

# The Bandera PROPHEET

October 22, 2021

## Bandera City Council Candidates' Q&A

The Bandera Prophet invited the candidates for Bandera City Council to participate in a Q&A. Each candidate's response is published in alphabetical order by their last name.

The questions were as follows:

1. Why are you running for Bandera City Council?
2. What are your thoughts on the Simplecity.Design recommendations for Bandera?
3. Do you feel the city's historic areas need to be preserved? If so, what is your plan?
4. What is your opinion on the increase in traffic on Main Street? What is your plan to mitigate the traffic flow?
5. What makes you the best candidate for Bandera City Council?

### **Rebeca Gibson**

1. I work to serve the community. It's that simple. Having served three terms on council and five years as mayor pro tem I have not only supported but championed solutions to some of our city's long standing infrastructure problems. I seek to continue collaboration between council, citizens and stakeholders in order to keep Bandera an amazing place to live, enjoy fellowship, raise families, feel safe, stargaze, scoot a boot, and enjoy the natural beauty in this absolute gem of a county and remarkable place on earth.

2. I am very proud to have brought Simplecity to Bandera through my work with Hill Country Alliance. The Bandera Comprehensive Plan along with the revision of our Chapter 14 Zoning Ordinance are in my opinion incredibly well crafted with input from citizens, industry

professionals, local tradespeople and elected officials. They reflect strong, well thought out strategies and development standards to protect Bandera's unique character. This masterplan should serve as a reference point for council decisions and council members should be held accountable to it. Too often communities have plans drafted with the best intentions but they end up on a shelf because they're not workable. They don't include the code it takes to achieve the vision. Ours does. It's a plan that will give property owners more freedom to benefit from their investments while emulating the characteristics of our charming town.

3. Historic preservation is critical for maintaining cultural heritage. It is a way of honoring those who came before us and memorializing the roots that they planted. Architecture, places, artifacts, photographs, documents and stories of the past are all attributes of cultural heritage and make Bandera what it is today. The Bandera County Historical Commission is a high achieving organization that works diligently in this effort. Collaboration between BCHC, County Officials, City Officials and private property owners will yield the highest and best result in this work. Aggressively seeking funding opportunities will ease the burden on respective budgets to help bring projects to fruition.

4. Bandera rush hour can be lessened by improving side streets for through and residential traffic and by improving off Main Street parking for increased access to goods and services. Working with our city engineers and city staff, council approved a street improvement plan that is to be completed in annual phases over 7 years. You may have noticed the first year phase, reconstruction of 11th Street from Sycamore to Pecan and other side street improvements around town. Improved horseback rider safety, walkability, and reduction of intersection turn radii help create a slower and safer environment for all. Main Street is a pass through for many but ideally we want folks to stop, shop, enjoy the wonderful things Bandera has to offer. Bandera is often seen as a place that is like a step back in time, many residents moved here to get away

from the hustle and bustle of the big city. Let's all remember to slow down and enjoy the pace of life here

5. What makes me a great candidate for Bandera City Council is that I don't see myself as 'the best', I do feel and believe I have demonstrated that I am a strong part of the whole. Re-electing me is one way that citizens can be assured that they will have in me a member of council committed to my role as an elected official and to working with honesty and integrity to preserve and enhance their quality of life. I'm the type of person and council member who can work with others to achieve high reaching goals. I operate from a place of trust and I appreciate the qualities of my fellow council members and what they each bring to the table. I respect that each of them were elected by our neighbors and that they, too, want to do their best.

Several years ago I created the council liaison program. After each annual election at a regular meeting, council members volunteer to serve as liaison to the organizations they have connection or interest with in order to maintain lines of communication and collaboration. I am currently serving as council liaison to the Bandera County River Authority and Groundwater District (where I am also a sitting board member), Hill Country Alliance (where I am also a sitting board member), Bandera County Friends of the Night Sky (where I am a founding member), Bandera County Historic Courthouse Committee, BEC, BISD, Commissioner's Court, and Bandera County Sister Partnership Association. This is one small example of my efforts to best serve the community through thoughtful collaboration and utilize all of the amazing intellectual resources that folks in our great community have to share!

My name is Rebeca Gibson, 4th on the ballot and your vote is kindly appreciated!

**Christine Morse**

1. As many folks may remember I was elected to City Council in 2017, but resigned and did not fulfill my term for personal reasons. Last year I was approached and asked to apply for appointment to City Council to fill a vacancy. I saw that as an opportunity to fulfill my obligation to the voters who had shown prior faith in me. Now that this term is coming to an end I very much would like to be elected to City Council to continue the work the current council has been doing. We are headed in a good direction right now and I wish to continue serving our city and voters.

