

Candidate Questionnaire For Durango City Council

1. Why are you running for Durango City Council? What qualifications do you bring?

I grew up in Durango and cherished those years. I moved away to attend college and graduate school, but (most importantly) to find my wife, Jeanine! In 2001, our small family moved back to Durango where I began to give back to my hometown. My participation with Leadership La Plata gave me an excellent understanding of how our city and county worked and I began to volunteer for events and build my skills as a non-profit board member. I have served as a founder or board chair for several local organizations focused on supporting our small businesses (Local First and LEAD) and supporting local kids (Boys and Girls Club of La Plata County as well as Big Brothers Big Sisters of SW Colorado). In my career, I have overseen multi-million-dollar budgets, directed the construction of five recreation facilities and managed several hubs of employees spread across two states and a Canadian province. I believe I have the ability to do the job of City Councilor well.

2. Do you agree with the seven principles Restore the Balance feels should guide political conduct in Colorado? If you do not agree with one or more of these principles, please identify and explain why

I certainly agree with the seven principles. The two-party duopoly that exists today is not serving our country well. I have been an independent voter for many years because I feel party interests and “winning” are more important to our political leaders than doing the best they can for citizens. I appreciate the understanding Restore the Balance is trying to bring and embrace this philosophy in how I would like to lead. I believe the nonpartisan election format of our current election is an excellent start to developing a working relationship with whomever is the eventual five members of the city council.

3. How will you support the Durango City Council’s strategic plan objective to “Foster strong community group partnerships through effective communication and a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusivity efforts while focusing on increased accessibility of services for underserved communities?”

I believe the city has done an admirable job in communication, accessibility and inclusivity efforts, so I would continue those. I find it remarkable that multiple city council meetings I attended have had Spanish speakers present through translation services supplied by the city and childcare available for mothers who need that service. The use of the land acknowledgment has been consistent in recognizing the historic owners of the land the city sits on, and I see a greater and greater production of Spanish language documents for residents as well. Individuals who want to interact with their city leadership need to meet the city halfway thru the engagement opportunities we have currently, but I will be open to other ideas that ease that engagement process as well.

4. If elected, what actions will you take to help find common ground with your fellow elected officials?

I will strive to understand the rules we operate under to ensure transparency and act accordingly. I will listen to both sides of the issue and always understand that decisions are often made as a compromise. At the end of the day, it is the ability to give and take, find a compromise that everyone can live with and understand that we have far more in common than we will ever have that separates us that will make the difference. I believe in the power of conversation one to one when there is friction, and that leaders have to always remember to keep the relationship strong while arguing the issues at hand. That isn't always easy.

In regard to our current friction with La Plata County and even Southern Ute Tribal leadership, I have a long working history with many of the individuals involved and have spent the last several weeks having one on one meetings to understand the issues. Some will take time to resolve, and some may resolve quickly with a potential change in the make-up of our city council. We need to use any opportunity we can to improve those relationships and keep them strong for the many, many situations ahead where we will need to lean on each other.

5. **If elected, how will you listen to and represent the concerns of constituents who don't agree with you?**

You must meet them head on where they feel most comfortable. There is no better way than to listen to, and understand, what their concerns are and make sure you present those concerns along with the concepts you are fighting for to reach a fair decision. Disagreement is not a bad thing. If the conversation is handled well, I believe it often reveals what we agree on as much as it shows where there is a gap. When you can form a compromise that contains within it the areas of agreement and disagreement, people feel better heard and are more likely to abide by a compromise solution

6. **What do you perceive as the top three issues facing Durango that you propose to address, and how would you address those issues if elected?**

Build an updated police department building

Ensuring the safety of our community requires the right infrastructure. The current police department building is overcrowded, outdated, and lacks essential security features, making it difficult for officers and supporting staff to effectively serve Durango's growing needs. The passage of Ballot measure 2A is a good way to address this issue, but if 2A does not pass, I will prioritize the establishment of a modern facility that meets our community's needs. A new facility will improve emergency response, provide secure spaces for evidence and records, and create a safer environment for both residents and staff. The old high school building is a meaningful landmark, and 2A offers an opportunity to repurpose it in a way that strengthens public safety.

Act as a catalyst for improved childcare in our community

The childcare challenges in our county and city need solutions. The recent La Plata Economic Alliance report is an excellent resource to understand the

severity of the problem, identifying the resources needed to make a meaningful impact, and outlining actionable steps we can take as a community to make progress. Just as in affordable housing, the City can act as a catalyst, bringing together businesses, non-profits and governmental entities to have conversations and find solutions. A strong childcare system benefits families, businesses, and our entire community making it essential that we work together.

Take advantage of the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity presented by the Durango Mesa Project

This unique gem will need experience and determination to build the amenities to make Durango Mesa Park a world class venue for biking, hiking and (what I want to put a sharp focus on) concerts and performances. An arts and performance venue will generate revenue to help offset some of the buildout costs, which is important for long-term sustainability. The land donation and financial support from the Katz Foundation is incredibly rare for a city like Durango. We need to advance the partnership substantially in the next four years and bring the Mesa vision to life. Doing so will create lasting quality of life benefits for generations of Durangoans.

7. **Multiple individuals were convicted by our judicial system for their illegal activities on January 6th. Do you support the president's action to commute sentences for specific individuals and the full and complete pardon of all other participants?**

I believe City Council candidates should stick to issues that a City Council is responsible for. I do not believe a City Council should be distracted from their core duties and national issues can too easily do that. You will see me try to consistently examine if a stance is appropriate for our job scope and if not, I will ask the council not to be distracted. We have too much to do in our limited sphere of control to not spend every moment we can on local issues.

I would add that I write my fair share of letters to my legislators, call my congressional representatives and advocate for the things I am passionate about as a national constituent and I am happy to talk about those views outside of my candidacy and any future city councilor role. As a private citizen, I consider January 6th to be unforgivable for perpetrators of crimes and let my national representatives know that belief both during the sentencing trials and after the blanket issuance of pardons.

8. **Is there a current policy, platform plank(s), or pieces of legislation that the Durango City Council has endorsed or supported that you disagree with? Why?**

I disagree with the jail contract connecting us to Archuleta County for the next two years. Both La Plata County and City officials should have resolved this relatively minor disagreement between us rather than pull in another county, even with potential cost savings. Both sides have valid issues here, but this is an issue for approximately 10 individuals in any given year that are jailed thru the municipal court system, and we should have been able to work out a solution within our existing framework.

That being said, I want to share that I believe I have to move forward with decisions that were made by the previous city council and look to conversations in the future to improve our city/county relationship. I don't intend to spend time re-arguing the past since I was not part of those conversations and interactions. We need to just move on and make future conversations and interactions better.

Thank you for your time and consideration.