

Candidates Name: **Danny Farrar**

COUNTY COUNCIL QUESTION

1. This Council will be tasked with appointing a Charter Review Committee, what charter changes do you support? What type of committee members will you be considering for appointment?

ANSWER:

- I would look to make two changes to the charter. First, the county lawyer would cease to work at the pleasure of the Executive and could be terminated with a majority vote from the Council.
- Second, I would like to see the Council move no more than two items in the budget that were deemed to be under-performing to economic development, education, or health and safety.
- The committee should be composed of members from the drafting committee, the first council members, representatives from the business sector (large and small), and county citizens.

2. We didn't get to this question at the forum: Based on your respective campaign commitments, what specific growth policies and regulations do you plan to introduce?

ANSWER:

- To look at growth in its entirety, not just one piece at a time. None of this occurs in a vacuum, yet we continue to focus on each piece as if it is the only part that takes place. As a result, this drives up the cost of "affordable housing", while at the same time fails to provide the infrastructure needed.

3. Livable Frederick, now going on three years of preparations, has been both criticized and lauded for how it evolved. As a Council candidate, what is your perception of Livable Frederick, and what would you want to see in order to gain your support?

ANSWER:

- I commend their efforts in working toward the betterment of our county and as with any undertaking there are redeemable qualities to it as well as parts that give me pause. I understand the need to market it, however stating that it is a "shared vision" when less than 1% of our community has taken part in it I believe to be misleading. Further, I take issue with the fact that they stated at the town hall that they "drew the maps so that you didn't know it was your piece of property to avoid contentious conversation." I find it unacceptable to specifically draw up a document that will affect the future of this county and expecting people to vote on it without clearly understanding what they are agreeing to. We are looking to completely revamp the way our planning will move forward. I do not see the point in rushing this when we have plenty of time left before we must vote on it. There are 11 other major

planning documents that must become current with this new comprehensive plan. Let's take our time to make sure that this really is the plan that our community wants to take us into the new horizon.

4. What areas should the County Staff/Planning Commission begin with their first Community and Corridor Plans, following Livable Frederick?

ANSWER:

- We need to see if Livable Frederick is passed first. If it is passed, are there any changes to it? At this point I am not comfortable saying where it should start when I am not even positive it is a plan that will be used.

5. What approaches would you take to garner support for legislation that you are introducing?

ANSWER:

- One of my favorite quotes is, "Seek first to understand before you seek to be understood." I take that approach in every aspect of my life--business, family, non-profit, and, if given the opportunity, the dais. Everyone up there is looking to do the best they can to provide for the future of the county. They all have the best of intentions. I would begin by learning what is important to them and the constituents they represent, then look to show them how my particular legislation aligns with the accomplishment of their particular goals as well. I also feel it is important to pick and choose your battles. If you fight with everyone on the other side of the aisle simply because that is where they sit, you will kill all goodwill and will have no hope of their support when you need it the most on the issues that really matter to you.

6. If elected and you knew you had full or enough support what one piece of legislation would you introduce day 1?

ANSWER:

- I would enact legislation that would ensure that all EMS billing went directly to the Division of Fire and Rescue as opposed to the general fund. They generated the revenue, they deserve for it to come home to them to fund their needs.

7. The County Executive has the primary duty of preparing and presenting a balanced budget to the Council. The Council is restricted to reducing planned spending. Do you have priorities that you'd like to present to the County Executive for inclusion in future spending plans?

ANSWER:

- **Our Division of Fire and Rescue has been grossly underfunded for quite some time. We need to hire more Fire Fighters. We need to replace their turnout gear which is going to expire county-wide very soon. And we need to add more staffing to our Emergency Dispatchers. They are quickly running into a staffing problem to meet the needs of the call volume. We must stop kicking that can down the road or someone will die as a result.**
- **We also must find a way to bring a detox center to Frederick to fight the opioid epidemic at our door.**

8. What specific initiatives will you be pursuing to support our small businesses in Frederick County?

ANSWER:

- **I want to work with the Executive, County employees, and a handful of employers in the county, large and small, to streamline and update the permitting process to ensure it is easily navigated and not a hinderance to starting a business.**
- **I would work with our first responders to craft a plan to start a rotational process that, while incremental due to budgetary constraints, moves us forward to a future with proper staffing and equipment to allow them to provide services safely and efficiently to our citizens.**
- **I also would like to work with members of our government, private and non-profit sector, to fund the building of a detox and treatment center for those suffering with opioid addiction when they are ready to seek help.**

9. When it comes to business-friendly policies and regulations, are there specific programs, services and regulatory changes that you would undertake?

ANSWER:

- **I want to work toward a culture that defaults to "Yes" when it comes to starting a new business. In my talks with other small business owners, especially those that fall outside the realm of "traditional" businesses, they feel as if the default answer is "No." In today's rapidly changing landscape many businesses aren't going to fit neatly into a predefined permitting category. We need to be committed to finding ways to help them get permitted so they can chase their dreams. The market, not red tape, should determine their ability to launch.**

10. In your discussion with the business community what have you found to be the greatest challenges facing the business community constituents?

