employment and experience history\*\*: Planning Commission at City of Anderson; owner of Aqua Systems.

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## SNAPSHOT OF THE CITY COUNCIL RACE AT-LARGE



### At-Large Democrat City Council Candidates

- **Meredith (Coco) Armstrong (D)**
  - Email: [bellarmstrong12@yahoo.com](mailto:bellarmstrong12@yahoo.com)
  - Relevant employment and experience history: Always has been a concerned citizen; has worked with youth and seniors; active in church and held a lot of positions; also active in a lot of organizations.
- **Anthony (Ty) Bibbs (D)**
  - Incumbent
  - Email: [bibbscitycouncil@yahoo.com](mailto:bibbscitycouncil@yahoo.com)
  - Social Media: Candidate stated, "As an Educator, in a K-12 school corporation, my professors strongly advised prospective educators to greatly limit one's social media exposure. As a result, I have chosen to refrain completely."
  - Relevant employment and experience history: An educator for 20 years; has worked for the Anderson Community School Corporation (ACSC) and for Anderson Preparatory Academy; in ACSC, taught at Anderson Elem., College Corner Elem., Edgewood Elem., Killbuck Elem., Robinson Elem., Southview Elem., and Southside Middle School; in APA, taught at the K-2 Elementary School.
  - Education:
    - Anderson University (All Grade Physical Education Licensure)(GPA 4.0)
    - Ball State University (30+credit hours) (GPA 4.0)
    - Indiana University--Bloomington (B.S. in Recreation-Sport Management)
    - Graduated with High Distinction--Magna Cum Laude
- **Rebecca (Becky) Crumes (D)**
  - Incumbent
  - Email: [rcrumes@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rcrumes@sbcglobal.net)
  - Relevant employment and experience history: Currently serving 8th year as City Council At-Large member and 3rd time as President of Council; retired UAW General Motors; former small business owner.

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## SNAPSHOT OF THE CITY COUNCIL RACE AT-LARGE



### At-Large Democrat City Council Candidates continued

- **Jahnae Erpenbach (D)**
  - Email: [electjahnae@gmail.com](mailto:electjahnae@gmail.com)
  - Social Media
    - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090578416016>
  - Relevant employment and experience history:
    - Grew up on a Southern Illinois cattle ranch and parented by teachers.
    - College degrees and specialties from Southern Illinois University in speech communication, journalism, psychology, advertising, and public relations.
    - For the past 30 years, professional career in hospitality and gaming, leading multi-million-dollar companies in all facets of business management.
    - Opened Hoosier Park Casino as the Vice President of Marketing; became General Manager of Gaming. Ensured strong community partnership while proudly providing and protecting thousands of good-paying jobs.
    - Opened the Hard Rock Casino in Northern Indiana as the Executive Vice President of Operations. Became the first and only female CEO for a Gaming company in Indiana.
    - Established a new business – LOVESHACKS ANDERSON, a premier property rental company that offers renovated homes designed to provide prideful living for Anderson residents.
    - Has held many offices and served on numerous Anderson and Madison County boards: the Chamber of Commerce, County Health Center, and Animal Protection League.
    - Graduated from the Madison County Leadership Academy. Received a local Shining Star Award, the Madison County Chamber Chairman's Award, an Athena nomination, and the Mayor of Anderson's Good Citizenship distinction.
    - Desire to serve.
    - Currently, chairperson for the City's ARPA Homeowners Assistance Committee and serves as the Animal Protection League's President.

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## SNAPSHOT OF THE CITY COUNCIL RACE AT-LARGE



### At-Large Democrat City Council Candidates continued

- **Tim Funk (D)**
  - Email: [tfunk524@yahoo.com](mailto:tfunk524@yahoo.com)
  - Social Media:
    - Facebook group "Madison County Awareness"
      - Can DM candidate on Facebook for more information on how to join the Madison County Residences group.
  - Relevant employment and experience history: A wide range of work experiences in both the private and public sectors; worked for General Motors and for the State of Indiana; volunteered as a fireman for 10 years. Currently organizes volunteer activities, such as Clean Up Anderson, giving candidate important insights on how critical it is that the government, businesses and citizens work together to make the community stronger and better.
- **Robin Wagner (D)**
  - Email: [robinwagner74@yahoo.com](mailto:robinwagner74@yahoo.com)
  - Social Media:
    - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/electrobinwagner>
  - Relevant employment and experience history: Current Head Bookkeeper for Auditor for 17 years; Madison County Councilwoman for 4 years; Deputy Clerk for 11 years; Madison County Federal Credit Union board member for 5 years; Member of Economic Development Commission Board for 4 years.

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# CITY COUNCIL DISTRICTS

## SNAPSHOT OF THE CITY COUNCIL RACE: DISTRICTS 1, 2 & 3

To determine your district visit <https://bit.ly/3mxaF9W>

### District 1 City Council Candidates

- **Jennifer Culp (R)**
  - Incumbent, running unopposed
  - Email: [culpfamily5@icloud.com](mailto:culpfamily5@icloud.com)
  - Relevant employment and experience history: Has been on the city council for 7 years; has worked in the public school system; is a coach, health, nutrition and wellness coach.

### District 2 City Council Candidates

- **John Poor (R)**
  - Email: none provided
  - Relevant employment and experience history\*\*: none found.
- **Jeff Freeman (D)**
  - Incumbent
  - Email: [jfreeman6t61@gmail.com](mailto:jfreeman6t61@gmail.com)
  - Relevant employment and experience history\*\*: Currently on the city council.

### District 3 City Council Candidates

- **Greg Graham (D)**
  - Running unopposed
  - Email: [greggraham1@comcast.net](mailto:greggraham1@comcast.net)
  - Relevant employment and experience history\*\*: none found.

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# CITY COUNCIL DISTRICTS

## SNAPSHOT OF THE CITY COUNCIL RACE: DISTRICTS 4 & 5

### District 4 City Council Candidates

- **Norman Anderson (D)**
  - Email: [coachnorm10@gmail.com](mailto:coachnorm10@gmail.com)
  - Social Media:
    - Facebook: Norman Anderson for Anderson City Council
  - Relevant employment and experience history: Director of Development; social services.
- **Ollie Dixon (D)**
  - Incumbent
  - Email: [olliehdixon@aol.com](mailto:olliehdixon@aol.com)
  - Relevant employment and experience history\*\*: Currently on the city council; 32 years 4th ward councilman; former President and Vice President for Anderson City Council; Former President and Vice President for UAW local 663 president; 36 years Industrial Electrician for GM; 25 years business owner (Ollie D's and Bail Bonding); 32 years service to the community via the annual Back to School Parade and Picnic; initiated development of walking trail at Westvale/Jackson Park; served on UAW International Steering Committee; organized labor for the city of Anderson; awarded "Issac 'Ike' Weatherly Community Award."

### District 5 City Council Candidates

- **Art Pelelea (R)**
  - Email: [apelelea@comcast.net](mailto:apelelea@comcast.net)
  - Relevant employment and experience history\*\*: Insurance and investment broker; partner in Pelelea Insurance and Investments.
- **Lance Stephenson (D)**
  - Incumbent
  - Email: [lancetstephenson@gmail.com](mailto:lancetstephenson@gmail.com)
  - Relevant employment and experience history\*\*: none found.

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# CITY COUNCIL DISTRICTS



## SNAPSHOT OF THE CITY COUNCIL RACE: DISTRICTS 6

### District 6 City Council Candidates

- **Marquest Higgins (R)**
  - Email: [ctequest@gmail.com](mailto:ctequest@gmail.com)
  - Relevant employment and experience history\*\*: none found.
- **Joe Newman (D), incumbent**
  - Incumbent
  - Email: [localjoenewman@comcast.net](mailto:localjoenewman@comcast.net)
  - Relevant employment and experience history\*\*: currently on the city council.
- **Tim Perry (D)**
  - Email: [tim@timperry.com](mailto:tim@timperry.com)
  - Relevant employment and experience history\*\*: none found.
- **Donita Thompson (D)**
  - Email: [dt91070@yahoo.com](mailto:dt91070@yahoo.com)
  - Social Media:
    - Facebook: Donita L Thompson
  - Relevant employment and experience history: Received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology and Criminal Justice from Indiana University in Bloomington; worked as a co-manager for Kroger for 3 1/2 years and the Department of Child Services in Indiana for 4 years; owned and operated Harris Nightly Childcare for the last 14 years; worked for the Anderson Township Trustee Youth Center and for the City of Anderson in the Utility Office during the COVID Pandemic. Has worked with the Redwood Foundation for the past 6 years as well as the Anderson-Madison County NAACP. Currently volunteers as Advisor to the NAACP Youth Council.

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# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN MAYORAL CANDIDATES



All mayoral candidates were asked the same questions by the creators of this guide. Here are their answers in their own words.

We recognize the candidate answer lengths vary. We want to provide their full answers so that we do not take away from anything they responded with.

Note: Names listed in alphabetical order.

### Questions asked:

1. What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective mayor?
2. How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?
3. How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?
4. What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?
5. What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?
6. What past and current occupational history do you have? (A simple list will suffice.)
7. Do you have a social media site for voters to review?

