

Candidate's Name: Steven McKay

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 don't believe that we need to do too much tinkering with the Charter, but I will respect the outcome of the Charter Review process and see what they come up with. Personally, I do have one area that I would recommend for change. I think the Council should have more budget authority, specifically, the ability to add funding to a program or office. Under such a proposal, I would also mandate that any such add be matched by a corresponding budget decrease. This was actually proposed by Councilman Chmelik, and I agreed with him. Unfortunately, not enough Council members agreed with him.

Regarding the Charter Review Committee, I think the key is to have it be composed with a broad slice of Frederick County. There should be representatives from both party central committees, a member of the business community (perhaps the Chamber of Commerce), a member from the Farm Bureau, an education representative, and one or more unaffiliated members to represent the citizenry. That would be a good start and I would be open to further suggestions.

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: One of my top priorities will be to examine the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO), and look for ways to tighten up our standards for reviewing the impact of new development, and what we ask in return to mitigate those impacts. In my opinion, the APFO was significantly weakened during the last BoCC and has still not been adequately addressed. Specific areas within the APFO include: acceptable Levels of Service (LOS) for our roads, modifying the fee-in-lieu option for Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) requirements, traffic study scoping, Impact Fee adjustments, and School Construction Mitigation Fee adjustments.

I would also revisit the Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreement (DRRA) law, and would propose amendments consisting of reasonable limitations on DRRAs. There was an effort to do so in the last year and it failed. I will resurrect that idea.

In general, I will look at new development requests – and I expect there will be some – with a more critical eye. We witnessed a very *laissez faire* attitude toward the zoning approval criteria for new zoning requests, particularly when it came to the adequacy of the road network. I'll insist on more thorough and objective analyses to support any staff recommendation for approval.

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: Livable Frederick is a strategic plan for the County. A strategic plan provides a high-level framework of goals and objectives, and leaves much of the implementation details to follow-up initiatives. From that perspective, I both accept Livable Frederick and have my own frustrations.

However, my frustrations are based on the fact that I am a more “tactical” level thinker – I like the details. So I appreciate what Livable Frederick is, and I accept it as such. Personally, I look forward to seeing it progress to deeper levels, with more tangible impact. If elected, I expect to be part of that process.

I’ve had my own criticisms of the way in which Livable Frederick has progressed. I’ve been monitoring it through its inception. I disagreed with treating the current pipeline of development – including many poorly conceived developments from the last BoCC’s tenure – as off the table for discussion. I understand their necessity to do this, but disagreed with the approach, all the same. During the scenario assessment phase, I disagreed with the lack of costing estimates for the scenarios. I don’t think you can expect a decision maker to evaluate one scenario over another without delving into the cost differences of each. Ultimately, however, the Planning Commission was responsible for delivering a plan and they’ve done so, having worked through these issues.

I can support the Livable Frederick plan right now because I know that it is only a strategic framework and the more impactful decisions are yet to be made.

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

ANSWER: The Urbana and New Market areas should be the first priority for follow-up planning. These areas were the focus of massive zoning approvals during the last BoCC. We are facing severe infrastructure issues in these areas, including schools in both areas, and major road issues in the New Market region.

In Urbana, we have a middle school and high school which are both over 100% state rated capacity (SRC), with no new school capacity in sight. By Fall 2020, the rebuilt Urbana ES will open, following redistricting among the three Urbana elementary schools, and I predict that all three will be over 90% SRC. Despite this situation, the Villages of Urbana will continue building the 620 homes in the new section.

In New Market, the school situation is approaching similar dire levels but the road situation is even worse. Over 2600 new homes were approved, ringing the north side of the town. Traffic mitigation for all three developments are predicated on completing a New Market Bypass that is many years away from completion – if it is ever completed. Until then two new developments – Calument and Blentlinger – will add up to an additional 15,000 daily car trips for Boyers Mill Road, and then onto MD144 and Gas House Pike. This is going to be a mess.

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

ANSWER: I think the key is work with people as a professional. You treat people with respect and you’ll get it back in return. We need recognize that we’re each there with an opinion, we don’t all have the right answers, but we’re all working to the betterment of Frederick County. If you can practice that approach, then you’ll find ways to work with your fellow Council members. I have

absolutely no problem working across the aisle. Bipartisanship should be a hallmark of an effective Council, and that will be my approach.

