

## Covington City Council Post 2 East

*Q1. Explain how, if elected, you will work to promote sustainability in AT LEAST ONE of the following areas of opportunity identified in the EPA's Planning for a Sustainable Future: A Guide for Local Governments. For more information, download the guide here.*

*Transportation*

*Land Use Planning*

*Biological Conservation and Open Space Preservation*

*Solid Waste Generation and Recycling*

*Energy, Air Quality and Climate*

*Protecting Water Quality and Ensuring Future Supply*

*Green Building*

*Green Construction*

*Green Procurement*

### **Fleeta Baggett:**

If elected, I'm committed to promoting sustainability in the area of Land Use Planning. Covington is an amazing place and our close proximity to Atlanta makes us a prime spot for development. We must support quality growth and move away from the multitude of apartment complexes that are continually getting zoned. By tightening our zoning regulations, we can work to build high quality residential developments that can grow our tax digest. Covington is lagging in the development of priced single-family homes. We have an abundance of apartments and further expansion in that area will only serve to stress our local school system, strain City services, and further burden our infrastructure. Tighter zoning ordinances will help us attract the types of developments that promote and sustain the vibrant community we all seek.

## Covington City Council Post 2 East (continued)

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### **Steve Plitt:**

#### **Land Use Planning and Transportation and Air Quality:**

I believe the City of Covington is making significant strides in planning for a sustainable future and I plan to continue that push in these areas:

- 1) **Trails:** The trails that have been put in place around the city have benefited all with connecting different parts of the community. This helps provide more sustainable options for travel as well as provide citizens with another exercise option to help with their own health. Everyday I see more and more people using the trails for these purposes. Hopefully we can help to show the county officials of the benefits that come along with the trails, so that they will follow in our footsteps and expand the trails throughout the county. Everyday I see more and more people using these.
- 2) **Smart Growth:** Planning new roads, buildings and having a range of housing choices (apartments that make sense) based around walkable neighborhoods. I believe more neighborhoods like Clark's Grove and the new Town center are the kind of neighborhoods we need to add in the future.
- 3) **Transportation:** Having quality paying jobs in our area will effect transportation. The closer our jobs are to our homes, the less we have to travel and that will help keep people off the roads. Commute times for people traveling into Atlanta can be over 50 minutes each way. Have better jobs closer to home is a solution to this issue. This also goes for shopping. I've heard entirely too many people mention having to go to Conyers to go to a specific store. Not only does this have people spending their money outside of our city and county, but it also adds to unnecessary travel.
- 4) **Air Quality:** We must make sure that the air we breathe is safe for every citizen in the city and its surrounding areas. This issue is a long way from being resolved. If elected, I will work to make sure we have every bit of information we need to make the correct decisions and actions

## **Covington City Council Post 2 East (continued)**

for us as a community and work to follow through with every measure that we can implement to insure the safety of our citizens.

## Covington City Council Post 2 East (continued)

*Q2. Through its electric and/or gas utilities, your city is in the energy business. What steps should be taken to ensure that your city's reliance on utility profits avoids a conflict of interest when it comes to promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy sources in your city?*

**Fleeta Baggett:**

Several cities in the state of South Carolina allow their customers to utilize solar power without imposing any penalties on them. They do this on a first come first serve bases. I'd like to see the City of Covington allow their residential, commercial and industrial customers to each put 5% in renewable energy. Once hitting 5%, all other interested customers would then go on a waiting list. As people move, sell or a business closes, they would be dropped and the next customer on the list would be given the option to sign up. At no time could any of the three customer groups exceed 5% per category. All panels would be purchased or leased by a private vender. The consumer would be responsible for all maintenance of their solar panels. Doing this it would ensure the City could purchase the minimum amount of mega bites required by MEAG, without a penalty, and not place any burden on those wishing to utilize solar energy.

## Covington City Council Post 2 East (continued)

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**Steve Plitt:**

I believe any government entity should do its very best to keep itself out of any conflicts of interest along these lines. For this particular issue, I think the best way to accomplish that would be to make sure that the profits that come from utilities go towards promoting renewable energy for businesses and individuals, as well as helping to promote ways to help save energy. I will admit that I need to learn more about how the City of Covington uses this income and once elected, I will look into this issue more.