Note: \*Answers for #s 6 and 7 are in the snapshot  sections for the candidates.

### Mayoral Republican Candidates' Q & A Responses

#### • Jon Bell (R)

- **Q1: What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective mayor?**
  - Qualities for an effective mayor include high quality leadership skills, being someone that citizens can believe in, and the courage to make hard decisions when necessary.
- **Q2: How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?**
  - Residents would be involved in decision-making by deliberately filling our committees and commissions with a diverse group of citizens. We do not allow anyone to serve in multiple positions and no active employee would be allowed to serve on committees and commissions with tax, budget, or revenue oversight. That is not the case with the current administration and the results have been catastrophic.
  - Similarly, transparency would follow with the involvement of citizens from all portions of our community. We wouldn't shut down our TV when meetings are not comfortable for the mayor's office, which is what happens now. We would

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN MAYORAL CANDIDATES



### Mayoral Republican Candidates' Q & A Responses

- **Jon Bell (R) responses continued**

- create a public pamphlet for distribution, giving citizens a first hand opportunity to see what has been done during the previous year and what has been planned for the next.
- **Q3: How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?**
  - Affordable housing is a major problem within our community. We need a long-term plan to address the issue, working with our housing authority and other entities, such as the Township Trustee's office. Also a transition plan, education and training, for those in the program would help reduce the increase of need. Making our affordable housing a temporary tool to help people while they become productive and self-sufficient.
  - An advocate for tenants, (an attorney or advisor) when disputes arise with landlords is something that needs to be considered. The justice system is complicated and can be difficult to understand during very stressful proceedings.
- **Q4: What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?**
  - Anderson's population possessed the kind of qualities that make living in the Midwest the best. We are friendly, easy to talk to, help our neighbors, and work hard. We are proud of our heritage but we know that we have to do better for the next generation. And we wont give up trying to make things better.
- **Q5: What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?**
  - We are challenged with the realizing that we need to embrace a new identity. Our mega factory jobs are a thing of the past and diversity is the key to building a strong economy moving forward.
  - Challenges can be met by partnering with private developers with strategic investments that make sense. New housing infrastructure, modernizing our park models to be more appealing to today's society, understanding and doing something about homelessness and hunger instead of burying our heads in the sand, and strategic planning sessions with council members can help move our city forward. Until then, we just dig in and refuse to support each other and nothing changes.

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN MAYORAL CANDIDATES



### Mayoral Republican Candidates' Q & A Responses

- **Robert Jozwiak (R)**

- **Q1: What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective mayor?**
  - The Mayor is a CEO managerial type position. Managerial and sales experience are a must. Relevant education is important. This leadership position requires neverending optimism, and sincere honesty. A Mayor must be organized, transparent, and forthright. It's also important to be an effective listener, proactive and a great problem solver.
- **Q2: How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?**
  - I've always said it's important for the Mayor to host a weekly meet and greet in the lobby area of the city building. Which would be open for the public. Concerns and questions could be brought to our Administration, then answered and solved.
- **Q3: How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?**
  - Government in the United States was never set up or intended to be the solution provider for all citizen problems. Those who believe otherwise are embracing the tenants of communism, for which I do not support. We already have State laws and municipal codes to address most of the housing concerns you mention. All housing laws and municipal codes will be enforced. Solutions increasing availability of improved housing options, will become available when the local economy becomes more vibrant and dynamic. Bigger and more abundant paychecks will create the profitable opportunity for private sector investors to build the housing options you're requesting.
- **Q4: What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?**
  - Anderson becoming a safe and prosperous place, for me and my wife to raise our children, is what gives me hope and joy. We often enjoy the park system, city founders built into our city. We really love Anderson.
- **Q5: What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?**
  - The most concerning challenge is removing the availability of meth, heroin, and fentanyl from Anderson neighborhoods and streets. Hard drugs are increasing crime, homelessness, mental illness, and child abuse. We're already paying for government enforcement, and the nothing can be done excuses are going to end if I'm elected mayor.

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN MAYORAL CANDIDATES



### Mayoral Republican Candidates' Q & A Responses

- **Carol Miller (R)**

- **Q1: What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective mayor?**
  - The qualities that I think are necessary to be an effective mayor include: caring about our residents and their safety; caring about their community needs for shopping, schools, training, and work opportunities; and, showing respect for their ideas and concerns about our city. I think a good mayor will have transparency and good communication skills with the city leaders, community leaders, and our citizens. The mayor is the Ambassador for our City...they need to represent our city well to those inside and outside our city.
- **Q2: How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?**
  - As mayor, I would be available to meet with groups of people throughout our city to hear about their concerns and their ideas. We have many civic leaders, religious leaders, professional groups, etc. that have amazing ideas that they would like to share with the city administration. I am already talking to individuals and have been amazed at their dreams and ideas for Anderson, but have had no one that will listen. I am listening and taking names and notes!
  - For transparency, I would set up a method of communicating with our residents about things going on in the city...and being sure people know where to find that information. I would love to see more community involvement at events but that information has to be available in multiple forms of media...newspaper, social media, city website, etc.
- **Q3: How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?**
  - Regarding safe and affordable housing...In the past 20 years, I have been listing and selling properties (as a real estate agent) in Anderson. I have sold many vacant properties to a variety of investors who are looking for properties to fix up (to save these homes). We have to stop letting the houses sit vacant until the roofs go bad, it destroys the homes, and then they eventually get torn down when the city finds the money to take down the "blighted homes". Yes, we will continue to take those down that are beyond saving, but I would seek out the property owners and match them up with investors wanting to buy the properties and get them back into habitable condition. There are a variety of mortgage loans available with assistance for low income housing and also

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN MAYORAL CANDIDATES



### Mayoral Republican Candidates' Q & A Responses

- **Carol Miller (R) responses continued**

- rental assistance programs. A single family home is more desirable to many families than being in a larger apartment project. As far as landlord issues, we need to make it very clear to landlords and tenants what is expected from each according to their contract and state laws. Clear knowledge of these expectations will help to have an amicable situation between the landlord and tenant and, if not, what the consequences are if there are ongoing issues. Maybe a panel of volunteer experts (attorney, social worker, police officer, etc.) could be set up as an arbitration option to settle the dispute in a timely and low-cost manner. Ongoing issues with no way to present your case cannot continue to happen for either the landlord or the tenant.

- **Q4: What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?**

- The things about Anderson that give me hope and joy are the people who live here. I enjoy chatting with people at the grocery stores or other establishments throughout our city. People in Anderson are very friendly. I would love to see more interaction between the various cultures in our diverse city. Many people feel isolated and alone...it is amazing what a smile and a "hello" can do for someone who feels invisible.

- **Q5: What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?**

- According to what has been disclosed at the City Council meetings, Anderson has aging water lines and wells that provide our city's water. My biggest concern is the continued safety of our drinking water and how long do we have until we have a breakdown of the system that leaves some of our citizens without water for a period of time. (It has happened in other communities.) Because these issues have been reported in our newspapers, what new businesses will want to come to Anderson and invest money (for jobs and services) if the water issues are not in the process of being replaced or repaired? My first year as mayor would be to hire a professional grant writer that will aggressively look for federal and state monies to put towards repairing and replacing our 100 year old water lines and older wells and make that a priority before it becomes a disaster. While getting those replaced, I would let our Economic Development Department do what they are excellent at...and finally (after being held back) go after new industrial businesses, new restaurants and retail establishments that will help bring visitors and new residents to our

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN MAYORAL CANDIDATES



### Mayoral Republican Candidates' Q & A Responses

- **Carol Miller (R) responses continued**

- community. We have so many "jewels" in our city to promote and we can become a regional destination place for people to enjoy...The Paramount Theater, Mounds State Park, the Anderson Speedway, White River Paintball, the Anderson Museum of Art, Rangeline Nature Preserve, Harrah's Hoosier Park Racing and Casino, the Gruenewald Historic Home, and Anderson University. It is time for Anderson to have a new identity. General Motors was great, but it has been gone for 30 years. It is time to look forward!

