

## Covington City Council Post 3 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*

### **Don Floyd:**

I encourage growth but it is necessary the growth be managed growth. Managed growth can only be accomplished with a realistic land use plan that would include many if not all areas listed in your questionnaire and to include the impact that the growth would have on the services provided by the City of Covington, Newton County and the Newton County Board of Education.

Above all, the land use plan must be applicable to every group who may desire to provide developments in our community. Our elected officials must not show favoritism to special interest groups as it appears to have happened with such developments as "The Town Center" and the multifamily rental developments at Hwy 36 and the ByPass.

## Covington City Council Post 3 East (continued)

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### **Josh McKelvey:**

1) Transportation - There are few things we can do in this area, but I think one of the best ways we promote sustainability in the realm of transportation is to support an extensive Trail/Sidewalk/Bicycle path throughout the City. During my time on the council, we have worked with Newton Trails and the PATH Foundation to develop a Master Plan of the old Rail lines, in addition to identifying opportunities to connect this trail system to greenspace like Central Park and the Eastside Trail. When I first arrived on the council, there wasn't much talk of this. In some circles, it was actually frowned upon. I believe we've moved the needle in the right direction, but we still have work to do. If elected for a 2nd term, once I feel confident we have a viable option for handling costs affiliated with Plant Vogtle, I will work to secure more funding for the completion of additional sections of Covington's Cricket Frog Trail and expanded an trail network.

2) Open Space Preservation and Biological Conversation - The City currently has zero true open space opportunities for Citizens that don't have large tracts of property to enjoy. Central Park will offer some of that once the trails are paved in the sections of the park intended to give our citizens a break from the hustle and bustle.

3) Solid Waste Generation and Recycling - This is a "Pie in the Sky" idea, but I'd love for us to figure out a way to convince the County and other municipalities to make converting our antiquated land fill into a modern, more green, and revenue generating facility. (Think gasification)

## Covington City Council Post 3 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?*

### **Don Floyd:**

The City of Covington relies the revenue generated by the sales of electric and gas utilities, property taxes and other taxes to provide the services the residents of the City deserve and enjoy.

Weather depending on the sales of utilities, taxes or other funding sources to provide services, the City must adopt and operate within a budget supported by revenues generated..

When adopting a budget, three main questions should be posed, 1. Is it needed to provide the services we need and are required to provided, 2. is it what we need or just something we want and finally 3. How is it going to be paid for.

By doing this conflicts can be avoided when it comes to promoting efficiency in providing all services the residents deserve.

## Covington City Council Post 3 East (continued)

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### **Josh McKelvey:**

I think we have to be honest and upfront about this situation. The City Electric Utility was started to become a revenue generator and prevent the need to increase property taxes as regulatory compliance became more costly and as population and the size of the City government grew. I think the City is making a big step in the right direction when it comes to making it more efficient for it's electric utility customers to invest in Photovoltaic technology by cutting the standby fee to a 3rd of what it was for some potential users, and less than half of what it would be for most potential users. The conversation should be had about the structure of the city, how it's financed, and how we seek alternative sources of funding to not be so reliant on our electric utility. If re-elected, I'd like to

1) Seek a reduction in city operating costs with the help of an independent 3rd party. If we can reduce our budget by becoming more efficient, we automatically become less reliant on the markup we currently have for the Kw's we sell to our customers. Bids have been put out for this service and are currently waiting for action after the new City Manager is hired.

2) Have a discussion with the public about our funding. Would they rather pay for the cost of operating their government with the bulk of that coming from property taxes, or would they rather have it come from City Utility customers?

3) Can we lobby our State Reps and Senators to allow municipalities to levy a sales tax of it's own? Right now SPLOST money goes to the County cities have to negotiate their "cut" with the county. Covington is the economic engine of this County, and with a potential growth in the commercial and retail sectors of our local economy (think Town Center), Covington could pull additional tax revenue from neighbors in the region that choose to use our roads, rely on our public safety, and enjoy other amenities when they are visiting. Please allow me to clarify that I would only advocate for an additional 1% locally controlled sales tax IF it was met with cuts to utility rate and/or property tax decreases. The goal of this new revenue stream would be to help us reduce our mark up on the Kw's.