



Livable Neighborhoods, Inc.

www.livable-neighborhoods.org

To improve and promote the livability
of all neighborhoods in the La Crosse area

2013 La Crosse Mayor/Council Candidate Survey

Livable Neighborhoods is a non-profit citizens group established in 1996. Our purpose is to improve and promote the livability of all neighborhoods in the La Crosse area. As part of our mission we encourage citizens to research and discuss important issues facing our community. Certainly one of the most important of those issues is who we should choose to represent us in local government.

The following questions have been developed to help La Crosse residents learn more about the candidates for Mayor and city council prior to the spring election. We are inviting each candidate to answer these questions with a 3- to 5-sentence response. The responses of all candidates will be collated and made available at <http://livable-neighborhoods.org> and in the local media. Your answers will be quoted without summary, editing or editorializing.

Please complete the survey by typing in your best answers to the **highlighted questions** in the row below. As you type, the row will expand, so you should not need to do any formatting. Or if you prefer, you may hand write your answers (please number) on a separate piece(s) of paper. Your response will be posted online and shared with the media exactly as you return it.

Please return your survey by Monday, March 18 to president@livable-neighborhoods.org. Or you may mail it to **Charley Weeth**, 122 17th St S, La Crosse, WI 54601-4208.

Questions? Please contact **Charley Weeth** at 784-3212 or **Charles Clemence** at 738-1736 or vp@livable-neighborhoods.org.

Thank you for your willingness to serve. And good luck in the upcoming elections.

Name: Scott Neumeister

Address: 1521 Wood St

Phone: 608-519-3090

Email: _____

Candidate for Mayor Candidate for Council Council District Number 2

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Questions

1. Political experience is helpful in governing a city, but effective leadership skills may be gained in many different ways. Please list the work, business, civic, or charitable experience that best demonstrates your ability to manage city operations

While this is my first run at political office I currently serve on both the La Crosse Plan Commission as well as the Board of Review for the City of La Crosse, a small business owner for nearly 20 years as well as many years working for local businesses (Currently Director of Operations at Dynamic Recycling) making difficult decisions in regards to staffing, budgets, policies and business development. In my personal life I have given back to my community by serving on numerous non-profit and city boards for nearly four decades. This well rounded perspective on business, government and community needs provides me with the experience necessary to be the best representative for District 2 on the City Council and to be the voice for my constituents. I feel my extensive business, management, and leadership background provides me the necessary skills to be a good Council member. Some of my community involvement includes the following –

- Commissioner of La Crosse' s City Plan Commission
- Appointed Member of the Board of Review for City of La Crosse
- Managing Director of the Varsity Club Cares Foundation
- Served on board of Directors for La Crosse County Crime Stoppers
- President of the North Stars/BGC Legion Baseball Board of Directors
- Served on Logan Booster Club (Past, Vice President)
- Served on the Logan Alumni Association Board of Directors
- Served as a Volunteer Coach for the Boys and Girls Club
- Served on the Board of Directors for Camp Send-A-Kid
- United Way
- Volunteer Fundraiser for the Children' s Miracle Network
- Volunteer for Special Olympics of Wisconsin
- Board of Directors for La Crosse Area Health and Safety Council
- Member of the La Crosse Tavern League
- Member of the Moose Lodge #1920
- Member of American Legion Post 417
- As well as active in many fund-raisers and committees helping others who may be in the need of a helping hand.

2. The City of La Crosse is facing budgetary problems stemming from increasing costs and stable or decreasing revenue. Assume the city is facing a situation where budgeted expenses are expected to exceed revenue by a significant amount. How would you address this shortfall?

It is my understanding that we currently have millions in our surplus fund. We must make sure that a shortfall does not happen by fiscal responsibility, synergies in departments and controlling cost and spending. We must continue collaborating with department heads, unions and most of all input from our constituents and what is most important to move us forward.

3. What do you feel are the greatest problems facing La Crosse neighborhoods? How should the City

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focus its revitalization resources? Specifically, please discuss and rate the importance of the following factors:

I believe that the aging and dilapidated stock currently is the most important. Crime prevention is also a key piece of livable neighborhoods. We can have the nicest houses in the State but if we are fighting crime in these neighborhoods we will not attract young families to our city.

- Aging and dilapidated housing stock.

We have some beautiful houses and areas in the city of La Crosse. We also have areas that are in desperate need of help. We must make recourses available.

- Attracting middle class residents to La Crosse neighborhoods.