**Mayoral Democrat Candidates' Q & A Responses begin on next page**

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN MAYORAL CANDIDATES



### Mayoral Democratic Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Thomas Broderick Jr. (D)**, incumbent
  - This candidate was contacted with the questions through various modalities and did not respond.
- **Rodney Chamberlain (D)**
  - **Q1: What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective mayor?**
    - To me, being an effective mayor starts with a commitment to honesty. I cannot expect the citizens of Anderson to support any of my efforts to bring businesses and jobs to Anderson, to update our infrastructure, to address public safety needs if they don't trust that I have their best interests in mind. Being honest and transparent will be the foundation of building that trust. My commitment to honesty with the citizens of Anderson is essential to me.
  - **Q2: How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?**
    - First and foremost, all city government meetings will be live streamed. They will be played on AndersonTV as well as the City of Anderson Facebook page. The community will have access to public meetings!
    - Secondly, I will hold town hall meetings so I can LISTEN to the public about their concerns as well as their ideas prior to major decisions being made. Currently, decisions are made first and the community is later given the minimal opportunity to speak as required by state law.
    - Third, when I am mayor, the citizens of Anderson will have my ear. I will have multiple opportunities for thoughts and concerns to be shared with me and/or my office. More importantly, I will reply to you.
    - This goes back to my first two answers. Honesty and community engagement. Additionally, I am interested in making a major upgrade to the City of Anderson's website. First, the site needs to be more user friendly so that citizens can access information more easily. Currently, if a citizen wants to look up a particular ordinance that has passed, they would have to know the exact ordinance number or name. There needs to be an easier way to search for and access information. Secondly, the website needs to be thorough. Currently, there is limited or no information posted about elected and appointed officials. It is also difficult to find something as simple as the city council district maps. Each official needs a complete bio including a picture and updated contact information. Also, I will absolutely support an ordinance that allows the Anderson City Council to have "read only" access to the city finance system. There is no reason that the city council, who is charged with overseeing the

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN MAYORAL CANDIDATES



### Mayoral Democratic Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Rodney Chamberlain (D) responses continued**
  - city's finances, should be denied such access. In my administration, there will be nothing to hide.
  - **Q3: How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?**
    - Safe, affordable, equitable housing is a complex issue to tackle. It is going to take collaboration with local agencies. It is going to take creative thinking. And finally, it is going to take investigating and accessing federal and state grant money that is available and bringing that money to our community. There are communities here in Indiana taking advantage of such grant dollars. Currently, the city administration has failed to seek out these options. When I am mayor, I will leave no stone unturned in seeking assistance to provide quality, affordable housing.
    - As mayor, I will be limited in what direct protections I can offer to tenants as I am bound by State law. However, I will absolutely support ordinances put forth by the city council that hold negligent, absent landlords accountable when they do not uphold their end of the contract. Indiana State law is changing to offer more protections to tenants and if we at the city level through ordinances can add to those protections, I support that. Also, there currently has been an ask by the Director of the Office of Human and Civil Rights to hire a part time public defender to represent tenants who are facing eviction. This position would be partly funded by the city and partly by the county. So far, the request has been denied by both. Nationally, 90% of people facing evictions do so without any legal counsel. Conversely, 90% of landlords do have legal counsel. We need to level the playing field. I can do my part as mayor and work with the county to encourage them to do the same.
  - **Q4: What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?**
    - I have lived in Anderson all of my life. My wife and I raised our daughters here and now they are raising our grandchildren here. I have seen and experienced Anderson at its highest and, currently, what I would consider its lowest. Through it all, my hope and joy has come from the people of the community. I have had the pleasure of knowing so many people in this community whether it has been through family and friends, refereeing and umpiring, working in the Parks Department, or serving on the city council. You are my hope and joy. You are why I have put myself out there to run for mayor. Because I know that YOU,



# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN MAYORAL CANDIDATES



### Mayoral Democratic Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Rodney Chamberlain (D) responses continued**
  - the people of Anderson, are the ones who can turn this city around. You just need someone to believe in you. I am that person.
  - **Q5: What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?**
    - The challenge that concerns me the most is being stuck in a rut of rehashing the same old tired ideas and playing by the same old rules. The makeup of our city leadership has looked the exact same since Anderson's first mayor. It is time for fresh ideas and new perspectives.
    - Being intentional about diversity within city administration is a must. And I am talking about diversity beyond just race. Our city is made up of a vast collection of individuals and our government should reflect the community which we serve. Most major companies deeply value diversity because they know that is what drives creativity and innovation. The City of Anderson must take advantage of the wealth of diversity in our community. Along these lines, I am committed to involve our youth more in our city government and in the community as a whole. Our youth are crucial for our city to be successful. Currently, many of our young people are leaving Anderson to seek out better opportunities. If our youth are involved and invested in the community, they are much more likely to stay and build a life here.
- **Tony Watters (D)**
  - **Q1: What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective mayor?**
    - An effective mayor needs to be honest, a good listener, responsive, accessible, transparent and accountable.
  - **Q2: How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?**
    - Engaging residents in the decision-making process when important decisions are being made leads to informed decision-making and stronger solutions to problems. I believe citizen engagement has a number of benefits including longer lasting results. I also believe if people are engaged in finding a solution at the beginning of the process, they will bring additional perspectives, expertise and knowledge with them as we work together to find solutions. I have a plan to create and implement citizen-focused policies with a clear set of priorities allowing people to have a voice on pressing issues in our community.
    - I plan to inform the public with fact sheets and informational meeting opportunities. I want to foster public meetings that allow for dialogue rather

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN MAYORAL CANDIDATES



### Mayoral Democratic Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Tony Watters (D) responses continued**

- than debate so mutual learning can occur. Ideally, I would like to create a forum where public comment can be shared through an online portal or other means so people can freely express the entirety of their thoughts without feeling they are constrained or limited when providing input on an issue, but those that would monopolize or grandstand are not taking advantage of the process. Every voice should be heard and encouraged to provide input. This is our city and our future and we should make decisions together.
- If you pay taxes here, you should say where that tax money is spent. My plan would supplement, not replace any public comment opportunities already in place.
- The best example of transparency is the Indiana Transparency Portal. Assets, contracts, employee information, finance documents, vendor information, is all available online whenever someone wants it. You don't have to jump through a hoop for the information, or wait until someone answers the phone. Everything is posted online. I want documents online, minutes, meetings streamed, and I don't want it to come with a price tag. If a council member can stream a meeting from their phone to Facebook free, we can find something that works just as efficiently. This where public input would be helpful. Maybe someone has a good idea to help address this issue. If so, feel free to message me on Facebook.

- **Q3: How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?**

- To be clear, as Mayor, I can only address the city of Anderson issue. Like every resident in Indiana, however, we all have the right to lobby for change at the federal level and I encourage everyone to do that. The city can help address substandard housing within our limits by making sure city codes are enforced, housing is being properly maintained by landlords and a schedule that reduces the time allotted for repairs or removal of unstable housing is closely followed and I will make sure we do our jobs to address those issues. We can also bring more employment opportunities to the city which can help improve economic situations for people who can't afford housing. We can definitely work harder and to make the entire city a safer place for the residents to live and that will have a number of positive impacts in all areas of the community and aspects of life.

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN MAYORAL CANDIDATES



### Mayoral Democratic Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Tony Watters (D) responses continued**

- As mayor, I can make sure the city is enforcing state health and fire codes and landlords are following common areas. The landlord must provide a safe, clean and livable place for residents. The following are rights tenants have in Indiana that the city can help enforce.
  - The rental unit must be clean, with toilets, furnaces and windows working.
  - Locks must be on every outside door or doors that lead to a common area.
  - Keeping rental premises habitable includes maintaining the structural safety of the building and weatherproofing.
- Landlords must:
  - Comply with health and housing codes.
  - Provide and maintain the following in good and safe working condition (if there at the time you signed your lease):
    - Electrical systems
    - Plumbing, including a reasonable supply of hot and cold water at all times,
    - Sanitary systems
    - Heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (including an adequate supply of heat at all times)
    - Elevators (if applicable)
    - Appliances supplied to encourage you to enter into the lease.

- **Q4; What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?**

- Everything. I love this city which is why I have lived here my entire life. I worked here, raised my family here and retired here. I'm ready to bring jobs back, make it a safer place for all of us to enjoy.

- **Q5: What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?**

- 1.) The lack of job opportunities.
- 2.) The drug problems and safety issues.
- 3.) Homelessness.
- Revitalizing a community that has fallen on hard times isn't easy, but the hardest part is having the right resources in place to rebuild and Anderson has those resources.
- Hard work and innovation runs in our bloodlines. When we get together for the holidays we can't point a finger and not have it land on someone who either worked at Guide Lamp or Delco Remy or someone who is related to a worker

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN MAYORAL CANDIDATES



### Mayoral Democratic Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Tony Watters (D) responses continued**

- from one of the automobile plants.
- Our community unionized the plants in Anderson and between 1930 and 1982, Anderson weathered a sit-down strike at Guide Lamp in 1937 and negotiated working conditions for better wages, job security, and benefits that would not only shape who we are today, but the automobile industry as a whole. There was a lot of blood, sweat and tears that went into those plants. When the jobs left, some workers left, some retired, but the bloodlines that built the manufacturing giants that once called Anderson home still run deep.
- Anderson remains uniquely positioned within the state and the nation. Did you know that if you drive eight hours in any given direction from Anderson you can reach roughly 75% of the nation's population? We have an international airport less than an hour away and access to a railroad line within our city limits.
- Anderson needs to do a better job of developing and creatively marketing - with little to no cost - a workforce guide that not only explains the city's unique workforce system to bring more jobs to the community, but creates a strategy to connect our tools, educational resources, potential funding, labor market data, key partners, and organizations that would make us leaders among the competition.
- There are opportunities for new growth in Anderson and I have explored potential business leads with individuals who expressed disappointment over their negotiations with our current leadership. Our current leadership is overlooking innovative business ideas that would expand the skill set of our workforce. I have a plan and it includes not only bringing jobs to Anderson, but working together, for change.
- The safety of residents in Anderson is my first priority and drugs in the city are a problem. Anderson needs real, achievable plans to tackle our public safety issues and I understand what those issues are and how to implement those plans with well-trained, well-resourced, and highly accountable officers.
- As many of you in the health field are aware, the Community Health Network 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment Anderson Region assesses the needs of Anderson and the surrounding community and this information is invaluable.
- The assessment highlights a statistic I unfortunately witnessed as a police officer. Between 2015 and 2019, drug poisoning deaths per 100,000 Madison

