State Journal Questions and my Answers

1 **Will you vote to rescind the bicycle ban in Leslie Morris Park? Why or why not?**

The Civil War earthworks in Leslie Morris Park at Fort Hill are a very important part of Frankfort’s history. They must be preserved and promoted as a historic attraction for residents and visitors. But using the park for recreation by people of all ages is another good use for this beautiful downtown park. The historic site is a small part of the park, the rest of which is a 124 acre natural area with hiking trails and interpretive signs. I frequently go hiking in the park and unfortunately I usually find the park almost empty of people. The bicycling trails that were first approved, and then disapproved by the city were ¼ mile from the historic area, and posed no threat to them. I approve of allowing both hiking and bicycling on these trails.

The plans for Parcel B in downtown Frankfort call for 216 new housing units. Filling these housing units is critically important to revitalizing downtown Frankfort. Let’s make living in downtown even more attractive by using Leslie Morris Park for hiking and bicycling. And in doing so, more people will discover our important piece of Civil War history. Both sides of this issue can come out ahead.

2 **Will you accept campaign funding from a political action committee? Why or why not?**

This question about PACs is based on the false premise that money swings elections. In the 2018 city commission race, the person spending the most finished fourth, and the person who finished first spent less than half that amount. The candidate and their message is still what matters most.

I am running for city commissioner because I have a set of goals and priorities that I believe will make Frankfort a better place to live and work. The other candidates are running for similar reasons, though their goals and priorities are probably somewhat different. If my message resonates with an individual in the community, and they want to support my campaign with a donation, that will be appreciated. And if an individual is part of a group of like-minded people, such as a PAC, and that group chooses to support me with a donation, then I see nothing wrong with that. But any suggestions they might have for me will carry no more weight than ideas coming from any other citizen. I will not be beholden to a PAC; I think for myself. And any donations will be used to get my message to the voters in a positive manner.

3 **What would you do, if anything, to restore recycling of paper, glass and more plastics?**

This is an issue that is very important to me. At Commission Eric Whisman’s invitation, I have toured both the Lexington recycling facility where Frankfort currently sends its recyclables, and also the Westrock facility in Louisville which sorts Louisville’s recyclables and those of several other communities. I have arranged a tour of Westrock for all of our municipal candidates. Westrock can take more types of recyclables than Lexington, such as paper, glass, and all types of plastic. I think this is because they operate on a larger scale and can therefore justify the cost of automated sorting equipment.

Frankfort needs to compare the costs of using Lexington plus the higher cost of landfilling all the recyclables that Westrock could take, versus the cost of using Westrock in Louisville plus the cost of transporting the additional distance. This analysis will point us to the correct decision. We also need to see if there are any advantages to combining the recyclables of Frankfort and Franklin County.

Whichever location we end up selecting, there is still a great need to better educate the citizens on the importance of recycling properly. This would improve the economics for Frankfort as well as help our environment.\

4 **What do you like and dislike about New Frankfort Development LLC's plan for Parcels B and C?**

Plans for Parcels B&C look good to me. They incorporated many components from the Frankfort Master Plan. The proposed 216 housing units will breathe life into downtown Frankfort. The city can make those units more attractive and at the same time benefit all of Frankfort by helping fund a new YMCA, and improving recreation opportunities in Riverview and Leslie Morris parks. I have met with YMCA officers and their plans are well thought out.

The developers have plans to add retail space. If this is where people could buy a few groceries and other essentials, that would fill a void in downtown. But I am concerned about plans to add restaurants. We already have a wealth of restaurants in downtown Frankfort, and I hate to see competition move in.

I’m also curious about the housing units. There are plans for a large surface-level parking lot that is exposed to the elements. Tenants would be willing to pay higher rent for parking beneath the building. It would also free up space for an outdoor play area for young families with children.

Lastly, I hope the developers take a careful look at installing solar panels on the roofs. Solar costs have dropped significantly, and are probably cost justified.

5 **Discuss an important issue for Frankfort that not enough people are talking about.**

There are many issues that not enough people are talking about. I think number one is the need to “infill”, that is, put new businesses and housing on properties within the city that are empty or abandoned. This will give us a more vibrant downtown, and reduce urban sprawl and the need to extend utility services farther out from the city core. Number two is redefining the role of the Architectural Review Board. Their guidance is needed on topics having to do with architecture, but they need to be reined in on non-architectural topics.