Livable attractable neighborhoods is the obvious answer, I also believe we must have a strong school system, low crime rates, and opportunities at well-paying jobs. We are currently losing the competition to neighboring cities. I am confident given time we can work together to change this.

- Developing job and business opportunities for residents.

We must change and become business friendly, treat both large and small business equally. Control the cost of fees and taxes; we need to promote La Crosse as Pro-Business. Bringing good paying jobs to our city help the tax base; residents will fix up the houses and attract young families.

- Neighborhood institutions (parks, schools, libraries, civic organizations, etc.).

I believe that parks, a good school system, etc. are all very important to our quality of life and building of a great neighborhood. But if we have them we must take care of them. We have a few parks on the Northside that are in desperate need of help. We also have the Freedom Park (Copeland) on French Island that would be a beautiful addition to the city that has yet to be built. Civic organizations are dear to my heart as you can tell by my commitment to them listed above.

- Licensing landlords, limiting the conversion of owner occupied homes to rentals, etc.

Work with the rental association and put a plan together that is best for the both the residents of the city and the association. Most landlords are not slumlords. Yes we must control and stop those who are not acting responsible. But we also need to be careful not to treat every landlord this way.

- Please sum up your approach to stabilizing and improving La Crosse’s neighborhoods.

As I stated in the La Crosse Tribune on February 14th– added resources, neighborhood partnership. How La Crosse handles these issues will have an important effect on efforts to housing and promote renovation and rehabilitation for owner-occupied housing. A core of community-based involvement to make the plan, City departments, local and private housing providers and local businesses are organized to support La Crosse residents and potential homebuyers. To improve these individual efforts, the city should create a single public or public-private organization — a neighborhood partnership — that is charged with increasing levels of cooperation and collaboration among these groups. Other cities have successfully implemented similar programs. We must become more business friendly. Most cities, including La Crosse, seek ways to increase revenues; however, this must always be carefully done, especially in tough economic times. We all want to continue the wonderful living environment of our city — our neighborhood shopping centers, our schools, our library, our pool complexes, our parks, our streets and sidewalks and our police and fire services. Our citizens understand that doing so comes with a price tag. But now is NOT the time to levy sales or property tax increases.

4. La Crosse is blessed with a unique and varied natural environment. While this is a great benefit, it can also pose challenges to expanding the tax base.

We are extremely lucky to live in this area, but you are correct and this is why we must work on adding value to properties and increase our tax base for the entire city of La Crosse

- Should the city strictly apply its development standards within three miles of its border as allowed

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by law and laid out in the comprehensive plan?
Absolutely, but we must be careful not to forget to continue working on our current neighborhoods.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should the City create development strategies or growth plans for surrounding towns?
I don't believe we should at this time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should the City consider extending sewer or water services without requiring annexation?
No not at this time. We have more than enough opportunities for our own city currently.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you support continued funding of the bluffland acquisition program?
This is a difficult question, while I believe in what has been done we are going thru a difficult time and trying to control expenses and be fiscal responsible, therefor I would not be in favor of this at this time. I would like to take a look at it however in the future.
5. The north-south corridor remains part of the La Crosse Area Planning Commission and the Department of Transportation's long-range transportation plan for the La Crosse area. This despite the 1998 referendum turning down the 5B-1 proposal.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you believe there is a need for new north-south road through the city of La Crosse?
Absolutely not. The voters have spoken. We must also protect our natural resources and building thru neighborhoods and marsh land is not the answer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you believe other projects, such as the proposed extension of 12th Avenue S in Onalaska to State Hwy 16 or the proposed traffic roundabout at 7th & Cass, should be developed as alternatives to a new corridor?
We seem to have some issues with this project as well, I believe we need more studies and determine if this is in fact the best alternative.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you believe the city should pursue measures to curb use of single occupancy vehicles as alternatives to a new road? For example, regulation of neighborhood parking, special fees and assessments for parking, and encouraging alternatives (walking, biking, car pools, mass transit etc.).
It seems to me to be a difficult thing to enforce. We should encourage car pools, walking, biking etc.
6. How would you promote the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists throughout the City?
I believe the city already has a plan in place. I would like an opportunity to study this plan more before commenting.
7. Recently La Crosse has seen a disturbing increase of accidental deaths and other serious problems related to alcohol abuse. What do you think the city's role is in stopping and reversing this trend?
We have come a long way already with this issue. But I am not going to comment further, I don't want to seem bias considering I am a tavern owner.
8. There has also been a recent series of violent deaths, assaults, and drug related crimes in the city. Does La Crosse have a problem with the growth of serious crime? What measures would you take to improve public safety in this area?
We have a truly wonderful, beautiful city, but we are not without issues, the crime rate is still rather low but I don't believe we have control of the drug related crimes. I served on the crime stoppers board of directors and fully understand we have some work to do. A combination of officers, cameras strategically places a neighborhood watch partnerships is also encouraged.
9. Historic preservation has become a popular method for neighborhood revitalization in La Crosse. The city currently has several historic districts and dozens of designated properties. However, all requests