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN MAYORAL CANDIDATES



### Mayoral Democratic Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Tony Watters (D) responses continued**

- County residents increased from 28.1 to 39.6 (41%) and exceeded Indiana averages in each year. While these are county statistics, they mirror the overuse of opioids and substance abuse within Anderson. Stakeholders indicated that substance use disorders are becoming prevalent as people self-medicate for untreated mental health conditions.
- My plan to address the drug problem in Anderson starts with addressing the cause of the crime. I want to create a new pilot program that pairs officers with mental health and domestic violence specialists from our local nonprofits agencies for specialized training. I know we need to be able to educate residents on the resources available within our community, so we can provide them with immediate victim services, and the best way to do that is work with our nonprofit neighbors to solve our shared problems together.
- The following are aspects of the plan I want to implement to combat the opioid problem in Anderson and improve public safety:
  - Boost our police presence in areas with the highest rates of gun violence and opioid use - presence is a deterrent. This doesn't mean we have to hire more officers, it means officers need to get out into the community more and return to community policing. Spend more time talking to people and learning about neighborhood needs, not driving through the neighborhood on the way home to Fishers.
  - Work with health care providers and school organizations to improve safety outreach efforts. How can we help them, partner with them, learn from them or work with them to do a better job together? What are we missing and what can we do to fix it?
  - Identify gaps in substance abuse treatment facilities, barriers to access and ways to expand capacity.
  - Increase safe housing, recovery and vocational assistance programs.
- Funding and grant opportunities are available through the Bureau of Justice Assistance each year and I would make it a priority to seek out these funds.
- There are a number of layers of public safety and different approaches to the issue that can help us build a safer, stronger, and healthier community. I don't want to wait months after the election to start making a difference. We can start with the easy things like fixing broken streetlights, adding lighting to dark areas to make them feel safer, increasing patrol areas and cleaning up the areas

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN MAYORAL CANDIDATES



### Mayoral Democratic Candidates Q & A Responses

#### • Tony Watters (D) responses continued

- that are overgrown. I want to start collecting your ideas now and plan today for Anderson's future.
- The homeless population in Anderson is one of our greatest needs right now. Homelessness is a growing problem and we can see it when we stand on our back doorsteps. It is clear that Anderson's current approach to addressing homelessness isn't working. We need new leadership with fresh energy to ensure that those who are unhoused are supported to get off the streets and stay off the streets.
- I want to help our neighbors who are living in our parks and on the trails, behind wooded businesses, and under bridges by giving them the resources they need to rebuild their lives. Anderson is allotted to receive \$1,372,583 from the American Rescue Plan Act HOME Supplemental Allocations to address this very issue through a properly vetted partnership.
- I have a simple three-step approach to tackle the homelessness issue:
  - Reevaluate: do a full audit of the homelessness programs in Anderson to determine which programs are working and delivering results and which programs are falling short so we can decide how to partner with a program or work to create a new one.
  - Reimagine: I want to look at how other communities have been successful in reducing homelessness and then determine ways we can deploy similar strategies in Anderson with the input of community leaders and residents. I think one of the things people get upset about is feeling they have no say in what is happening. This will be a joint venture - not a decision behind closed doors. I know the use of Safe Outdoor Spaces (SOS), which provide sanitation, social services, and security to individuals who are resistant to shelters is an approach that has been used with a degree of some success which we might consider in Anderson.
  - Reinforce: Anderson needs to prioritize public safety, public health, and public spaces and, as the next mayor, I will do exactly that. Helping our unhoused neighbors locate alternative shelter options also ensures our sidewalks, public spaces and streets can be utilized by everyone living in Anderson. My long-term strategy is to alleviate homelessness by looking into ways to develop more housing options that are accessible to those with lower incomes, while maintaining a high degree of safety for residents.

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN MAYORAL CANDIDATES



### Mayoral Democratic Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Tony Watters (D) responses continued**

- We also have supporting information from a new study to help us understand the cause of homelessness, and those findings show there are three leading causes to homelessness - substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental illness. Building on these issues, I think we can create an outreach program to benefit the homeless population in Anderson around these known causes. Some resources are already in place, but connecting the dots between the cause and homelessness is a new way to address the problem.
- The study, published in 2022 in the International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology, said these issues not only led to homelessness, they made addressing the issue of homelessness more difficult.
- The leading cause of homelessness was substance abuse as users become addicted to drugs or alcohol, they found it harder to keep a job, pay their bills and enter a shelter within 12 months. The strain of the addiction caused relationships to end or people to hide their situations and they would become estranged from friends and family.
- The study found that half of America's homeless population is women and children. In fact, homelessness among women has seen the fastest growth relative to other groups and the leading cause for the homelessness was due to women leaving an abusive relationship.
- Regardless of gender or age, people experiencing homelessness often suffer from mental illness, with 42–80% having experienced mental health problems. Mental illness can lead to homelessness, and homelessness can make mental illness problems worse. Having a lack of social support and resources, loneliness, and barriers to receiving treatment for injuries, may increase mental health problems and substance abuse among veterans, which contribute to chronic homelessness. Additionally, the study found people who face greater long-term psychological problems, like those in the LGBTQ community, were more likely to develop depression, PTSD, and even suicidal thoughts, according to the research.

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



**All city council candidates were asked the same questions by the creators of this guide. Here are their answers in their own words.**

We recognize the candidate answer lengths vary. We want to provide their full answers so that we do not take away from anything they responded with.

Note: Names listed in alphabetical order.

### Questions asked:

1. What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective city council member?
2. How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?
3. How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?
4. What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?
5. What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?
6. What past and current occupational history do you have? (A simple list will suffice.)
7. Do you have a social media site for voters to review?

**Note:** \*Answers for #s 6 and 7 are in the "Snapshot"  sections for the candidates. Answers for #6 were summarized by Voter Guide creators if the answers were lengthy.

## City Council At-Large Republican Candidates Q & A Responses

### • Pete Bitar (R)

- **Q1: What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective city council member?**
  - The 4 pillars of my campaign detail the qualities I see that are necessary for City Council in this day and age:
    - Innovation: New ideas and real progress, creating not only jobs, but headquartered companies
    - Integrity: Stop the nepotism and under-the-table deals that seem to be so pervasive in government
    - Intellectual Honesty: Read the motions and do the research, talk to people, and make wise choices
    - Inclusivity: Not just a virtue signal, but a real inclusivity that listens to and helps everyone



# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Republican Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Pete Bitar (R) responses continued**
  - **Q2: How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?**
    - I would like to see a City Council page not only on the City website, but on social media and in the newspaper that posts agendas and discusses the topics updated monthly, also allowing for public comment online along with in person at the meetings. Those online comments should be read by all Council members prior to meetings in order to have a realistic view of citizen perspectives, from all sides. Who knows, maybe new ideas and points of view can emerge that help the City make better decisions.
  - **Q3: How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?**
    - More creative ideas, like super modern tiny houses and container housing need to be considered as an answer to affordable, attractive housing concerns. Right now, City ordinances really don't allow for tiny houses at all.
    - I have a design for container housing that would allow a small family to own a home for less than \$40,000, that would be self-sustaining, solar and wind powered, and could be easily rented for less than \$400/month.
    - We also need to update rent reforms that protect both landowners and tenants, and incentive landlords to minimize expenses while incentivising tenants to better take care of properties they rent. I have some experience with this, both in residential and commercial/industrial space, and have seen ways to maximize value for owners and affordability for tenants, by providing fair accountability to both.
  - **Q4: What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?**
    - Housing values are rising and unemployment is low. The potential is here for jumping into the future with both feet, and I even sense a growing spirit of anticipation in many of our youth. What we lack is vision and coordinated leadership that can articulate vision to the City's citizens.
  - **Q5: What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?**
    - We have so many opportunities right now to access hundreds of millions of dollars for infrastructure and development, and we don't have leadership that is willing to pursue it. We are literally missing a once-in-a-generation chance to

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Republican Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Pete Bitar (R) responses continued**
  - rebuild for the next 50 years, and it's slipping away. That, and the lack of vision and a comprehensive plan for the future is fueling the urgency of my candidacy.
  - There is a "militant complacency" evident in our City's current leadership. Not just complacent behavior, but also an insistence on not doing anything. I have heard: "this is Anderson, it can't happen here..." uttered from our leaders' mouths, and that is just unacceptable.
  - So in summary, leadership and the lack thereof is our biggest challenge in Anderson.
- **Tiffany Harless (R)**
  - **Q1: What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective city council member?**
    - A City Council Member should be adaptable, dependable, and possess some degree of flexibility. Good old common sense and life experience are certainly a must for any member. One must be self motivated, an independent and critical thinker, as well as honest. Council members should value integrity and provide concise communication that is effective, but relatable. A member should be able to investigate, research, and delegate during any formal proceedings all while maintaining a proper decorum. Most importantly, a member must lead by example, be open, receptive, and empathetic while serving the public.
  - **Q2: How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?**
    - Transparency equals honesty folks, it's that simple. If one is honest then there should be nothing to hide. Presently however, it seems that our current administration is very "choosey" about what information is released the public. Perhaps because the information being withheld is for "individual gain" and "personal agenda's"? Withheld information leads to uninformative decision-making. If we only have part of the story and part of the facts then we cannot conclude or decide anything with good judgment. If you want the public to make good informed decisions that are considered without bias, treated ethically and culturally sensitive, then give the residents of Anderson the information they need to do just that. Residents who feel they are listened to and heard will naturally gravitate toward aiding in the decision-making process. There are many residents that are not involved because they simply do

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Republican Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Tiffany Harless (R) responses continued**

- not know where to start or how. Awareness needs to be generated and reiterated to educate the public about how they can participate and why it is so very important for them to participate in the decision-making process. We need to bring it to the level that our residents are at and get into the 21st Century. All public meetings should be recorded and streamed live and information be made readily available at the click of a button for ease of use and access.

