

## Candidate Forum Mayor 4/17/2014

### Question 1

#### [Papillon Seal](#)

With respect to a commitment to being mayor and representing the voter residents of Trophy Club signing a petition AGAINST PD-30 in 2012 what were your positions either FOR or AGAINST and explain your reasons for your decision.



[Mayor Connie Shaw White](#) I am happy to get that question, thanks, because I feel it is important for people to understand. We worked so hard to do what we felt was right for our Town.....

Many people felt we ignored the petition, which is far from the truth. For one thing, he originally asked for 1000 apartments, the version the P&Z voted on was 350. What the P&Z voted on was not what we finally approved. Rather than ignore the petition and resident input, we listened and used it as leverage to drive a better agreement than what had been presented to the P&Z. We spent countless hours working through this and we believed that agreement was not only better than what P&Z had seen, but far better for the town than the zoning currently on the property at the time. We felt that the town needs some commercial development there, but the zoning at the time would have provided very little protection or assurance that we would have a quality development. With the extensive controls put in place with the PD30 document we can be assured of high quality development and even if Mr. Beck had chosen to sell it, we had better control. It is important to understand that a zoning change must come from the owner and this project gave us the opportunity to upgrade the zoning that we would not have had otherwise.

I tried to get some senior housing in the apartments as that is something we desperately need in my opinion. I spoke to the apartment developer about senior living and he told me that while he does not build that, he finds a high demand among seniors for units in his regular apartments. I went to those apartments today and found that they were upscale and had a significant number of seniors. They like the convenience, but choose not to be segregated. Senior living of some sort is something we very much need in Trophy Club. And we don't have

many other places to build. According to census figures, 25% of our population is over 50. The demand is there. It is interesting also to know that multiple real estate people I have spoken to have waiting lists of people who want to move into Trophy Club who would love to live temporarily in an upscale apartment.



[C Nick Sanders](#) There seemed to be a number of comments about whether or not the signatures and the petition could be trusted. So first of all, once the significant number of signatures was verified, we as elected officials should trust that people have a legitimate concern and being their representative we should give their concerns sufficient consideration. I don't think that was done. Having a mixed-use facility may be a good thing, but seemed to me the majority of citizens did not want that.

## Question 2

### [Mike Buck](#)

Hello Connie and Nick, thank you for participating in this candidate forum, as well as, your ongoing service to Trophy Club. Jeanne and I would like to ask...

Communication with residents and voters is key to ensuring you have your finger on the pulse of the people who elected you. How are you going to measure successful communication during your term as mayor? Specifically, many residents feel they are not being heard (PD 30, PID contract, the bond which combines police station and town hall facilities, parks with operating hours, which infringe upon residents quality of life). How will you solicit and respond to voter input and feedback as mayor? Thank you.



[Mayor Connie Shaw White](#) Communication is so critical! As you know, almost everything we do must be in open meetings. I know they are long and tedious, but that is the very best way for people to get the information. We have added our new web page to disseminate information more quickly and April has been doing a great job with that. One issue that can come up is that we are working on things over months but for whatever reason they don't rise to the level to gain interest until a certain point. Then it comes as a surprise. I am not sure how to overcome that, but here are the things we are working on: Adding Project Pages to our web site to provide complete budget and status information on various projects; I would like to find a way to make the recordings of our meetings searchable by agenda item; we have a facebook page where we send out timely information and answer questions. This is actually a better place to get answers since staff is monitoring it. I do try to walk a lot and be available for anyone who would like to talk and ask more in depth questions. I do prefer face to face contact since so often things can be misunderstood in email, and I will spend the time. Please understand that we put in many hours (our last packet was 500 pages ) both before and during meetings. We consider many options and I honestly don't know how else to make sure everyone knows about all of that.

Mike, I know I am talking more about mechanics here, but I honestly don't know how to get past the opinions that no matter how much we listen everything we do

will be unsatisfactory to someone. I am more than willing to consider anyone's suggestion.



