

Meet the candidate: Josh Bokee

By Jen Bondeson News-Post Staff | Posted: Wednesday, August 14, 2013 2:00 am

Josh Bokee is a Democratic candidate for alderman.

1. Should the city continue investing public dollars in business ventures? The city owns an airport (Frederick Municipal Airport), a theater (Weinberg Center for the Arts) and a golf course (Clustered Spires). Should the city be investing in a downtown hotel and conference center?

As an ongoing priority we always need strong, fiscal and budgetary responsibility. These ventures already require self-sustaining operating budgets today, but we should never hesitate to review and evaluate the best options for all agencies of the city, under the guidance of a larger strategic plan. A full-service downtown hotel would be a key component to expanding tourism and the local economy, but it must be a private-sector-owned and led effort.

2. Assess the efficiency of the Frederick Police Department. What improvements should be made?

Ensuring public safety is a top government priority. We are fortunate to have a well-trained and led city police force. The downtown police sub unit is starting to improve safety and nuisance issues along Carroll Creek. However, other neighborhoods, both downtown and throughout the city, require similar attention and resources. Maintain police force staffing at its maximum authorized complement (currently set to 141) and reevaluate the strategic plan in light of population growth.

3. Are the city's resources (funding, police, planning, recreation, etc.) allocated appropriately throughout its neighborhoods? Name any neighborhoods you feel receive too much or too little, and explain why.

Today, it can be challenging for residents of any neighborhood to know in a measurable way whether they are receiving effective value of their tax dollars beyond the basic yardsticks of crime statistics, trash pickup and snow removal. We should devise a tracking system of a full range of services, make



Questions for candidates: How candidates for aldermen would help low-income, vulnerable populations

Josh Bokee, candidate for Frederick Alderman.

it accessible and intuitively understandable, and set benchmark metrics based on an agreed-upon strategic plan that meets the needs of neighborhoods.

4. What's your view on the status of business and crime along Carroll Creek Linear Park? Is the city moving in the right direction when it comes to redeveloping this area?

Completing the Carroll Creek Linear Park is the right step to continue economic redevelopment and reinvestment. A more complex challenge that requires strong focus is spurring private investment along the length of the promenade that will bring new jobs, services and residential units to achieve an exciting and inviting atmosphere and also expand the tax base. Maintaining a strong public safety presence both along the creek and throughout all city neighborhoods is critical.

5. What is the best plan for Hargett Farm?

The purchase price by the city remains above what it can be sold for in the foreseeable future. The financing utilized places restrictions on both use and early payback. Road capacity in that location realistically limits future private development. The city has identified needs for playing fields and a rec/swim facility. Evaluate the feasibility to phase in these open space uses at minimal taxpayer cost and leverage public-private partnership opportunities for facility construction.

The Frederick News-Post invited candidates in this year's Frederick mayor and Board of Aldermen election to give their thoughts on some of the city's issues. We will publish their responses over the next few weeks leading up to the Sept. 10 primary election.