- **Q3: How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?**

- We have homes in Anderson. We have homes that are sitting empty until they become so dilapidated that they are no longer a usable residence. We should be putting them to use and not wasting resources. By the time Habitat For Humanity builds an entire house, the city could have already showed initiative and renovated a home instead and possibly even save money and house more families. We do not have a cap on rent or a feasible plan to control the price of rent currently. We need to work with landlords and tenants alike to find a solution that works for everyone involved. Some statistics may suggest that there is a housing crisis; however, I believe this information is not entirely accurate and slightly askew. The Indiana Housing and Community Development Association (IHDA) made the Indiana Emergency Rental Assistance (IERA) funding available during COVID to help address issues that had risen as a result of COVID. People were scared, they didn't know what to do, and some just flat out couldn't handle it. Many people either were let go or quit their jobs for fear of becoming ill from COVID, understandably so. Many of these individuals and families applied for and utilized the IERA in the manner in which it was first intended. However, the assistance provided was too much, in my opinion. I've witnessed many individuals and families that were receiving IERA funds quit their jobs because their largest expense (rent) was being paid for the next 18 months and then they could re-certify to apply again for additional assistance too. Even after COVID died down the IERA funds were still being paid out. Presently there are still funds being distributed for IERA. If you are not affiliated with serving the public and providing them with assistance of this nature however, it can be difficult to be aware that the resources even exist

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Republican Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Tiffany Harless (R) responses continued**

- to outsiders not utilizing them. I have been working to advocate for tenants/landlords receiving IERA funds for nearly two years.
- IHCDCA really dropped the ball on the IERA funding/application process. IHCDCA was swamped and overwhelmed to start off with, but then they transitioned to Sales Force right in the middle of COVID and in the midst of accepting applications and distributing funds. When the transition occurred and they switched to Sales Force for their software and applications not all of the information transitioned during the switch. Many clients were left waiting for months in the dark without even being notified that their applications were in limbo. Landlords also faced issues communicating and working with IHCDCA. IHCDCA also issued utility assistance to those who qualified, but instead of paying the assistance straight to the utility or gas company, they issued the \$500 assistance directly to the recipient. Many people that I have served have misused the utility allotment from IHCDCA's IERA program. To bring it full circle many individuals and families receiving these funds had their rent paid and their utilities paid for months. Many of them also received ICAP's EAP funds paying more toward their utilities as well. All of which were likely also receiving food stamps to pay for food. For families and individuals on lower incomes that just about all the bills they have. There was definitely a learning curve involved I'll admit and hopefully we can do a better job in the future of preparing and implementing strategies during emergency situations like COVID. There is no simple solution unfortunately.
- The numbers may change drastically regarding the housing "crisis" by this time next year since funding is running out and now people are forced to get a job and pay to live. Also, we need comprehensive plan for the city that address the needs of our community as it relates to the homeless population that has been occupying Madison County, specifically Anderson. There is no facility that can provide temporary shelter for a family within Madison County. Why? Shame on us for not being better prepared. We know how to assess risk and plan ahead, but yet we don't practice what we preach. We can no longer be bystanders that simply complain. Encourage togetherness is difficult when 17 households are displaced because of an apartment complex fire. A single male can go to a male ONLY shelter and women and kids can go to another county, unless they

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Republican Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Tiffany Harless (R) responses continued**
  - are battered women and children then our county can provide temporary shelter. We need more shelter options and we need options that can accommodate families to allow them to stay together during a time when they most likely needed each other the most.
  - **Q4: What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?**
    - When I think about what gives me hope and joy about Anderson, it's our rich history that immediately comes to mind. I absolutely love anything that has to do with the history of my hometown because I am of Native American descent too. I am proud to say that I have lived here my entire life thus far, and I have no intentions of changing that. I like to visit other places, but I'm always ready to come back home to Anderson. I have hope that Anderson will be great like it was when I was growing up. Anderson was cleaner, safer, and wealthier before the factories closed down for good. I would like to see that Anderson again one day so that our children can experience what I had the privilege of so many years ago. Our community should be able to enjoy life and not live their lives in constant fear. What would Anderson be without Anderson Speedway (home of the fastest quarter mile and within city limits), Anderson Roll Arena, Gene's Root Beer and Hot Dogs, Saint John's Hospital now known as Ascension Saint Vincent Anderson Regional Hospital, the Indians, the Scotts, the Pirates, the Wigwam, and the original Payless Supermarket more commonly known as Kroger?
    - Times have changed and society is evolving and there may be some things we may never see again in our city. It would bring joy to me to know that when I leave this world I am leaving my children in a place better than the way they found it. I want to strive and stimulate social change to produce progress towards these types of ideas and initiatives. Hopefully the residents of Anderson can again experience the feelings associated with being safe, healthy, and meeting all personal needs in the near future. I believe that we must come together in order for this to occur. We are all on the same team, the Human Race Team. We all have the same basic needs to fulfill. We have to take a stand and say enough is enough. A bully will continue to bully someone until the bully is stopped. We've got to stop our bullies and take back control. We can't build walls around our homes and we can't run away from the problems. I hope

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Republican Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Tiffany Harless (R) responses continued**
  - that Andersonians can come together and have each other's backs and celebrate our differences rather than pick each other apart because of them. This would truly mean the world to me if we could all just be more considerate and a bit nicer to each other.
  - **Q5: What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?**
    - First, we need to put our own personal beliefs and views aside and come together to address challenges the city is facing. The City Council should be making decisions based on what is the greatest good for the greatest number of people. We can make an ordinance, but if no one cares or abides by it, then it does no good. It takes all of us working together, elected officials and the public alike. Also, I'm not simply referring to Anderson. I'm referring to our neighboring communities too. Our neighboring cities and rural communities are an asset and we should use that to our advantage. We should be building relationships and establishing lines of communication with our neighboring cities and rural communities. Our communities reflect upon one another, we need a partnership (This is FREE and it's only cost, your time). I believe the top three challenges that Anderson is facing are related to housing/homelessness, public safety and population retention. All of these concerns are overlapping to some degree. One relies on the other, for example, making Anderson safer by crime reduction to keep established residents from leaving our city. Make it the safest place to live and everyone will want to move here. It's unrealistic, but you get the point. If we quit taking on new projects and initiatives that we do not need and address the concerns and problems we already have, that is our starting point. We should not be taking on anything new in the City of Anderson at this time, but rather we should be focusing on what we can do with what we have already. Generating a comprehensive plan for Anderson would be next. Once agreed upon and established, resolutions can then be put to work for all of Anderson's residents, but there must be accountability as well. The residents of Anderson must be included throughout all processes. Community support is essential to any plan for the city of Anderson, but again, we need to meet them at their level where they are. We need to provide options so that everyone can participate in City Government. If we cannot clean up our act and provide our residents with the community they so badly desire, then we will not progress

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Republican Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Tiffany Harless (R) responses continued**
  - or grow. Instead our population will continue to dwindle, which according the United States Census Quick Facts, we've declined in population by approximately 2.3% between 2010 and 2021. WE ARE ON ONE TEAM. With your help, let me be the voice that guides us to where we need to be.
  - Statistics from the United States Census were drawn from the following website:  
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/andersoncityindiana/PST045221>, Accessed on 3/30/2023
- **Rachel Lee Landers (R)**
  - **Q1: What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective city council member?**
    - Council members should be well-versed in the issues that are most important to their constituents, have a deep understanding of the community they serve, and have a basic understanding of financial management and budgeting. A council member should be able to communicate effectively with constituents and colleagues, including being able to listen actively, express ideas clearly, and be persuasive. They should be able to identify problems and work collaboratively with others to develop effective solutions, basically putting aside differences and finding common ground to build upon. An effective council member should be compassionate, empathetic, and have a strong commitment to serving their community and improving the lives of their constituents. Council members should be open to new ideas and perspectives, willing to listen to different viewpoints and be willing to consider alternative approaches. They should be transparent in their decision-making processes and accountable for their actions, ensuring that they act in the best interests of their constituents. And, finally, council members should adhere to high standards of ethical and moral behavior and act with integrity at all times, including keeping control of their emotions to avoid engaging in negative interactions.
  - **Q2: How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?**
    - I would hold regular town hall meetings inviting the public to present the issues they see being a problem within the community and engage in healthy