[C Nick Sanders](#) Even though we have a Web Site and Facebook page, we still don't seem to get to the majority of people. Even when we place inserts into the MUD bills, they don't seem to even work well. I want to keep the town marquees because it is one more form of communicating. If we are going to keep them, then we may need to improve them and even add some. Since 2005 when I was elected Mayor, I have been involved in organizations both within and outside the town. This gives more opportunity to talk to citizens. I am proud of the fact that I always respond to every phone call or email I have received from citizens even if it is a "thank you for your comments". I continue to receive comments from citizens that their emails are not answered. I pledge to respond!

I have served as board member of Northeast Leadership Forum from 2011 and became the Forum's Treasurer in 2012 and currently hold that office. The Northeast Leadership Forum is a non-profit consortium of individuals, businesses, cities, school districts and other entities in Northeast Tarrant County. Its purpose is to enhance and promote the economic vitality and quality of life in Northeast Tarrant County by providing leadership, forums, and information exchanges for its members and acting as a catalyst for communication, collaboration and cooperation.

Have served on the Board of Directors of Metroport Cities Partnership since 2007 and served as that organizations Chairman for 2 years and currently serve as Board Secretary. The Mission of the Partnership is to promote public-private collaboration and cooperation among Metroport communities; to advocate the interest of the region; and to identify and execute initiatives to enhance regional economic vitality and quality of life. Member communities who comprise its members are Colleyville, Grapevine, Haslet, Keller, Northlake, Roanoke, Southlake, Trophy Club and Westlake.

Have supported Northwest Metroport Chamber of Commerce since 2003 and served as a board member in 2010-2011.

### Question 3

#### [Jim Parrow](#)

If either of you were Mayor at any time, I am confident that you will insure that the will of the people is respected, especially when it pertains to our most precious right to vote. Therefore as Mayor, will you go on record that you will insure that any candidate Elected by the people, in any election, will be sworn in, to begin performing their duties, on the very first day, permitted by law, following Election Day in accordance with published canvass election results or if not practice some other date prior to the next Scheduled or Special Session council meeting? For example, in this years election on May 10 the first day that swearing in is permitted is the 13th.



[Mayor Connie Shaw White](#) In every instance I have seen, there is a final meeting of the Council during which the new members are sworn in. We found that made it difficult to actually celebrate the victory in the midst of doing business. This time we chose to try and separate it, having a special meeting just for the swearing in so that everyone will have an opportunity to participate fully



[C Nick Sanders](#) Jim, I could not promise anything more than to let new elected officials take office as soon as they could and to limit any last minute action by council leaving office. I would act just like I did while Mayor.

#### Question 4

#### [Craig Brandon](#)

Trophy Club is a very diverse town, much more so than we were in 1985 when incorporated. Many neighborhoods in TC now have HOAs that regulate properties and what is/isn't allowed. Do you feel at some point, that we need to re-evaluate and possibly amend the town Code of Ordinances to ensure it represents the citizens fairly that choose to not live in a HOA area? Do you feel the current ordinances can be enforced fairly when we don't even have a code officer?



[C Nick Sanders](#) Craig, I do not think we have the staff to enforce the ordinances and somewhat depend on citizens complaints to focus on issues. I do believe that there needs to be a way to work with people on their perceived violations. For example, for years we had the ordinance that did not allow overnight parking on the street and allowed for one temporary permit per household to park overnight for a limited time. While Mayor in response to citizen's issues we allowed for permits to be purchased for overnight parking and even allowed for up to 2 permits with the 2nd permit costing more money. A review of ordinances should be a regular procedure for staff seeing as though they are the ones who usually get the complaints. HOA's have different issues because in some cases their streets are private and the police do not enforce speeding issues or even the leash issue for pets. HOA's have the ability to allow the Town to enforce or even state that the HOA rules will follow the Town rules.



[Mayor Connie Shaw White](#) First, I want to say I am truly sorry for your situation. The town ordinances apply to all citizens, whether or not they live in an HOA. An HOA can only be more restrictive than the town, not less. Even though the Town is diverse, we have not gotten any indication that people in general wish to loosen restrictions. They appreciate the beauty and quality of our Town. We often

re-evaluate our ordinances to ensure they are reasonable and will continue to do so. Yes, I do feel the ordinances can be enforced as we do have a code enforcement officer. We recently changed this from a part time to full time position, but have had some turnover. We do have a new person however and he is doing his best to get up to speed.

