

**3/13/07**

**Dennis Smith, Candidate City Council District #7**

**Candidate Forum for Council District #7 – March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

These questions are presented as they were submitted by WWPNA Committee members and through email from the public. During the forum, some questions may be edited or combined for clarity and/or time considerations.

- 1) How would you vote when presented with a petition from homeowners in our neighborhood who would like to change their zoning from R-2 to R1?

*Assuming every homeowner on a block signed the petition in favor of downsizing, I would support downsizing. Otherwise I am opposed to downsizing.*

- 2) Which method of down zoning would you prefer to support and why – the checkerboard method or straight line (all the homes on one block)?

*I would support straight line, again, assuming all homeowners on a block support the downsizing.*

- 3) How would you vote in the Sloan's Lake down zoning issue where some property is being downzoned without the property-owner's consent?

*I would vote opposed.*

- 4) What have you done for your community?

*I teach illiterate refugee immigrants (and there are many in Denver) fundamental English. I get them jobs, advocate for them across the community (health care, legal problems, sports, etc.) and I nurture them to embrace American ideals: equality, freedom of religion, civic duty.*

*I was instrumental in getting Denver outdoor pool hours extended last summer. And I was an early and persistent advocate of Denver getting a disc golf course. Denver's 1<sup>st</sup> course opened last summer in Paco Sanchez Park.*

- 5) Where are the majority of your campaign contributions coming from?

*I don't solicit nor accept monetary campaign contributions.*

- 6) How do you think we should solve the graffiti problem prevalent in our neighborhood?

*Give homeowners who request it the solvent(s) to remove the graffiti.*

- 7) What is your position on allowing liquor to be served in the parks and in particular the recent proposal to allow the sale of alcohol in the parks?

*I am opposed to both alcohol-in-the-park proposals. I voted against the first proposal, allowing liquor to be served in the park (my side lost) when the issue came before the Denver Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, and I will vote against the recent proposal to allow for the sale of alcohol in the park when it comes before the board later this spring.*

8) Among the following choices, how would you make your determination when faced with a proposed ordinance changing some element of land use or a transportation policy that residents in your district believe would directly impact them:

- a) Follow closely the guidelines set forth in Blueprint Denver;
- b) Follow the majority opinion of Council members; or
- c) Make an effort to learn the opinions of constituents and support them accordingly?

*Follow closely the guidelines set forth in Blueprint Denver.*

9) Would you support reduced densities for properties zoned "MU", where intra-structure is not planned and has no committed funding?

*No I would not.*

10) Are you supportive of voluntary down-zoning efforts from R-2 to R-1, and would you support efforts to maintain the low-density characteristics of R-1 zoning (e.g., maintain zoning characteristics that would prohibit accessory dwelling units in/over garages in R-1?)

*I only support down zoning when all homeowners on a block support it. And, yes, maintain R1 where it is and prohibit accessory dwelling units.*

11) If there is a split among neighborhoods in your district, how will you make your determination on which constituents you will support?

*I'd support the decision path that, in my view, serves the greater good.*

12) How can you assure constituents you will build consensus among Council members and the Administration in order to gain the support necessary to garner the votes necessary to carry neighborhood issues?

*Effective government requires compromise and collaboration. The occasional quid pro quo is necessary to get things done.*

13) Would you support neighborhood traffic calming measures as requested by neighborhoods in your district? For example, will you support:

- a) Returning one-way to two way streets interior to neighborhoods in your district?
- b) Lowering speed limits from 30 to 25 mph on interior streets?
- c) Measures (e.g., cul-de-sacs) to reduce cut-through traffic?

*Yes!! On all counts. In addition, an issue that is high on my agenda is calibrating pedestrian cross walk lights to be responsive to users. My goal: when a pedestrian pushes a cross walk button in district 7 it will respond within 90 seconds.*

14) How would you balance the needs of businesses in our neighborhoods versus the desires of residents, at times when these interests diverge?

*Through compromise and discussion. Are the business needs/impacts long term or temporary?*

15) 8. How would you induce the City to include grass-roots, community involvement on task forces and similar initiatives?

*I would continue Kathleen MacKenzie's excellent monthly e-mail that briefs district residents on all things Denver city government. Her e-mail provides an excellent forum for citizen engagement.*

16) Would you make yourself and your aides available to all residents in your district?

*Of course!*

17) What steps will you take to assure that all valid complaints and concerns of residents in your district are addressed?

*By making a timely response to the initial inquiry with a timeframe for further communication as needed.*

18) We love old homes as well as the rights of their property owners. In the case of both "adverse" historical designations and demolition of civic structures, however, these interests clash. If compromise was impossible and you had to make a hard decision, how would you weigh the inherent rights of property owners against the historical legacy of the city? OR How would you have voted on the DeBoer historic designation issue?

*I would have voted against the DeBoer historical designation.*

19) Is District 7 a neighborhood or is it a group of neighborhoods? What is your vision for these neighborhoods and the relationships between them?

*District 7 is a group of neighborhoods. I advocate the further maturation of these neighborhoods through the power of the market economy and free enterprise.*

20) What is it that you want to do if you are elected to City Council?

*Maintain the positive momentum that Kathleen MacKenzie has generated. I'd like to help the Gates site developers get their proposed pedestrian/bicycle bridge built connecting the east side of Santa Fe Drive to the Platte River Bike Trail.*

21) What does it mean to "preserve the character of the neighborhood" in WWP? Would we want to preserve the character of every neighborhood in District 7? How does this fit these neighborhoods into the Greenprint Denver plan? What needs to be preserved and what needs to change over the next 50 years? What would you do to start work in this area?

*It's a trite expression meaning "maintain the charm." I would defer to private enterprise and our market economy to continue enhancing district 7.*

22) If election to City Council can be seen as a first step in a public elected career, what are your aspirations, and what sort of political agenda do you have? What party affiliations or attractions do you have?

*I'm a registered Republican, but I don't vote a straight party line. I have no political ambition beyond city council. I enjoy teaching and I'll probably keep my hand in it.*

23) Which other City Council candidates are you most close to? Who do you expect or hope to find coalition with?

*I don't know any of the other candidates personally.*

24) What are the city-wide issues you care most about? What approaches to working on those issues do you favor?

- 1. It's no surprise, but I see a connection between our high drop out rate and the increasing popularity of gangs, and thus the ensuing graffiti. Getting kids to care about their education is a tough nut to crack. But the city as a whole, not just DPS, should take a vested interest in selling kids on the benefits of literacy.*
- 2. Dedicated funding for Denver Parks & Recreation. I'd take a hard look at a RETT (real estate transfer tax). This would be unpopular with most realtors, but a case*

*can be made that well-funded and maintained parks raise the value of adjacent land, thus the property tax as well. Denver has a lot of parks that are neglected due to funding shortages.*

*Maintain the parks, improve the neighborhood, increase the property values, and increase the property taxes.*