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Republican Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Rachel Lee Landers (R) responses continued**
  - discussion on potential solutions. I would encourage the public to take ownership of their community and not only find the problems that exist, but take part in finding the solution, and being a part of implementing that solution. I would encourage the formation of neighborhood committees (much like the neighborhood crime watch groups) to focus on some of the needs within the neighborhoods, such as life skill and moral support for the young adults (similar to the CASA concept, but for young adults needing life skill guidance), neighborhood clean-up efforts, neighborhood revitalization efforts, elder care efforts, etc.
  - Transparency:
    - 1. Regular communication: The city should communicate regularly with the public through various channels such as websites, social media, newsletters, and public meetings.
    - 2. Open meetings: City council meetings and other public meetings should remain open to the public, with agendas and meeting minutes made available to the public in a timely manner. Live streaming of these meetings should always be made available for those who are unable to attend meetings and the videos should remain accessible indefinitely.
    - 3. Public records: The city should maintain a system of public records (financial records, meeting minutes, and other important documents), allowing citizens to access information about government activities and decisions.
    - 4. Citizen participation: The city should actively encourage citizen participation in the decision-making process by holding public hearings, soliciting feedback from citizens, and providing opportunities for citizens to serve on advisory committees. It is important for citizens to have ownership of their community and what happens there.
  - **Q3: How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?**
    - 1. The city can encourage the development of affordable housing by offering tax incentives, zoning changes, and expedited permitting for developers who build affordable housing units.
    - 2. The city can partner with non-profit organizations that specialize in providing



# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Republican Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Rachel Lee Landers (R) responses continued**
  - affordable housing to help expand the availability of affordable housing units. There are already several non-profit organizations in Anderson addressing affordable housing needs, but the need exceeds the output. There are grants available to non-profits for such efforts, so the city could help non-profits find and apply for grants.
  - 3. The city can support policies that promote equity in housing, such as fair housing laws, tenant protections, and anti-discrimination policies. Policy needs to be established to address the problem with “slum lords” and keeping properties safe and healthy.
  - 4. The city can create a task force to study the housing shortage and make recommendations for addressing the problem, including identifying opportunities for public-private partnerships and increasing funding for affordable housing programs. Again, help find and apply for grants.
  - A local tenants' rights group and/or legal aid organization should be made available to tenants free of charge to learn more about their rights and options when landlords are not meeting the standards set for them by the Fair Housing Act and/or by Indiana state law and/or by the lease agreement. Landlords need to be held accountable for the responsibility they have toward the people living in the spaces they own. Legal action should be taken to ensure the safety of tenants and landlords should lose the ability to provide housing if they repeatedly put their tenants at risk.
- **Q4: What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?**
  - Anderson is my home of 46 years. I grew up here, have a lot of friends and extended family here, raised my own family here, and now my adult children are choosing to stay in Anderson. I have deep roots here. I have invested my time, money, and energy into the community here. I care deeply about Anderson and see the value that Anderson holds with a rich and significant history and with many people working hard to continue creating a rich culture and heritage here.
  - Anderson has many establishments that have been around many, many decades that help create that rich history and heritage. Anderson has a significant history in manufacturing and industry, and is known for its production of automobiles and auto parts. While the city has faced economic

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Republican Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Rachel Lee Landers (R) responses continued**
  - challenges in recent years, there are many residents who are working to revitalize the community and create new opportunities.
  - Some of the positive aspects of Anderson include its diverse population, access to natural resources like parks and lakes, and the presence of a university and other educational institutions. These factors can provide opportunities for cultural exchange, learning, and recreation. I, for one, love hiking at Mounds Park, walking around Shadyside Lake, walking along the White River Trail, kayaking down the White River, attending the various festivals, events, concerts, and other activities offered throughout the year in Anderson.
  - Furthermore, Anderson has organizations and individuals who are dedicated to promoting social justice, equity, and community development. These efforts can inspire hope and provide a sense of purpose and belonging for those who live and work in the city. Seeing people coming together to preserve what we have and create new ideas moving forward is reflective of the pride so many have in this place we call home. I have great hope for our future and believe we can overcome any challenges we face through the resilience and dedication shown by those in our community willing to work together for the common good.
- **Q5: What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?**
  - Anderson has faced economic challenges in recent years, including job losses, declining population, and a shrinking tax base. This has led to issues with blight, abandoned properties, and limited funding for important services such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure. This has contributed to the development of other problems within the city, such as:
    - 1) substance abuse, which has led to a rise in overdose deaths, homelessness, increased demand for addiction treatment, and a strain on emergency services.
    - 2) crime rates that are higher than the national average, including incidents of violent crime such as homicide and assault, domestic violence, and child abuse and neglect. This can impact residents' sense of safety and security and deter businesses and investment from coming to the area. And,
    - 3) the deterioration of a properly educated and trained workforce.

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Republican Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Rachel Lee Landers (R) responses continued**
  - 1. The city should continue to work to attract new businesses and industries to the area. Addressing infrastructure improvements is one thing that can't be put off any longer. That will go a long way in attracting new business, as well as new residents. They can also focus on retaining existing businesses, supporting small businesses, and creating job training programs to help residents acquire skills for high-demand industries.
  - 2. The city can work with healthcare providers, community organizations, and law enforcement agencies to increase awareness of substance abuse and addiction, expand access to treatment and support services, and reduce the supply of illicit drugs through law enforcement efforts.
  - 3. The city can invest more in community crime watch programs, which focus on building trust and collaboration between police and residents. This can help reduce crime rates and improve residents' sense of safety and security. And, as mentioned above, additional programs can be developed to offer community or peer support and guidance, especially to young adults just starting out on their own, who may be lacking general living skills or who may be struggling to make it on their own.
  - 4. The city can invest more in education by increasing funding for schools, supporting teacher training and professional development, and providing resources for students such as tutoring, after-school programs, access to technology and technology skills training, and life skills training.
- **Larry Lee Savage Jr. (R)**
  - **This candidate was contacted with the questions through various modalities and candidate did not respond.**
- **Mark Turner (R)**
  - **This candidate was contacted with the questions through various modalities and candidate did not respond.**

### City Council At-Large Democrat Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Meredith (Coco) Armstrong (D)**
  - **Q1: What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective city council member?**
    - a) good character; b) team player; c) be accessible; d) understand city financials; e) be prepared

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Democrat Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Meredith (Coco) Armstrong (D) continued**
  - **Q2: How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?**
    - I plan to inform our residents in what's going on and then request their input once I receive it then I'll accept it and reflect it on my choices.
    - Transparent: By making information more easily accessible.
  - **Q3: How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?**
    - By helping develop more housing low and moderate income people.
    - Making sure renters have guidelines for landlords and make sure that they (landlords) follow them.
  - **Q4: What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?**
    - Selling the youth center to the city so the youth can have programs.
    - How NTN and NTK along with Nestle has made more jobs available for our citizens.
  - **Q5: What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?**
    - No answer was given.
- **Anthony (Ty) Bibbs (D), incumbent**
  - **Q1: What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective city council member?**
    - The qualities that I believe are necessary for a city council member to be effective would include: being a person of character; being dependable; being honorable; being trustworthy; being consistently fair; being reachable; being willing to find compromise on policy, but NOT on integrity; not being beholden to campaign contributions
  - **Q2: How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?**
    - I plan to continue to involve residents in the decision-making process by keeping them informed of Common Council meetings (Every 2nd Thursday at 6:30 pm at the City Building on 8th Street). Also, by keeping them informed of the agenda items to be discussed at the Common Council meetings. Moreover, I have long been an advocate for expanding Anderson TV to include ALL City of Anderson Public Meetings (not just Common Council meetings). Examples would include: Board of Public Works; Anderson Redevelopment Commission Meeting (ARC); Safety Board; Park Board; etc. Each would be shown live and at set times. The schedule of meetings on Anderson TV could be included in each citizen's utility bill. I was severely disappointed to learn that the Indiana State Senate decided to pause House Bill 1167 for two years. It would have required governing and local agencies to livestream their respective meetings and make them accessible to the public.

