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PROGRESSIVE PEORIA POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE CANDIDATE SURVEY

Peoria City Council at large survey

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Please include a resume and any campaign literature that you would like to share with the Progressive Peoria PAC.

What are your top three priorities if elected?

At this point I think that the top three go hand in hand. School, neighborhoods and crime. If we could get children in the schools and if they would learn I know that crime would drop and we would clean up the neighborhoods.. It is like the old which came first the chicken or the egg??

What are the key business issues in the city and what will you do to address these issues?

1. Keeping the business' in Peoria and keeping them from going belly up
 2. Assorted business' to keep people in the area for their business needs so they don't go to other cities for their needs.
 3. Better jobs giving employees a living wage.
 4. Benefits like health insurance.
 5. Training the masses for the jobs coming into the area.
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1. It seems that as the city grows one way we see the decline in the other areas. As bigger businesses move in the mom and pop stores close. It is a must to keep this from happening. An example , to me, is what happened before Christmas and that is the closure of Cohen's, Shopko, and K's Merchandise Mart. As we let in the bigger stores like WalMart and American we lose the smaller home grown stores. A restaurant that had been in Peoria recently moved to Washington We need to stop this bleeding.
 2. We need to look at what we have and don't have and try to attract in the areas we don't have big and small. I shouldn't have to go to Bloomington or East Peoria to buy what I want. It should be here and if not we need to give incentives to bring them here. An example is I

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scrapbook a lot and the best store is in Bloomington. Not a big enterprise but add these up and they make a difference. The family is from Peoria.

3. This community and others around have turned into two tier communities. You have the service workers and the professionals. We use to have the three tier ones. You have people who make money and those who don't. When you make more money you are able to live better, buy better and stay where you are at.
4. When people have jobs they need to be able to have what other people have from high end jobs and that is benefits. If you get sick you need to take time off to get well. If you miss work and don't have benefits than you lose the pay. To add to that if no benefits are offered than you have the bills from a doctor/hospital/medicine. That puts the worker at a disadvantage if he is working for minimum wage. This also can cause turnover because turnover because the employee can have hard feelings toward the employer. President Clinton enacted the FMLA which saves peoples jobs if you have workers for more than a year at a place but less than that the worker is in trouble and could lose their job for missing work. When an employer puts benefits with a job the worker will begin to think more of himself and the employer.
5. If we are looking for new business' than we need to start training . If we have an idea of what we are going after than with the wonderful facility like ICC we can gear classes and training to make the workforce more appealing. An example is the Med Tech district. Workers can be trained for jobs there is we know what they will be looking for.

To become a better business community we need to offer incentives for the business owners to make this a more appealing place. This can be done with free advertising for the new business followed with helping to get celebrities from local or bigger to make appearance. If a new business wants to come in than the city needs to see what the impact will be. With the brain power in this community we should have a pool of people who have experience to help new businesses. We use to have something like that but I don't know if we do now. If the city itself could rehab some buildings for smaller stores and not charge an arm and a leg for rent. When new business comes to town maybe we could encourage them to remake an old business with city,s help finding construction workers and re modelers to help fix. If we did it right the people who help would get an incentive.

What will you do to make Peoria city government more effective?

Change the counsel would be my first idea. We have people who need to go . I feel it should be term limited somehow. The people who have been on their the longest are part of the mess. The Mayor has many commission positions to fill. He has been in office almost two years. People wait on these and when they hear nothing they give up. Some people have sent in information requesting to be appointed to a position and they never hear. Me included.. Volunteer positions need to be found for these people or they give up. The council revamped the commissions and other areas and now they need to be filled. The agencies that work under the council and city manager need to be kept informed and listened to.

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It would be nice if during city council meetings there would be a professional who could come back and give an evaluation of the meeting. Did it accomplish what it set out to do. Could the people of Peoria understand what was going on.

What do you believe needs to be done to make Peoria City Hall more business friendly and how will you accomplish it?

City Hall is a beautiful building but when you walk inside it is overwhelming. One office will send you someplace, who will send you someplace else. As for business friendly I am not a business so I can only give my idea.

