



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: _____ Bob Seaquist _____

Address: 202 Zephyr Circle _____

Phone: _____ 796-1992 _____

Email: _____ bobseaquist@rocketmail.com _____

Candidate for Mayor Candidate for Council Council District Number 8

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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

I spent 45 years actively working in the media, including directing (manager) WLSU FM as well as being a reporter and producer for broadcasters. I concluded a 29 year career at UW-La Crosse as part of the university's University Relations team.

Community involvement has included membership on the boards of: Riverfront Activity Center; Riverfront Foundation; La Crosse Festivals. I also was active with the United Way in various capacities. Currently I am on the board of the Winona Amateur Radio Club.

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?

3. What do you feel are the greatest problems facing La Crosse neighborhoods? How should the City focus its revitalization resources? Specifically, please discuss and rate the importance of the following factors:

La Crosse suffers at the hands of poor landlords and substandard renters. It is time for a community development corporation to take the lead in redeveloping city neighborhoods using partnerships for finances and inspiring private development and improvement. Also, the city should increase its efforts to help homeowners improve their properties, it should continue acquiring and redeveloping substandard properties and it increase inspection and enforcement of current codes. Attention should be paid to restricting the number of rentals in a given area as well as work with professional landlords on improvement of their operations.

- Aging and dilapidated housing stock.

- Attracting middle class residents to La Crosse neighborhoods.

We need increased targeted law enforcement as well as strengthened neighborhood organizations to help improve the attractiveness of our neighborhoods.

- Developing job and business opportunities for residents.

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

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

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

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.

La Crosse's environmental assets are just that, attractions that can stimulate development. We have to work harder to preserve and improve our parks, forests and marshes so that the city is attractive to individuals and companies interested in locating here. There is appropriate land for development that will not affect environmental assets.

- 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?
Yes! The city should also work actively and aggressively with neighboring units of government to squelch sprawl.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should the City create development strategies or growth plans for surrounding towns?
The city should work with surrounding units to cooperatively plan for growth.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should the City consider extending sewer or water services without requiring annexation?
Slowly and carefully. There is an obligation to the environment to work on outside units for various services; they certainly should also contribute to other costs of the principal municipality in this area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you support continued funding of the bluffland acquisition program?
Yes
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?
There is a need for comprehensive north-south TRANSPORTATION but it must look beyond cars and trucks ripping apart City of La Crosse neighborhoods.
<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?
Car and truck traffic must be smoothed; arteries must be maintained and alternatives are requisite.
<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.).
Yes
6. How would you promote the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists throughout the City?
Already I got a Complete Streets ordinance – Wisconsin's first! – enacted in the city so that pedestrians, bicyclists and others are officially recognized in future traffic planning. I believe we should now aggressively pursue improvements on major thoroughfares (Losey, South Ave. West Ave.) to moderate autos and trucks and create safety features for non-motorists.
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?
The city should take the lead in 1) recognizing that alcohol and drug abuse is a significant problem; 2) take action through enforcement and appropriate legislation. It's the first part – recognition – that will make the rest successful and so far there is little community appetite for that so getting council action will be difficult.
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?
Yes.
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 to demolish historic buildings have been approved by the city council.

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No kidding. The council should be educated on the value of historic preservation and then find ways to make it more financially appealing to landowners to save, rather than destroy, properties.

- Should the historic status of a building have an impact on whether it is demolished?

Yes

- What criteria should the city use to evaluate the impact of a development on historic properties?

- Should the city provide funding and/or technical help for property owners to maintain and renovate historic buildings?

Yes

- Should the city's ordinance be changed to give the Heritage Preservation Commission more than just advisory authority over designated properties?

Yes

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?

Unfortunately the lack of coordination in city hall prevents many important endeavors though I believe the consensus of departments would be for cooperation.

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?

The fact of the matter is that La Crosse has cut itself almost to the point of destruction. If residents want decent services, paved streets, public safety and water and sewer then taxation is required. The city council also must learn the difference between "cheap," often the present short sighted mode, and "frugal" which is much more desirable.

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.

- 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.

No. Fire and police should be among the basics of what a city provides and extra fees are not needed.

- Should the city look to fees and fines as a source of revenue or as a cost recovery device only?

- 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?

Many city fees are appropriate user fees yet many are also for much less than the cost involved. The principal controversy comes from lack of information and facts.

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?

There is no question whatsoever among those who are close to the city that an administration is required.

14. The Joint City-County Housing Task Force identified a number of actions aimed at that it felt would help the revitalize neighborhoods and expand 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 with the recommendation. The current city hall is not able to support that due to unfilled positions

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and a lack of coordination – and a lack of an administrator.

15. Finally, what do you want voters to know that haven't been brought out by our questions? What experience, ideas, qualities, etc. do you have that make you the better choice?