

Name: Rick Riker Position Sought: NE Ward 2

1. Please describe why you are seeking the position of City Councilor.

I wish to be part of a team of individuals that can help evaluate the policies and programs currently facing the city, and lend direction that will preserve the city as a desirable place to live. I bring with me 20 years of experience as a planner at Josephine County Planning, and over 14 years as a small business owner as a private land use planner.

2. If elected, do you have any specific things you would like to accomplish during your term on the City Council?

I do not come to this with a specific agenda, but also I have not been given a list of specific items other than what I have read in the newspaper. If there was one focus, that would be to see harmony restored on the council and within the city.

3. Please provide us with a listing of your prior community and civic involvement in Grants Pass (or other communities).

My local involvement in the community for the past 34 years has been to provide, raise a family, be aware of the needs within the community and respond when possible, and be a positive person in this special town. My favorite position is to take a seat in the back row and listen, but I have a low tolerance for having a meeting just to have a meeting and where little is accomplished. Served on the District 7 Task Force for the new Grants Pass High School; and chaired the committee that studied the feasibility for a new levy for Lincoln and Redwood Elementary Schools. I am an active member of River Valley Community Church participating in different programs including Helping Hands, Angel Tree and local mission projects. My wife and I have been active in serving overseas in Honduras, with Mercy Ship Teams, working with orphanages and construction projects that involved a hospital and local schools. As I write this, we will be headed to "Gleaning for the Hungry" south of Fresno, Calif. to make soup mix for shipment overseas to orphanages, and to areas of local need.

4. Please tell us your understanding of the role of Economic Development and what you believe should occur with Economic Development during your term.

There are different ways to evaluate Economic Development, and while I may have ideas, I would want to hear what position and action the current administration is taking. I would like to encourage conservation of resources, and this may merit an exploration of retrofitting older homes with thermo pane windows, proper attic insulation, low flush toilets, and other features, that could promote employment for our local contractors.

5. What role do you believe Tourism promotion and the Tourism program should play in Grants Pass over the next four years?

The tourism role is a major component in our community, and it should be encouraged, as it is healthy for both the community and local businesses.

It is amazing what Brady Adams has done with his different ideas includes the Riverside Doors, the fiber optic Christmas displays, and the latest addition - The Tap Rock Restaurant. The Hellgate Jetboat Excursions are also a major draw. The community opening it's doors for Cycle Oregon this last summer was a great hit, and they said it was one of the best places they had ever toured and visited. Other venues like this should be encouraged over the next four years.

6. The decisions on the Urban Growth Boundary will be made in the next couple of years. Please tell us your understanding of the purpose, and your views on the extent (if any) that the Urban Growth Boundary should be expanded.

I was employed with Josephine County Planning for 20 years, and I use to deal with the issues of the Urban Growth Boundary on a weekly basis. Living in the city I have seen what the county did and did not do, and the impact it has had upon the city by accepting the Redwood District as is, and now the upgrade to the neglected infrastructure. In any situation there needs to be a balance, there needs to be reasonable growth, and over 20, 40, and 100 years, plans need to be made for future expansion. When I have the data of the current inventory and the projected growth patterns I could be more specific as to where and when the expansion should be considered.

7. What is your position on signage for local businesses (i.e. it should be expended, reduced, regulated, unregulated, etc.), and why?

It has been years since I have worked with the city's sign ordinance, and while I may have personal opinions as to what signs should look like, and how they should function, I cannot offer a response at this time. I would hope the council would revisit this ordinance and after familiarization with the sign rules, offer suggestions and recommendations. One feature I would promote is large tasteful numbers on the side of office or business buildings for emergency purposes.

8. The community survey annually asks about how citizens perceive growth and the impacts of growth on the community. Please describe for us your position on community growth.

This question was partially addressed in Question 6 and the Urban Growth Boundary. My personal feeling is that there has to be some form of growth in the community to have a healthy town. There needs to be the opportunity for basic education, for employment, and for a stable environment that encourages livability. A community that has the opportunity for everyone to be acknowledged in their long range outlook, has the potential to be a balanced and happy community.

9. This City is actively evaluating parks and recreation plans. What is your position on the proposed park plan, and to what extent do you believe that parks should be directly funded by local taxing efforts?

Currently, this is a very hot topic. Again, balance is needed concerning the direction of the parks. For me to properly evaluate the park and recreational plans, I would like to see the costs, the funding, the long range maintenance, what segment of our community this serves, what are the various benefits - like hosting local events such as the successful

Boatnik, etc.. When I evaluate something like this complex subject, I want to have the full picture and be aware of both the positive and negative issues, then formulate and answer to be able to render a decision/and or a position.

10. Please let us know your position on the funding of Public Safety (fire, police, building enforcement).

I have always supported the funding of Public Safety in the past elections. Again, I like living in the city and I feel that they have done a commendable job in the past. With everyone tightening their budgets, and residents tightening their pocketbooks, we need to be sensitive that the financial and service side matches the desires of the community, or future levy's will not be successful.

11. Do you believe taxes and fees in Grants Pass are too high, too low, or about right, and to what extent do you believe these should be changed?

You really want to put someone in the corner! It is difficult to respond to this as no matter what position one takes, there will be half of the people for your viewpoint, and half against. The word I like is balance. There needs to be a balance between the residents in the community and the governing body. There is usually a level that the community is willing to support, and a level that the local government can function properly, but balancing the two takes both communication and understanding. Without the balance sheet and knowing the inner functioning of the city, and the related costs, I cannot even start to formulate a position on this. The city should be efficient in the services that are offered, and the people should have the opportunity to decide for themselves the level of services they want, and acknowledge the taxes it will require to furnish it at that level.

12. In your opinion, what role does the downtown play in the future of Grants Pass?

It is essential that we have an active downtown, and the fantastic ideas of Brady Adams are to be commended. You rarely see a vibrant downtown like we have in Grants Pass. The small business owner is still a player in Grants Pass, and they should be encouraged and appropriately supported in their business endeavors.

13. Please provide us with any other information you believe makes you the best candidate for the City Council.

There can be various experiences that can make each individual unique to serve on the council. I would like to tell a personal story.

Around 1989 District 7 floated a levy for new Lincoln and Redwood Schools, and it was soundly defeated. We had two kids in District 7 schools, and I felt that the community was supportive of new schools, but the taxing level of the levy was too high. I approached the school board and got permission to chair a committee of local individuals, including those opposed to new taxes. We sent out a survey to the households in District 7 and had over a 20% response. The form had choices for them to reveal their level of comfort and state their concerns. Based on the results of the survey, the median point for a successful tax base was determined, and a new levy

formulated with that rate. The new levy passed, and the tribute to the community can be seen today with two new elementary schools, Lincoln School and Redwood School. I am proud of that diverse committee, District 7 allowing the opportunity, and the community responding affirmatively.

I believe my employment history and life experiences make me a viable candidate for the City Council. As in the example with District 7, I believe I can provide a different perspective that can help promote unity, while allowing the strengths to show up as a vibrant community.