

The Bandera PROPHEET

October 15, 2020

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 is your position on the current noise ordinance, and its enforcement?
3. Do you think Main Street/Downtown Bandera is healthy? If yes, how do you plan to continue its success? If no, how do you plan to improve it?
4. If you were given a \$1 million grant to use for the city any way you choose, what would you do with the money and why?
5. What makes you the best candidate for Bandera City Council?

Darcy Hasty:

1. I love to serve my community, I have felt a calling to do so since I was young. In saying that, I have been to most all the City Council meetings for the last 3 years and in those last 3 years I felt a strong calling not only to engage more, but to become a part of solutions to the problems that I and others see. Some might call that "putting my money where my mouth is."

2. I believe that the current ordinance needs to be updated by the council to allow for music to go later than 5:00pm. I also believe that there should be allowances made because COVID-19 has forced bar owners to have music outside rather than inside their buildings as normal. Venues

should not be punished because the Governor has forced them to move people outside. I also think that there is a way for everyone to be respectful of one another. The bands and bar owners should make sure that the ordinances (once updated) are followed to allow for peace in the neighborhoods. I believe that the bars and other venues do that for the most part, however when they don't law enforcement should step in and enforce the ordinance as written.

3. I do believe that it is as healthy as it can be after the world has suffered through this global pandemic. I believe that although Bandera has most certainly suffered, we have fared far better than most cities our size. If yes, how do you plan to continue its success? We have to look at the reasons for the success as well as what we can do to make sure that continues. We also must look at the things that did not work and what we can address to fix that to better insulate the city from economic hardships in the future. If no, how do you plan to improve it? Although I think our downtown is mostly healthy, I do think there are ways to improve it. I think that one way to do that is to appoint a well-functioning EDC and to let them form an action plan to help downtown to thrive including things like: More grants for becoming handicapped accessible (as this would bring in more visitors) and bring more small businesses to the downtown area in order to not only be more visually appealing but to give locals more shopping options and bring in more tax dollar revenue to the city and more options that could be discussed.

4. I would immediately fix the wastewater system and the streets as far as the money would stretch.

5. I am the best candidate for council because I am running for the right reasons. I do not have a personal agenda, I truly want to work for the people of the City of Bandera and the business owners of Bandera. I will listen to the people and will always act on their behalf. I truly love Bandera and I want to keep Bandera, Bandera!

Andrea Jankoski:

1. Is it appropriate for me to say “because it’s fun”? I truly enjoy being involved in the decision-making process of our city and I desire to contribute to the betterment of Bandera.

2. I believe that the music industry is a vital part of Bandera and I seek to preserve it. With that said, I am not opposed to reviewing the current noise ordinance (especially in light of how COVID-19 has affected it) and reach a mutually beneficial approach that benefits both the musicians and the neighboring citizens it affects.

3. It is always encouraging to see the people traffic moving up and down Main Street. Although I believe that Main Street/Downtown is healthy, I’d like to see the extension of foot traffic further down Main. This can be accomplished by facilitating ease of movement with better connecting sidewalks and ramps that also allow for handicap access. A cooperation among the businesses to promote one another is also important for the health of the businesses on Main.

4. I would invest it in a waste water management facility because we are in dire need of one.

5. Common sense

Toni Kunz:

1. My family founded and helped build this town and I enjoy any chance I can get to help maintain our heritage, life style and values through community service. City Council and its decisions are a fundamental part of managing inevitable change without sacrificing who we are. It is such an important seat to be filled by people that truly want to represent the residents’, property owners’ and businesses’ point of view without

pushing any individual agenda, including their own. I am in this to bring the representation back to the people that are Bandera. I want to be a part of a council that manages the city with the residents, property owners and business owners. I believe we have it in us to do this. We just have to encourage and improve our direct communication.

2. My position on the current noise ordinance and its enforcement is I am 100% for fairly and consistently enforcing it and all ordinances as they are, not just the one that seems to be the hot topic of the day. I am also open to revisiting any ordinances that may be out of date or incomplete. Any ordinance can be requested to be reviewed by City Council for the consideration of modification. As a matter of fact, that happened twice during my previous term on city council. Both were ultimately approved and are a part of our ordinances today. It is how we stay fair and stay current.

Anyone that has followed my personal involvement as an elected councilman, an appointed board member, or even as a volunteer with many organizations and events, knows I believe in THE process at hand, whatever that process may be that applies to the situation we are in. The current noise ordinance is no different. For example, it has been in place and working for quite some time. The process, as it stands, is when a citizen has a complaint of noise from local live music, they call it in, the Marshals' test the decibel level, the Marshal determines if it is in violation of exceeding the level limit. If the level is in violation, the Marshal addresses it with the manager/owner available at the time, then uses their discretion on how to proceed to get the venue into compliance as soon as possible and stay in compliance. Simple, right? Absolutely not. There is a variance that anyone can apply for, in advance, when they know they may be out of compliance. Many people ask, "Well, what is the point of having an ordinance, if you are just going to let them have a variance?" My answer to this is, "Ordinances cover the majority of situations but not all situations fit in a nutshell so we allow for the person to present their unique situation to the council." This is done in advance, in an open public meeting where anyone opposing the variance

may also speak to add details and information for the council to consider before making their decision. If anyone is not able to attend to speak in person, they may submit a letter to be read on their behalf. Then, after all has been presented, ultimately, as a majority of 5, the council then determines if the variance is a reasonable request and votes to approve or an unreasonable request and votes to not approve. This entire process allows all people involved some recourse instead of feeling stuck and over-governed.