2. I had some catching up to do on Simple City when I came to Council in December last year so I completely identify with our citizens when it comes to digesting and understanding the "plan". I think Simple City has done a tremendous job for Bandera. I am excited about the implementation of their recommendations and with continued input from the citizens we can have a great plan for Bandera's inevitable growth.

3. Most definitely our historical areas and buildings need to be preserved. At the same time we need to make sure the property owners' rights to such historical concerns are preserved. This topic is best served by the citizens and the City working together.

4. With the continual promotion of tourism there will be a continual influx of traffic. We are limited on what we can do when both highways into town feed on to one main street. Easing parking on Main street with more public parking lots would help with the flow of traffic. Most of the suggestions I hear would cost taxpayers a lot of money and/or include implementing eminent domain. Both of which myself nor the City Council agree with.

5. It sounds cliché, but I care about Bandera, today and its future. I care about the taxes we pay, I care about the businesses being successful, I care about having enough housing for our citizens, I care about our streets being repaired, I care about our river and the need to move the waste-water treatment facility, I care about our Tin Man receiving its

historical marker, I could go on. I am a citizen too, so I choose to be involved. I feel I am level headed, make good (informed) decisions, and listen. I look forward to being able to continue serving my city and our citizens.

### **Robby Pierce**

1. My family and I have been visiting Bandera for many years. We enjoy the simple and laid-back lifestyle of the city and decided to move here full time in August of 2020. We are very fond of the community and have made lifelong friends. I can see that Bandera is facing many infrastructure and economic issues. I believe my business experience would be of great value to the council, residents and business owners in the city.

2. After studying the plan, I agree with the majority of the design. We are in great need of consistent building codes and city ordinances. I feel the Simple City Design offers a pathway for controlled growth while maintaining our community values.

3. Bandera's rich history, the backbone of the community, should absolutely be preserved. I would like to consult with the Texas Historical Commission, members of the community, business owners and grant specialists to create a 5-10 year plan incorporating preservation and tourism

4. Main Street/Hwy173/Hwy16 is maintained by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). I would share the concerns of citizens and business owners with TxDOT and work with them to come up with options for mitigating traffic and improving flow.

5. I have extensive business experience, starting up and running a multi-million-dollar corporation for many years. I am also a sincere philanthropist supporting organizations such as the American Cancer

Society by serving on the Board of Directors for the Cattle Baron's Ball, the Down Syndrome Association, and many other local causes supporting social and tourist activities. Strong family values and a deep fondness for the people of this community drive my desire for the well-being of the City of Bandera and for future controlled growth.

### **Jerry Russe**

1. I want to be sure the projects I helped start, such as the street and wastewater treatment plant, are continued and completed. I will be proactive, stand up for all taxpayer's rights, make sure taxpayers are treated fairly, spend taxpayer's money conservatively, and to be a voice for taxpayers.

2. I feel the SimpleCity Design team has listened to what citizens have to say. They've held several well-attended workshops. There are some changes that need to be corrected based on the latest citizen input. Overall, I think they've done a good job in setting the direction for the future of Bandera and preserving our heritage.

3. I feel our historical buildings are a very important part of Bandera's heritage and we need to do everything we can to preserve them. I recently brought to light the condition of Heritage Park's pave stones and Council has now received estimates on repairs that should be made as soon as possible. My plan is to support all preservation of these buildings.

4. Increased traffic has become a major issue and was a priority when I campaigned two years ago. Since then, I became City Council's liaison with TxDOT and have been meeting with them to discuss this issue. Some solutions we've discussed would be to add additional turning lanes at the intersection of Hwy 16 N and Hwy 173. Additional turn signals at that spot would also help. The best solution is to provide a Main Street bypass to reduce the number of large trucks and other vehicles passing

through town. Input from citizens and businesses will be needed on the feasibility of such a project and how much they feel it would affect them.

5. I am a unique candidate in that I am the only one who owns a home AND a business in the City and have for 19 years. I know firsthand the problems facing BOTH businesses and residents. I'm not afraid to speak up. I recently brought to light excessive overtime of city employees that had been occurring for many years. I was instrumental in moving some city employees from hourly wages to salary saving the City thousands of dollars. I have accomplished the goals I set out to do in my first term and have the projects started that I promised in my last campaign. I spend hours educating myself on the operations, budget, and current and future needs of our city. I am always looking for ways to decrease spending and I promise to always do what is right for the citizens.

Early voting will continue until Oct. 29 at the Bandera County Election Office in the Ray F. Mauer Building at 403 12th Street in Bandera; the Lakehills Area Library at 7200 FM 1283 in Lakehills; and the Medina Annex at 161 East Parker Street in Medina. A photo ID will be required, and curbside voting will be available.

General Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 2, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.