Beyond this high level framework, I think the key for specific legislation is to socialize what you're trying to do with your fellow Council members. Listen to their opinions and reactions, and find ways to compromise to achieve their support. If you don't know who will (and won't) support your legislation before its introduced, then you haven't done your homework.

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

ANSWER: Amendments to strengthen the APFO, per my earlier discussion.

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: Yes. Strengthening our Fire Services, through both added positions and a more competitive wage scale. Continued support for strong schools. Greater County spending on preserving our agricultural lands, through the various Ag Preservation programs we administer.

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

ANSWER: Honestly, right now I don't know. I'm not a small business owner and I don't know what specific issues need to be addressed. I want to learn. I want to understand where, specifically, the Council can help. I hear anecdotally about "too much regulation & fees" but where exactly are the problems? I want to have those discussions and get smarter before proposing specific initiatives.

That said, I do support ag-based small business initiatives. We've seen various efforts to help supplement farm income through agri-tourism and various entertainment venues on farms. As long as we can strike the correct balance with the rights of neighboring property owners to enjoy their land, then I would support these initiatives.

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

ANSWER: I don't have specific areas identified right now. As I noted, I'm not a local business man and I don't know –specifically – where the greatest challenges lie. I want to learn and then be in a better position to propose targeted and effective initiatives.

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

ANSWER: I haven't had those discussions yet. My campaign has focused on other issues, predominantly focused on development and its impacts. I will be open to these discussion so I can learn how best the Council (and myself) can help promote business growth in Frederick County.

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

ANSWER: I think this is similar to my approach with my fellow Council members. You begin by dealing with people on a profession level, with mutual respect. Our Delegation has a different job, but the same objective as the Council – ensuring that Frederick County remains an outstanding place to live, work and grow as a community. From that perspective, the key is to maintain a steady line of communication with the Delegation. Let them know what our key issues are, and then build support within the Delegation to move forward on bills we need in Annapolis.

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: This is where we need our Delegation, our Congressional representatives, and our representatives in the Washington Council of Governments. Frederick County is an important element of the Washington Metropolitan area, but for too long we've taken a back seat to Montgomery, PG, Fairfax, Loudon, and Arlington counties. We need to work with our State, regional and Federal representatives to ensure that our highway needs are being met.

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 actually think that they've done a pretty good job. I particularly like the process for bringing forward new bill, including allowing time to "digest" the input from a public hearing before making a final decision. I will not propose any changes to that work flow process. I think one change that I would propose, separate from the legislative process, is to make more room for public comment, including during Council workshops.

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. Residential development starts out as being tax-negative for the County. I wouldn't further exacerbate that problem with a TIF to draw even more of the tax revenues away from the County's operating budget.

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

ANSWER: Yes. I think there are greater opportunities for TIF financing of infrastructure improvements to support and attract major employment centers to Frederick County. The key is to not be too eager to attract the business, such that we don't give away all of the expected benefits to the County.

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

ANSWER: No. I might have said "depends" if that option was open. The Mixed Use (MXD) developments in the County have typically been dominated by residential use. From that perspective, I would not support TIFs in these areas.

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 think that the primary funding for new school infrastructure to support those new students should come from the new homes, rather than the general populace.

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

ANSWER: No. If the projects are specifically required to support a specific development, then the funding should come from there. If the project is a more regional requirement, independent of a specific new development (s), then I could support the tax.

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. A completely separate staff would result in a significant increase in County spending, replicating personnel functions from the CE staff to the Council staff. That's wasteful and it's only come up as an issue based on the hostile relationship that has been fostered between the Council and the CE.

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: No, I don't think the Executive Branch has brought forward too many initiatives.

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. Absolutely.

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. I would actually support a zero-based review of changes in our land use code and regulations. Too often, we have language on the books that is simply ignored. We may have other language and we don't know why. I've seen instances where clear language is ignored. My bottom line if it isn't important, then it shouldn't be in the code. The time to work through those issues is before a specific business interest makes an application.