ANSWER:

- **Getting through permitting.**

11. If elected, what would you do to improve/enhance the relationship between the County and the Frederick County General Assembly delegation?

ANSWER:

- **I would stay in touch with them. Relationships take time to build, they just don't happen overnight. If the only time you converse with someone is when you need something you quickly become an annoyance. I would stay in touch and make sure I was up to date on pressing issues at the state level that could factor into the needs at the county level. If people see that you care about what matters to them they are much more likely to care about what matters to you. There is no shortcut in building that. You simply must put in the time and actually care.**

12. Are there any specific solutions or ideas you have identified to support accelerating the needed widening of US 15 and I-270 projects.

ANSWER:

- **I am for supporting Governor Hogan's plan. We will look to make this a top priority for the county with help from the state. With that said, L.A. has eleven lanes and still has horrible traffic. We need to address the flow as well. That starts with providing economic opportunity within in the county.**

13. The first County Council has been seated for almost 4 years now, and has had to maneuver through establishing certain 'norms', 'processes' and 'rules of order' to administer their agenda. What is your observation of the first council and if elected what would you propose to further refine the legislative process in the County?

ANSWER:

- **I would love to see it mandated that if a Council Member wishes to have something placed on the agenda that the President couldn't block it by not adding it. I understand that it may not get put on the first meeting that comes up, but if a Council member wishes to have it placed on the agenda there should be a limited window before it is mandated that the President add**

it. There is no reason, in my opinion, that items they wish to see brought forth are blocked from seeing the light of day or delayed for long durations of time.

The Yes or No Questions: Please take this opportunity to go beyond the simple answer of Yes or No.

One of the key initiatives the Chamber learned from the Greenville SC trip was a Citywide TIF, that was purposeful, and led to strategic investment of longer term infrastructure needs for all types of development.

1. Do you support Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) mechanisms to support infrastructure necessary to bring forth...*Residential Opportunities...* (YES/NO)... in Frederick?

ANSWER:

- **No. They don't really help the taxpayer; once the improvements are completed, taxpayers will still be paying a higher tax rate.**

2. Do you support Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) mechanisms to support infrastructure necessary to bring forth...*Employment Opportunities (Yes/NO).....*in Frederick?

ANSWER:

- **Yes. Economic development is much less of a drain on taxable services than residential. We can use that extra income to help support those services needed by our residents while at the same time providing economic opportunities for residents.**

3. Do you support Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) mechanisms to support infrastructure necessary to bring forth... *Mixed Use Opportunities (YES/NO)...*in Frederick?

ANSWER:

- **Yes. Same as stated above.**

Related to financing of Infrastructure, but not utilizing a TIF as described for prior questions:

4. Do you support broad-based taxes and fees to pay for school infrastructure needed as a result of enrollment changes?

ANSWER:

- **No. I am for adding no new taxes. Frederick County's current \$608.6 million operating budget represents an \$83 million increase in spending with over 280 positions added since the implementation of Charter Government in 2014. We have the money in the budget. We just need to reprioritize.**

5. Do you support broad-based taxes/fees to support constructing specific transportation projects?

ANSWER:

- **Same as above.**

Relative to County Operations/Separation of Powers

6. Do you support a completely separate staff for the County Council in order for the Council to have independent-or-autonomous review and analysis of legislative initiatives that come before them?

ANSWER:

- **No. There is zero need to add additional payroll to the budget for this.**

Over the last four years the County Executive has introduced as much legislation as the Council. Further if you look at the Council bills, many are as a result of an administrative policy or issues that required the Council to take up as a result of administrative actions.

7. Do you think the Executive Branch is attempting to address too many legislative initiatives as opposed to running the administrative arm of the County, or is this the right approach?

ANSWER:

- **I believe that every leader elected is going to have their own approach to the position. So long as it isn't in violation of the charter, I am not going to be worried about how they choose to lead. They have the ability to submit legislation and as such I have the ability to vote for or against it. Quantity isn't the deciding factor in my mind as to whether they are right or wrong, quality is.**

The Frederick County Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) has been in existence for nearly 30 years. During that time, there have been specific adjustments to how it is administered with the most recent significant changes occurring in 2008. Now, **in 2018** with a rapidly changing economy, demonstrated shifts in county demographics, and housing choice preference from both existing/resale and new home buyers, combined with programmatic decisions affecting capacity in different ways throughout the County.

8. Do you support a comprehensive review and analysis for best practices and enactment of a better approach that will lead Frederick County's Growth Management into the next decade?

ANSWER:

- **Yes. It should be reviewed regularly, every 5-10 years.**

The council addressed a number of bills brought forth to them affecting business development and land use;

9. Do you support a more targeted approach to updating certain code/zoning changes, rather than dealing with issues on a piecemeal basis?

ANSWER:

- **Yes.**