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Democrat Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Anthony (Ty) Bibbs (D) responses continued**
  - **Q3: How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?**
    - The Common Council branch of city government can help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Anderson by continuing to advocate for a healthy collaboration with the Anderson Housing Authority and providing the Anderson Housing Authority with financial assistance when needed. In addition, the Common Council can continue to work to make sure that the Civil and Human Rights Department is adequately funded, adequately staffed, and appropriately resourced and supported.
  - **Q4: What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?**
    - Being a positive influence on, and giving back to, my community gives me joy. Helping get citizen issues and concerns addressed and/or resolved gives me joy. Watching all of my students develop into productive citizens gives me hope.
  - **Q5: What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?**
    - I believe that the most concerning tangible challenges include drug addiction (homelessness and petty crime). The Common Council can address these issues by continuing to invest in Public Safety and Collaborating with local Social Service Agencies to provide resources for those citizens that are in need of assistance.
    - I believe that the most concerning intangible challenges include a generalized lack of inspiration/imagination and a willingness to accept mediocrity. To address these challenges the Common Council can speak truth to power and by acting on conscience and not political expediency. Those that are voted into positions of power/authority should endeavor to enlighten themselves and their fellow citizens.
- **Rebecca (Becky) Crumes (D), incumbent**
  - **Q1: What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective city council member?**
    - Communication skills; knowledge of legislative branch of government; self-confidence; compassion; honesty

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Democrat Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Rebecca (Becky) Crumes (D) responses continued**
  - **Q2: How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?**
    - Town Halls, Surveys and making sure residents have their voices heard at Council Meetings
    - Answering Public Records Request in a timely manner
    - Posting more detailed information about finances of City on webpage
    - Having a more user friendly webpage
  - **Q3: How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?**
    - Working with the Housing Authority and making decisions based on current data
    - Ordinances that do not conflict with State or Federal laws could be implemented, once issues are identified
  - **Q4: What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?**
    - Knowing we can do better and will do better
  - **Q5: What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?**
    - Infrastructure, Housing and updating Comprehensive Plans
    - Partnerships with industry, schools and community
    - Be accountable
- **Jahnae Erpenbach (D)**
  - **Q1: What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective city council member?**
    - Our city leaders must work shoulder-to-shoulder to improve the lives of all citizens who live, work, and raise their families here in Anderson.
    - If successful, my primary focus as one of your councilpersons will be on good governance in a united effort to improve the quality of life for all of us. As a long-time resident, community leader, and business owner in Anderson, I have gained the critical management and servant leadership skills that I will apply in addressing Anderson's most pressing issues. I will work to build the following:
    - PURPOSE – Promote civility, positive communication, and collaboration among our government, citizens, and business organizations

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Democrat Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Jahnae Erpenbach (D) responses continued**
  - PROGRESS - Champion the development of a long-term, economic improvement and quality-of-life plan
  - PRIDE - Celebrate the positive attributes of our community and intelligently leverage our resources to benefit all neighborhoods and our more vulnerable residents - Seniors, Veterans, Youth, the Disabled, Homeless, the Underemployed, and our Animals
  - **Q2: How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?**
    - Our City Council should be collaborative, openly encouraging input and ideas from citizens and the Administration. To ensure voices are heard, opportunities for interaction should be professional, where everyone is respected and genuinely appreciated for their concern and involvement. As your City Councilperson, I would do the following:
      - Listen, Research, Explore, Collaborate, Decisively Act & Celebrate Success.
      - Openly value & embrace inclusivity, outreach, professional communication, and opportunities to express positivity.
      - Meet with citizens continuously and often to fully understand viewpoints and share important information.
      - Develop more sub-committees to investigate enrichment opportunities.
      - Leverage all possible relationships, cooperatives & sources to advance progress, awareness, favorability, and connections.
      - Foster collaborative efforts that cleverly support various beneficiaries with a single initiative (i.e., Seniors & Youth, Animals & the Disabled, Education & Cultural Initiatives, Arts & Recreation, etc.)
      - Encourage the establishment of expert panels and task forces consisting of mostly Anderson Citizens to advise and assist with strategic plans, program development, and the execution of the City's long-term plan objectives.
      - Celebrate every victory along the way.
  - **Q3: How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?**
    - As the general manager at Hoosier Park Racing & Casino for many years, I was instrumental in developing and protecting thousands of jobs in Anderson.

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Democrat Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Jahnae Erpenbach (D) responses continued**

- Having quality, affordable, and equitable housing in the City was a significant factor in maintaining a strong and sustainable workforce.
- After opening the new Hard Rock Casino in Gary, Indiana, I quickly returned to Anderson, where my husband and I invested \$1.2 million to rehabilitate rundown homes within Anderson to provide affordable quality housing.
- In addition, I am a member of the Anderson Police Department's Crime Solutions, a group of local multi-unit property managers and owners who come together in an effort to ensure the safety and well-being of tenants. As an active participant in this group, I can address criminal and security issues that affect residents.
- I am also the Chairperson for the City's American Relief Program - Homeowner's Assistance Committee. Our charge is to effectively expend more than \$2 million to assist Homeowners in the City who COVID has impacted. Through this initiative and our committee's ongoing cooperation with the Affordable Housing Committee, we can significantly improve the condition of housing in Anderson.
- As your councilperson, I will work hard to continue the recent progress in housing development. When addressing any problematic issue, gathering all pertinent facts and data to analyze the situation's scope is first necessary. To effectively assess this concern, I would propose developing a landlord registration program.

- **Q4: What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?**

- I believe we are ready for a New Way of thinking and doing. I am optimistic and excited about what is on the horizon for our great City:
  - 1) A forward-looking base motivated to achieve shared objectives
  - 2) Much more communication, collaboration, and positivity
  - 3) Many invested citizens & engagement: action groups, advisory groups, program beneficiaries, cooperatives
  - 4) More business ventures, more good paying jobs, more opportunities for enrichment & personal growth
  - 5) A Prouder Community as a result

- **Q5: What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?**

- As your City Councilperson, here is how I will work to build:



# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Democrat Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Jahnae Erpenbach (D) responses continued**
  - A robust, long-term development plan (economic, cultural, lifestyle) – I will champion a plan.
  - A cohesive and collaborative government – I will use my diverse education and leadership skills to promote positivity and effective communication.
  - Inclusivity, awareness, appreciation, and buy-in for a big-picture progress plan – I will leverage all possible relationships and cooperatives, openly embrace inclusivity, and encourage civility and professionalism.
  - A prideful community – I will positively engage with citizens and celebrate every win until the city vibrates from progress and pride.
- **Tim Funk (D)**
  - **Q1: What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective city council member?**
    - First, we need a city council that will attend all the meetings. If they're not there, then they can't get things done. Secondly, council members need to have Anderson's best interest at heart. Finally, Anderson has the potential to be great. We need bold council members that will make the tough decisions to enact important changes in Anderson.
  - **Q2: How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?**
    - It is important that the citizens hold their leaders accountable. I started the Madison County Awareness Facebook group to give the citizens a forum to openly discuss the needs and wants of our community. Our group now has over 18,000 Madison County users. The worst thing for a democracy is closed door meetings where secret deals are being made. I will fight to have all council business to be public. From the beginning of my campaign, I have made my personal cell phone number (765-810-1143) available for voters to reach out to me and discuss important topics.
  - **Q3: How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?**
    - To meet Anderson's need for safe affordable housing, we need to work with the right business partners that will make safe and affordable housing available and get rid of the slum lords. We want to encourage great landlords to turn blighted homes into newly renovated houses for deserving families. To

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Democrat Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Tim Funk (D) responses continued**

- do this, we need to stop being an adversary to these businesses that do things the right way and make Anderson a welcoming place for them to improve our community. We want the good guys here and the bad ones to leave. Additionally, I will make resources available to tenants so they know their rights and protections against predatory landlords. I would expand Anderson's Civil and Human Rights department to allow for citizens to reach out for advice and help resolving tenant issues. And I will personally work with local law firms to provide free legal representation on deserving cases.

- **Q4: What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?**

- The thing that gives me the most hope and joy about Anderson are the people! This is why I have chosen to live here and will never move.

- **Q5: What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?**

- We need to shore up Anderson's foundation so our citizens can excel and prosper. I know our citizens are the best and we just need to give them the opportunities. It was devastating when General Motors left. It affected every part of Anderson, from the factory workers to the small businesses, and our tax revenue that provides important services. We have a great work force ready to supply new businesses with quality labor. I will work hard to bring new businesses to Anderson. Not only will I work to make Anderson financially thrive, but I will work to make it safer and healthier. I will write new ordinances to legalize pan handling and help homeless and addicts off the streets. I will work with our senior citizens groups to tackle important issues such as wellness programs and social centers. Finally, I will give our youth new opportunities for the future. I want to provide them with skill training, and develop after school programs designed education and recreation.

- **Robin Wagner (D)**

- **Q1: What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective city council member?**

- A person should possess a working knowledge of how local government works. Be willing and committed to work with local leaders and community members. Remain available and visible in the community and always be willing to listen. Make hard decisions when necessary for the betterment of the city.

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council At-Large Democrat Candidates Q & A Responses

- **Robin Wagner (D) responses continued**
  - **Q2: How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?**
    - Invite and encourage residents to attend meetings to see what's taking place in our community and how they can become involved. Attend city events and be available to the residents.
    - Transparent: Be available to answer questions about city business and how it works. Point residents towards the correct agency or resource.
  - **Q3: How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?**
    - Work with Anderson Housing Authority along with local leaders to create more opportunities for those in need of housing.
    - Create ordinances with strong enforcement, to protect tenants.
  - **Q4: What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?**
    - The idea that we could make this city a place people want to live in, go for entertainment and sustain ourselves for the future.
  - **Q5: What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?**
    - Workforce, homelessness, drug & alcohol/addiction.
    - Support skilled training opportunities. Support Mental Health, drug/alcohol treatment education and services. Work with local Health & Wellness leaders in the community to come up with solutions to ease the homelessness in our community.