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to demolish historic buildings have been approved by the city council.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should the historic status of a building have an impact on whether it is demolished?
Absolutely
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What criteria should the city use to evaluate the impact of a development on historic properties?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should the city provide funding and/or technical help for property owners to maintain and renovate historic buildings?
If funds continue to be available
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should the city's ordinance be changed to give the Heritage Preservation Commission more than just advisory authority over designated properties?
The current way seems to work. I would be open to change if needed.
10. Do you think the City has assisted or thwarted attempts at regional cooperation? What direction would you give department heads to encourage such cooperation?
I know it has been tried before. We have work to do in this area. We must all pull in the same direction and check the egos and political tug a war at the door.
11. Public opinion polls show that most people want to cut the size and cost of government, but there is no consensus on where to cut and how much. What is your approach to spending and taxes? Would your goal be to decrease taxes, hold them steady, or allow for some increase?
Tax increases, Fees etc. is not the answer. We need a council and Mayor working together for the constituents (tax payers) of La Crosse and hold the line and look for opportunities of reducing when possible.
12. A large part of the cost for providing city services is currently borne by property taxpayers. The city has the ability under state statutes to establish utility districts and user fees so all property owners pay for the services provided and received.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would you support creation of a utility for fire protection? A fire protection utility would charge to all property owners based on the level of fire protection needed.
I am not sure this is the direction we want to go.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should the city look to fees and fines as a source of revenue or as a cost recovery device only?
Fees " a hidden Tax" absolutely not. Fines for bad decisions is something we should consider. But we also have to collect the fines.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently there is a controversial plan to raise fees relating for all types of city services. Do you think current fees are adequate or should they be raised?
Again Absolutely Not.
13. La Crosse voters soundly defeated a proposal to hire a city administrator. However we are in a shrinking group of cities without professional administrative expertise. Do you think the referendum settled the issue of a city administrator or should the discussion continue?
The Voter Spoke. No Administrator needed at this time.
14. The Joint City-County Housing Task Force identified a number of actions aimed at that it felt would help the revitalize neighborhoods and expands the tax base. The number one recommendation was "Better education and enforcement of existing codes and standards". Do you agree? If so, how what changes would you suggest be made at City Hall?
I agree, But I also think this is just a start and much more can be done.
15. Finally, what do you want voters to know that haven't been brought out by our questions? What

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experience, ideas, qualities, etc. do you have that make you the better choice?

I am a Life Long Northsider and 1983 Graduate of Logan High School.

- Small Business owner for almost 20 years
- Citizen Commissioner of La Crosse' s City Plan Commission.
- Board of Review for City of La Crosse

We have a Common Council that are experiencing a disconnect with the Mayor, a rise in crime, is not working effectively with businesses, neighborhoods that need cleaning up, and citizens' issues that have gone unheard. These are issues affecting both the residents of La Crosse and our own District and require a new view from one of those residents. This process empowers citizens to make this choice and elect a peer to this position. I' d be honored and excited to take on this responsibility. Being connected to what is happening in my community makes me passionate about being a public servant. Serving on Common Council representing District 2 would allow me the opportunities to not only represent the interests of the people in my community, but the values of the people of this fine district.

Currently, I am Director of Operations at Dynamic Recycling. Also my wife Lisa and I, along with my Brother Ken and his wife Dawn, own and operate three small businesses in La Crosse.

I strongly believe the voice, influence, and common sense of an everyday citizen of this community, like me, is welcome in this stagnant and sometimes difficult political climate. Having a true connected resident of our community, representing the interests of all of us in District 2, is vital in the progression needed to reach the ideal vision of what we see as a better place to live, a vision that leaves our households free of worry, and confident in our leaders WORKING TOGETHER to make cost effective decisions with our tax dollars. La Crosse is a great place to live, but La Crosse is not without its challenges.

Thank you,