As you probably know, during our “big” weekends the live music seems to be louder but what you may not know is that it isn’t a “just because” or “the city turning a blind eye” situation. Variances may have been granted to allow louder music because it is reasonable to understand that the live music venue wants to provide a great experience to all their patrons. The reasoning is when more people are in their venue, the noise the patrons create is louder so that means the band must also be louder to provide the sound and experience to all and not just those right in front of the speakers. I don’t know about anyone else but there is nothing more disappointing than hearing a loud crowd drown out a great band. This ordinance and its process have seemed to be working as a great compromise so that the citizens have reasonable noise level the majority of the time and recourse if they feel it is being violated.

I encourage anyone that believes there is a process breakdown or has a question or has an issue or has a suggested resolution that they get involved so TOGETHER we can make Bandera the best it can be for all of us. Involvement of the people is what makes Bandera thrive and is so important. My hope is to generate more real involvement to find better long-term solutions. Our future depends on it. So remember, step 1 is to call City Hall to get the facts and the process. If you feel the information is inaccurate or the process is not working, feel free to give your city councilman a call. That is what they (hopefully to be “we” soon) are elected to do as our representative in our city government.

3. I think Main Street/Downtown Bandera, as a whole, is as healthy as it can be at this time. I also think there is much room for improvement. We

have many challenges out of our immediate control, such as the world-wide pandemic and heavy “through traffic” on the state highway, but there are many things that are within our control, such as improve parking, improve walking convenience, improve pedestrian safety and be more cohesive from Sycamore to Maple. I want to continue to focus on these.

When on council previously, I initiated the process to build a downtown district to help preserve and restore our existing history and control the new building projects with the sole intent to manage growth and not lose our unique look and feel. As far as I know, this is still tabled and could be revisited. If we did, the details need to be discussed and ironed out so that it supports our overall vision of the future of Bandera but I still think this is what we need.

There is a current “Master Plan” project underway that will help with the focus on the small steps toward the overall goal to manage the inevitable growth. I look forward to gathering information and input to this plan as well as implementing a plan to move forward as a whole. The “whole” being each entity, group, board, corporation, business within the City of Bandera. Each should be able to use this plan as a foundation to their current and future decisions. This not only promotes cohesiveness but also fiscal responsibility and efficiency, which we need desperately.

4. Wow, what a great question! I don't think a million dollars would be enough but first I would make sure our water and waste water infrastructure is effective and secure because it is so important to the overall health of our citizens and our hill country. Securing this infrastructure is not only needed to confidently supply potable water but it could also collect, treat, discharge and sell wastewater or manage storm water runoff, and to prevent or manage flooding and erosion. This would allow not only peace of mind but could possible generate and alternative income that would reduce the burden on our property taxes. Being a property owner of 2 properties in town, I am always looking for ways to reduce the burden on our property tax.

If I had any money left over, I would start a community involved recycling project that would include education about recycling and improve the mindset required to reduce litter. A successful project like this would be able to free up future money in the budget for other neglected areas. This project would also be implemented with the goal of how to generate an income from the recycling to fund the continuing project.

5. I am 100% worthy of your vote for Bandera City Council because I believe “We” are the sum of our collective passion, vision and expertise and I believe in finding solutions for the collective residents, property owners, business owners, and visitors of Bandera. No matter what the situation, problem or solution, I believe this. And, I believe Darcy Hasty believes this. And, I believe Suzanne Schauman believes this. Does that mean we will all agree on what the solution is? No, it doesn’t. But I can promise in ALL cases, I am accessible, I am ALWAYS willing to listen, I am ALWAYS willing to discuss and I am ALWAYS willing to debate any issue with anyone willing for the sole purpose of learning and gaining perspective so that I can best represent ALL the people that love and contribute to our Bandera: residents, property owners, business owners, and visitors.

In August 2016, I set up a Facebook page called “We the People of Bandera City and County” to promote what is happening in our community. If you want to know more about me, what I stand for, what I promote, and what I want to spend my time focusing on, you have 4 years of data at your fingertips. I post and present as a “We” looking at all the things in our community that shape us. If you have any feedback or comments, I would love to hear them.

If you have any questions or concerns for me, please do not hesitate to contact me at cobtonikunz@yahoo.com to initiate a conversation.