## Question 5

### [Tracey Hunter](#)

Thank you Nick and Connie for participating in this Mayor forum. Today's technology is simply fantastic. In my opinion this is a great way to reach our citizens instead of declining to participate. I applaud you both for your participation.

What is each of your opinions of an automatic renewal of a town employees contract and why is this a good business decision or not a good decision business?



[C Nick Sanders](#) I do not think employment agreements should have automatic renewal or extensions. The council should take action each year. Because the leadership of Council can change significantly in 2 years, some employees should be able to have some feeling of job security. The larger issue is what does the employment agreement say about compensation.



[Mayor Connie Shaw White](#) I am not quite sure what you mean by 'automatic renewal'. We evaluate each of our direct employees (Town Manager, Attorney, City Secretary) every year and make a decision regarding their contract. We may choose to extend for more than one year as is often done with professionals in highly competitive fields. Additionally, Town employees are subject to the election process and essentially have seven bosses! It is most difficult for someone not directly involved to assess that person's value to the town so it is important that their contract be in place to give them enough time to prove themselves to new Council. If in fact they are not doing their job they can be terminated. We are fortunate enough to have an outstanding staff who work diligently to do what is in the best interest of the town.

## Question 6

### [Shirley Ervin Hase](#)

Thank you both for your service to our wonderful town.

Do you favor back-end loading the May bond issue? Should we not pay our fair share now and not ask our kids and grandkids to pick up what we should be paying?



[Mayor Connie Shaw White](#) Back end loading is not my favorite thing to do, but when you look at the fact that we are projecting significant growth and building a facility for our kids and grandkids to use, there is nothing wrong with sharing the cost. That is the whole concept of bonding, that those who actually use something share in the payment. Based on the expected growth we feel we can easily handle the bond in that fashion without adding additional tax rate. At the same time, if we can save additional funds, we can and will put it aside to pay some of that early so we are limiting the later payments. Anytime after 10 years we can choose to pay off some of the bonds. This is a situation where we have an opportunity for a very reasonable rate to borrow funds and build for our future! I think our children and grandchildren will be proud of our foresight!



[C Nick Sanders](#) NO! I believe the proposed plan to “back load” would be the first time this would be used in our Town History. I think this is being used to be able to say the current bond election will not raise taxes. This is somewhat easy to do now when we still have several years of new property being added to the tax rolls. It is much harder to manage expenses as our town gets older. I think citizens and council need to be able to see all long range capital needs when making such decisions as 11 million dollar bond approval.

## Question 7

### [Susan Edstrom](#)

Many residents are concerned about the size and cost of the town hall/PD and lack of information before a ballot item was posted. Please provide your view on the cost and size of the facility(ies) and what your thoughts are about what is needed. In addition, I'd like to know what your thoughts are on the lack of a solution for the Town's Animal Shelter, short and long term.



[Mayor Connie Shaw White](#) As has been mentioned, we have actually worked on this for quite some time. The Police department feasibility was originally done a number of years ago. Last year we had an outside group do a feasibility study, analyzing all of our staff positions and our facilities along with growth projections. It is based on those studies as well as what we can readily see regarding overcrowding that leads us to the decision to build a town hall as well as a police station. In all of our evaluations on potential properties we found there are few which would meet our needs, even for police. Then the opportunity for this piece of property arose and it just made sense to look at it for both facilities. At the same time, building it as a joint project saves a significant amount of money.

Am I sure about the exact size at this moment? No I am not. I think there are some places we might cut back and we will continue to evaluate that. The new council will have the final say there. However it makes sense to move forward on funding at this point due to the lower cost of money and construction. I know we desperately need more office space and we desperately need meeting space in our town and I am pleased with the concept of Community Rooms. I believe this property will also in the future allow for a civic center for our community. While it may appear large for what we need today, we thought the same thing when we built the original MUD building. We couldn't imagine ever filling it! It was a wise move then to build larger than needed and I believe it is a wise move now. It is not something we plan to do another time.