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council District 1 Republican Candidate Q & A Responses

- **Jennifer Culp (R)**, running unopposed
  - **Q1: What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective city council member?**
    - The willingness to respond to constituents and listen and to be honest and transparent with their concerns. Be willing to listen and take into consideration their worries.
  - **Q2: How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?**
    - I try to do the above (referring to Q1). I respond when called. I listen to even if I don't always agree. I treat all with respect.
  - **Q3: How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?**
    - I have voted and stayed in votes I am making. We need housing in all areas. Each person needs to be treated with fairness.
  - **Q4: What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?**
    - The people that I see taking ownership in our community. Those that are seeing an area of need and just stepping up and doing what needs to be done. Not waiting for the government to do it. Those seeing trash that needs picked up, those seeing hungry and need fed and doing it, taking care of children. Being Jesus to our community. Serving others without expecting anything in return.
  - **Q5: What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?**
    - Homelessness, I believe we can support those already doing the work. I see a need for upkeep in neighborhoods. This is an area government should step up. Keep it clean, expect owners to keep it clean and hold them accountable.

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council District 2 Both Parties Candidate Q & A Responses

- **John Poor (R)**
  - This candidate was contacted with the questions through various modalities and candidate did not respond.
- **Jeff Freeman (D)**
  - This candidate was contacted with the questions through various modalities and candidate did not respond.

### City Council District 3 both parties Candidate Q & A Responses

- **Greg Graham (D)**
  - This candidate was contacted with the questions through various modalities and candidate did not respond.

### City Council District 4 Both Parties Candidate Q & A Responses

- **Norman Anderson (D)**
  - **Q1: What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective city council member?**
    - Proven performance: Leadership requires knowledge, talent, skill, vitality, and the ability to make a difference; commitment; sound judgement and integrity; strategic thinking ability; sound communication.
  - **Q2: How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?**
    - Through regular town hall meetings, local media platforms, and social media.
  - **Q3: How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?**
    - Assist by partnering with local local housing agency's and develop a transparent plan to address housing needs.
  - **Q4: What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?**
    - I see Anderson as a blank canvas with tons of opportunity to grow this place I call home!
  - **Q5: What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?**
    - The lack of transparency and willingness to not work together for the common good of our citizens!

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council District 4 Both Parties Candidate Q & A Responses Continued

- **Ollie Dixon (D)**
  - This candidate was contacted with the questions through various modalities and candidate did not respond.

### City Council District 5 Both Parties Candidate Q & A Responses

- **Art Pepelea (R)**
  - This candidate was contacted with the questions through various modalities and candidate did not respond.
- **Lance Stephenson (D)**
  - This candidate was contacted with the questions through various modalities and candidate did not respond.

### City Council District 6 Both Parties Candidate Q & A Responses

- **Marquest Higgins (R)**
  - This candidate was contacted with the questions through various modalities and candidate did not respond.
- **Joe Newman (D), incumbent**
  - This candidate was contacted with the questions through various modalities and candidate did not respond.
- **Tim Perry (D)**
  - This candidate was contacted with the questions through various modalities and candidate did not respond.
- **Donita Thompson (D)**
  - **Q1: What qualities do you think are necessary for an effective city council member?**
    - One of the most important qualities for any government official is integrity. The city council is the legislative body of our city. They make laws and approve expenditures. We have to have people who are willing and able to make knowledgeable decisions that can not be swayed by politics or other government officials. A councilor must be willing to put in the work to educate themselves on policy and best practices. A councilor must do what is best for our city even if it is not popular. Being able to stand on your own and doing what's right makes a good councilor.

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council District 6 Both Parties Candidate Q & A Responses

- **Donita Thompson (D) responses continued**
  - **Q2: How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in our town? How can our city government be more transparent with the public?**
    - One of the best and easiest ways to involve citizens in decision-making is by informing them before the decision is made. Allowing citizens to ask questions and answering those questions helps them give valuable opinions about situations being examined. Being patient with citizens and acknowledging that they are not government officials is also important. What may seem like basic information to an official may be foreign to a citizen. Every district in the city should have monthly town halls led by its district representative. One of the first things I plan to do as councilor for District 6 is to hold these meetings so that every citizen in my district can know the value of their opinions and concerns and that they truly have someone representing them.
    - Transparency means allowing light to shine through so the good and the bad can be seen. Citizens need to know the good and the bad of situations. We sometimes fear that individuals won't support something if there are negatives but I have enough confidence in our community that a positive conclusion can still be attained even if you know the unfavorable facts. The reality is that every decision being made has good and bad factors. Citizens do not want to be persuaded into support. They want to be informed so they can make the decision to support. Fear should not rule decision-making. Knowledge overcomes fear.
  - **Q3: How can city government help address the safe, affordable, and equitable housing shortage in Madison County? What sorts of protections can you provide for apartment inhabitants having issues with their landlords?**
    - There is no one good answer to address the affordable housing crisis that plagues cities throughout the country. What we can do is develop a plan that can grow and be modified as needed. Included in the plan should be programs that help address different issues contributing to the crisis. Offering incentives to landlords such as funds to fix issues with their properties in exchange for being committed to allowing low income tenants. Training programs that aid in employment with higher wages. Fixing multi unit complexes and allowing them to be managed by AHA instead of tearing them down. Making available programs that aid and assist individuals in making good financial decisions that help lead to home ownership. Programs for Seniors to aid in fixing up

# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council District 6 Both Parties Candidate Q & A Responses

- **Donita Thompson (D) responses continued**
  - homes, mowing lawns, handicap accessibility, etc. so that seniors may stay in their homes. There are several ideas that could be implemented but it will require a team to develop a plan and then to ensure that there is follow through.
  - Listening to the issues and attempting to mitigate the circumstances before taking it to court is one way to help empower tenants. Before either party can file a lawsuit against the other, there should be mediation through the Human and Civil Rights Department to resolve the conflict. Holding landlords accountable for their actions and conditions of their property should be high priority. Updating codes and following through to ensure landlords are following codes. Requiring judges, prosecutors, and landlords to attend programs like The Poverty Simulation Experience so that they may understand the difficulty of “making ends meet”. Through these experiences, ideas and programs can be developed that help deal with reasons many families fall behind. At the very least, these individuals can realize it may be more difficult than once believed to run a household of three on a minimum wage income.
  - **Q4: What about Anderson gives you hope and joy?**
    - We have a beautiful foundation in Anderson filled with history. The potential for growth is boundless. With the right leadership, Anderson can grow into a community with every citizen having the opportunity to flourish. For the past few years Anderson has experienced a decline but the potential for growth economically as well as the quality of life can be drastically changed with an administration that cares for its people as if they were it’s family. The people of Anderson are rich in humanity and resiliency. The hope lies within them.
  - **Q5: What do you believe are the most concerning challenges for our city? What can city government do to address those challenges?**
    - Communication and transparency within our city government is greatly lacking. We are currently working on a system that tends to be lead blindly by a select few. The unfortunate part is that those who are leading have concern for only a select few. We have to have people in place to make decisions that benefit the entire community. We have to acknowledge the good while working on the bad. Currently, our city government tends to ignore the bad. Our economy is lacking for all citizens. Opportunity is lacking for all citizens.



# Q & A



## ANDERSON, IN CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



### City Council District 6 Both Parties Candidate Q & A Responses

- **Donita Thompson (D) responses continued**
  - Only a select few who are close to our current administration are able to thrive while the remaining 90% of our citizens are left to fend for themselves.
  - If the mindsets of our current administration do not make a major change, this economy and quality of life in this city will not change. I struggle to believe that our government sees the struggle of the citizens that are not in their immediate circle. Transparency is important to our citizens but not an option for those currently in power. Until there is a change of mind or of people, there will be no change.



# USE YOUR VOICE AND VOTE



**Thank you for taking the time to read through this guide. Our team hopes you have benefitted from this, learned new things, researched more about your candidates, and feel more confident and ready to vote.**

We are grateful for the excellent resource of each candidate running for office, the candidates that thoughtfully responded to our questions, indianavoters.in.gov, ballotready.org, and community members who helped round out this guide with primary voting information.

This is the second edition of this kind completed by the CLA team for voters in Madison County, Anderson, Indiana. We want this to be helpful to our community. If you have any feedback, comments, concerns, or questions about this guide, our work, or civic engagement please contact one of our team members.

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## **Please follow:**

- "Community Lens of Anderson" on Facebook for voting information and ways you can participate in civic engagement.
- "Heart of Indiana United Way" on Facebook to learn about how they fight for the health, education, and financial stability in Delaware, Fayette, Henry, Madison, and Randolph counties.

## **Non-partisan Voter Guide developed in collaboration with:**



Heart of Indiana  
United Way

[communitylensanderson.org](http://communitylensanderson.org) [heartofindianaunitedway.org](http://heartofindianaunitedway.org)

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