If when you walk in if there was a volunteer or a secretary to help direct. Maybe even put the Peoria Cares office in the entry way. Yes Shawn is busy but what about some volunteers. Students at Notre Dame have to complete hours and maybe an agreement can be made to let a volunteer get hours at City Hall. Helping each other out. Pay minimal wage for someone from the urban league or school coops. It would take them awhile but as they work they could make a manual to pass on stating who asked what and what was the answer. A computer would be nice that that costs even more.

City Hall use to give tours and maybe they could go back to that several days a week. People who work in some of the offices seem to hate working there. Maybe some job training on stress reduction, gratitude, and one on treating the customer right.

What do you see as key budget issues facing the City of Peoria? Would you consider alternate sources of revenue other than a real estate tax increase? If so, what alternative source do you prefer?

We seem to not be able to bring in enough revenue to make the "bills" the city has. The first thing I would do is go over the budget with a fine tooth comb. I know others have done this before but new fresh eyes would help.

I myself know of several budget items that overlap and could be done away with saving \$300,000.00. Not much but that is a start.

I would dump the garbage tax. That was evil and wrong.

The buildings that the city has need a good cleaning so when the next city auction comes they would have more to get rid of.

Instead of raising property tax I would look at raising the sin tax. I would consider adding a couple cents to liquor and even a higher tax on adult book stores. The liquor tax would be higher at bars than at family restaurants. It would be discussed whether it would be on open liquor or from bars.

At one time the television station in Peoria raised money to help buy infrared cameras for the fire department. Because the city is in bad shape maybe this could be used to help buy needed items for either the police or fire department. It wouldn't be a budget item than.

I would also look at property tax and especially at the better neighborhoods and have the tax be based on where you live.

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How will you work to develop and maintain a cooperative intergovernmental relationship with other local units of government, particularly that of Peoria County and Peoria Public Schools? We have many parts of a government in the city. My plan would be to identify the bigger ones like the county board, school board, park district, library and probably more. These are the ones I can think of. If we take and split the council up into 10 individuals and assign each one or two to attend the meetings of the others. They would have power to make minor decisions and give some input on what the council could do.

Okay what does that mean. If I were on the council than one of my other duties would be to attend the school board meetings. It could be me and someone else for sharing. I could then bring back what I learned and help to build a bond with some of the board members. Two council members may share the county board with weekly reports back to the council. Four times a year have a joint meeting where members, as many as possible, get together for a social kind of event. Maybe all go to a Chiefs game. Purpose of this is it is easier to talk and work with someone you know and have met. It is harder to "hide" things from others. Building a better partnership by building a relationship.

What is your opinion on the Heart of Peoria Commission's proposed form based code for targeted areas of the City?

I am not as familiar with this. I know some about it and when I went to research it I found Nothing. I remember listening when I went to the chamber school we talked about it but I am not bringing enough up to talk about it.

What do you believe the City should do to attract and retain businesses in the City?

I sit back sometimes and wonder what is wrong. We have this wonderful city with Methodist Medical Center, St Francis Hospital, Children's Hospital of Illinois, Illinois Central College, Bradley. We also have Braves Basketball., Chiefs baseball-right arm of the bigger Chicago Cubs, Symphony, and all the venues at the Civic Center. We have the river front and even across the way we have the boat and we even have an airport and another two close by.

We need to capitalize on what we do have and that is much. We are lucky and we need to sell that. Point out what we can do for you. Get more involved, keep better track of how business are doing. Hopefully get in before they go down.

Plan what we want and if that means no to some than that is no. My brother-in-law tried to start a small technology company and moved to Peoria Heights. Why. Many reason. If as a live long Peoria feels like he needs to leave the city for his business lets talk to him and others who go to the smaller areas and find out why Peoria wasn't chosen.

As stated earlier provide help for them in technical support, advice from experienced retirees, promotional help, hosting of business after hours. At a Business after hours besides the company hosting maybe have newer ones "featured"

All small ideas but ones that I feel will help.

What is your position on the use of cumulative voting for the at-large council positions?

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If someone has a strong main base they will always win because their people will always vote for them giving them the edge. Also by having 5 votes that you can vote for 5 candidates giving some an edge. I think one vote for one person.

What is your position on City funding for the Economic Development Council of Central Illinois?