Regarding the animal shelter, it is our current plan to keep a facility attached to the current building. Specific plans for how we will modify the current building are not complete either. Many of our field workers will operate out of that facility. We

totally agree that we need to provide for a temporary holding facility and it should be upgraded from what we have today. I do not think we can support a longer term facility, they are very costly and a great function to be shared among multiple towns.



[C Nick Sanders](#) I believe we do need new facilities for both Town Staff and the Police Department. I spoke against the approval of the CO's to finance the entire facility and stated that I felt it was too early to take this issue to the citizens. I made this statement because I did not feel all the information had been discussed openly. I do think that Council has not completely vetted out all the requirements for either building and with the limited information that has been made public, I think the square footage seems to be too large. Here is an example where our town government needs to be more open with information and make it easy for concerned citizens to be kept well informed. As we have grown, the need for a TRUE facility to adequately care for the animals. One option may be the land next to the Waste Water Plant. A little hard to code enforcement to watch them at that location, but might be an option.

## Question 8

### [Susan Edstrom](#)

In follow up to my question on the town hall/PD building, how do you plan to do address what appears to be a significant addition of employees and where do they see the numbers going in the future?

In April of 2011, the town had 50 employees.

On December 31st of 2011, the number was 58. +8

On December 31st of 2012, the number was 61. +3

On December 31st of 2013, the number was 75. +14



[C Nick Sanders](#) Good question Susan. To begin with, not sure what all these people do. I do support increasing the Police Department with more patrol officers. It seems that the majority of time our Fire/EMS personnel make calls, it is EMS related. By the time we reach build out it seems like we should plan for sufficient Police and Fire/EMS staff. While I was Mayor we reviewed the number of people in each department along with the budget. Seems to me that if the council and town leadership should have been looking at this increase and how much space is required for these workers assuming they are long term and not temporary while we are growing.



[Mayor Connie Shaw White](#) The town has experienced unprecedented growth in the past several years. With that growth comes demand for new services. We needed and will continue to need additional fire/ems personnel, police, streets, etc. Also we had the bond issue for the parks where it was made very clear to the voters that the addition of those new parks would generate a requirement for additional staff, as does the addition of new streets and medians. One point however, I believe the large growth in 2013 has to do with moving the fire/ems to the town payroll for benefits purposes. Not really an increase of those people.

Depending on the amount of continued growth we will potentially need to add personnel to continue to provide the services citizens desire, but I don't have specific numbers at hand at the moment.

## Closing Statements



[Mayor Connie Shaw White](#) About the good things.....We have come a long way in the five years I have been mayor. We have built more parks and trails, a wonderful Splash Park, and more homes than most anywhere in the Metroplex. We have begun addressing our drainage issues, built sidewalks and a round-about. We have significantly more commercial property in place or under construction. We have gone from having to borrow money to purchase vehicles to funding our capital improvement plan and upgrading our bond rating twice!! We have significantly improved our communications at all levels. We have involved more citizens in all aspects, be it on more committees or as volunteers, or even as students in our Police and Fire academies. This past year we involved citizens in our Vision effort and created a Vision 2030 plan, integrating our Strategic Goals and supporting projects. I am proud of all that we have accomplished and want to see this through as we move ahead on our Vision, continue to improve on our commercial base, expand our trail system and enjoy the wonderful community we have here.

I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR VOTE TO RE-ELECT ME AS YOUR MAYOR.



[C Nick Sanders](#) To all the RUTC members, thank you for submitting questions and watching what the Mayor and I commented or answered. Mayor, thank you for being part to the event.

I am asking for your VOTE as Mayor and pledge to listen to your concerns and always respond to any inquiry.

Hope everyone has a blessed Easter.



[Julie Teplitsky Folley](#) Thank you so much Candidates! You did an amazing job keeping it all going strong! I appreciate you both here in attendance and trust me we tried to keep everything a quality fair and unbiased forum for everyone. Please note, everyone, that the PDF of this entire forum will be available to you at the top of the page in the "files" section on RUTC. You may at time take all of these questions and answers and discuss further or question any of your candidates after the forum is complete. Thank you to you awesome husband Scott Folley for getting those PDF's out quick and helping me through each event! I appreciate all participation. Great questions.