

**CITIZENS FOR A FAIR FERNDALE
CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE
CITY COUNCIL
2015**

Name Dan Martin

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How long have you lived in Ferndale? 11 Years

Describe your community involvement: I have been engaged in the community in a number of ways, including:

- Mayor Pro-Tem; City of Ferndale; Present
- Ferndale City Council; 2011- Present
- President, Ferndale Community Foundation
- Board Member, Ferndale Youth Assistance
- Democratic Precinct Delegate, Ferndale MI
- Member, Ferndale Elks
- Alt. Board Member, DDA Board of Directors
- Past President, Ferndale Housing Commission
- Past President, Ferndale Area Democratic Club
- Past Vice-President Ferndale Arts and Culture Commission
- Past President, Michigan AIDS Coalition Board of Directors
- Other Volunteer Activities: Ferndale DDA, Ferndale Good Neighbors Awards, FernCare Free Clinic, Clean the Ferndale Up, Ferndale Pride, Pub Crawl, Blues Festival and Good-fellows.

How have the demographics of Ferndale changed in the last 20 years and what implications does this have for the City Council in the next 5 years?

The demographic trends over the past 20 years has seen a reduction in the number of children living in Ferndale, contributing to lower enrollment in our school system. Our population has continued to diversify, both in terms of age, race, familial status all of when requires different housing needs. In the next 5 years, Ferndale should focus on a housing strategy that reflects this. It is important to increase the diversity in our housing stock, having more housing options will be important to attract people. We also should look at our policies to support people who want to "age in place", which requires modifications to homes they are already living in. This applies to both our planning and how we do business with residents and developers.

What role do Boards and Commissions play in Ferndale's Government? How should members be recruited/screened? In my view the role of Boards and Commissions is to add a diverse voice to the work of the community. People from varying backgrounds and talents can use these groups to connect with work they are passionate about and are also excellent opportunities for residents to get familiar with City Government and possibly deepening their involvement through one of the elected bodies.

Why did you decide to run for City Council? What has prepared you to hold a City Council seat?

The last four years serving on City Council has really been an amazing experience and I have enjoyed it. It certainly hasn't always been easy or flawless but I am proud of what we have accomplished, that I have been able to help develop and work with a team who I respect and appreciate, even when we are at odds on an issue. I do not feel my work is done on Council and that is why I am running for re-election. I am prepared to hold this seat because I have done so for the past term.

Previous to serving on Council my experience in the private industry and education, as well as a deep involvement in community work was a very valuable place to grow into being an effective Councilperson.

What is the most productive relationship between Council and the City Manager?

City Council is the policy making body for the City. In our local form of government the City Manager is responsible for the execution of those policies. The advantage of our current form of government the City Manager is professionally educated and experienced, so that she can bring options and proposals for the City Council to respond to. The City Manager is also responsible for the hiring and development of city employees, so having a City Manager who has that professional background is essential. The Council should give the City Manager consistent feedback on her and staff's performance, and hold the City Manager accountable for delivery of those priorities.

When there is disagreement on any issue among members of the City Council what is the responsibility of each individual Council member?

There are a number of responsibilities. First and foremost is to act in accordance with your values and representing your constituents. Second is to be honest about your convictions and why you have arrived at the decision you have. Third, is to work in an open manner to see the views of your fellow Councilpeople and respectfully dialogue an appropriate course of action. Perhaps there isn't one and the issue dies, but never is it appropriate to shut down, be belligerent or disrespectful. Our local government works as well as it does because relationships are based on mutual respect and openness to other points of view. There are disagreements but we have always been able to work together and be honest with each other.

Explain the type of development that you see as most beneficial to the Downtown area.

Mixed use, increasing our residential and retail development. The strength of a city is in the diversity of its housing and the downtown area could benefit from more options. I also believe future development should be within the character of the city and respectful of our historical value. Many people sometimes refer to us as the next “Royal Oak”. There is nothing wrong with Royal Oak being Royal Oak, but that is not us. I am looking forward to some really creative solutions that includes deeply embedded resident engagement.

What specific ideas do you have for reducing expenditures while maintaining city services?

Investing in technology that makes transactions cheaper and easier for the residents has been a key focus of mine and will ultimately reduce expenditures. I also believe cultivating the talent we have in house will allow us to do more without hiring consultants or outsourcing services, creating more innovative solutions will reduce overall expenditures while improving services. The recent dog park construction is a great example of this. The recent bond proposal that passed improving infrastructure will keep ongoing maintenance costs in check.

I also am a great advocate of multi-year budgeting practices that allow the City to plan for investment that creates a long term trend of expenditure reduction. Lastly, it is the role of City Council to use its judgement on expenditures, do their homework and exercise responsible stewardship for the resources we’ve been entrusted.

Please give your opinion of the MiLife Health & Wellness Center.

I have two arguments that shape my opinion of the MiLife Health and Wellness Center. First and foremost I want to point out that as this issue came to Council I asked a lot of questions, but ultimately abstained from voting so as to not give the appearance of a conflict of interest with my “day job”, at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

First, the argument for the Center; it will save the City money in the short term. Unquestionably for both our employees and our health care expenditures. As a self-funded customer of Blue Cross Blue Shield, Ferndale pays the actual cost of the service delivered by participating providers, plus service fees for processing the claim. Employing a physician directly or contractually will be cheaper on a per service basis. Also, I like this concept because it took multiple municipalities working together to make it happen, and that’s great collaboration. Lastly, the at work health initiatives are great and support lifestyle change if used in conjunction with a comprehensive care plan.

My concerns around it is that there should a removal of the mindset that chronic conditions can be treated in a vacuum. A medical home is a team of health care providers addressing diseases in a multi-faceted way. A diabetic, for example, gets better care from multiple disciplined sources including doctors specializing in treating the physical aspects of the disease, behavioral health services, nutritional coaching, etc. The quality of care and outcomes is just better.

This proposal was presented before Council as a medical home. It is not. I have no objection to getting quick service at a low price for treatments such as a sinus infection or a sprained ankle, but I worry that the reduction in patient out of pocket costs will motivate employees away from a coordinated team approach for chronic conditions or prohibiting them from establishing a relationship with a primary care / family physician that truly belongs to a system that offers a spectrum of coordination. It will also be cheaper from an expense perspective in the long term if degenerative conditions have a continual multi-disciplinary approach.

I want to re-iterate that I will continue to abstain from any vote that appears to be a conflict of interest. I also want to be respectful of the question asked here and be as transparent as possible. So to summarize a really long explanation of my personal opinion, if used properly and in context the Center is a great idea. It does not replace the quality of care received for chronic conditions that require long term, coordinated care.