Another important issue that receives little attention is the destructive impact that invasive species have on our river banks and forested lands. Bush honeysuckle, garlic mustard and winter creeper are pushing out our native trees, flowers, and wildlife. This includes the banks of our Kentucky River and our parks such as Leslie Morris Park. We are proud of our river and it can become a more important economic driver for Frankfort. So let’s restore its beauty for both citizens and visitors to enjoy. For starters, the city should form a task force of state and local experts to create and implement a plan of attack.

6 **Do you support converting West Main Street to a two-way street? Please explain why or why not.**

I understood the reason for changing West Main Street to 2-way traffic was to assist downtown merchants. But how would it would help? So I walked the four block section of West Main and discussed the subject with six different businesses. I was amazed to learn that none of them felt that 2-way Main Street would improve their business. Yet none of them wanted to be quoted as they were afraid it would upset ardent supporters of 2-Way Main.

Delivery trucks disrupting traffic, loss of parking places due to added turning clearances, the need to retain handicapped parking despite reduced parking spaces, pedestrian safety, and lost space for touring performance vehicles at the Grand, were all mentioned as problems that would be created by 2-way Main. So unless someone presents me with a convincing argument of the benefits of 2-Way Main, I cannot support it.

But in talking with downtown businesses, I found there is a different problem that really needs to be addressed – parking. Several businesses mentioned that office workers park in the 2-hour zones and move their car every two hours, reducing parking availability for customers. I have ideas on the parking problem, but that’s a different subject.

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As an ordinary resident of Frankfort, I have not interacted with KCDC. So it is difficult for me to assess their performance. I have studied their website and like their mission statement, strategic plan, and annual reports. But this information also raises questions. For instance, despite a robust economy in general, last year the Frankfort unemployment rate went up and the number of people employed went down. Also, KCDC partners with several other organizations, and it is hard to determine who to give credit to. Most troubling to me is that the President/CEO of KCDC, who is being paid to promote business in Frankfort, is also serving as Harrodsburg Economic Development Director. Is that a conflict of interest?

I recommend that the City of Frankfort (and county) reach out to new businesses in Frankfort and survey satisfaction with the help they received from our government entities. Which part of our city government did they interact with – KCDC, Planning and Zoning, Architectural Review Board, etc.? How satisfied were they with those organizations? How might assistance be improved? Evaluating the answers to these questions would help determine where our tax dollars are doing the most good, and how we may need to make changes.

8 **How does your faith inform your politics, if at all?**

I am the oldest of six children in a Catholic family.  I attended church, Bible school, and an all-girls Catholic high school.  Since then I rarely attend church, though I retain my Christian morals and ethics.  My husband is much the same except he was raised in the United Church of Christ.  I completely respect people of all religions and for that matter people who are not religious.

Though it is not from the Bible, I believe in the phrase “God helps those who help them themselves”, which to me means that I am responsible for making the world a better place through my actions, not by praying for God to take care of it.

The other phrase I live by is from Matthew 7:12 – “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”.  I have been fortunate in life and feel I have an obligation to help other people, and our planet, through charitable giving and public service.

I hope that these are the motives of all people that are called to public service, and that whoever ends up serving on the City Commission can be united in making Frankfort a better place to live and work.

9 **Do you support allowing chickens within the city limits?**

Given the dire circumstances the world is in, it seems trivial to discuss chickens.  Perhaps, it will help take our minds off coronavirus for a while.

I moved here from Austin, TX where it is legal to have up to 6 hens (no roosters) per household.  People there are proud of their little flocks and some have very attractive chicken coops.  Each year the public is invited to a “coop tour”.

Benefits for the owner are a supply of eggs.  You feed them kitchen scraps, rather than sending waste to the landfill, and a little chicken chow.  Chicken poop is high in nitrogen for your garden.  And you can have fried chicken once in a while.  At a time when people have lost touch with where food comes from, they demonstrates agriculture.

In Frankfort we have had neighbors with chickens, and the birds were almost unnoticeable.  They don’t bark like dogs. They don’t kill birds like stray cats.  And only roosters crow.  In my opinion, bird flu fears are greatly exaggerated.  To date, no human cases of bird flu have occurred in the U.S.

If a person wants to raise a few chickens, they should.  I think it is a great idea for Frankfort.

10 **Has the coronavirus pandemic revealed any gaps, needs or problems in Frankfort that you would address as an elected official?**

COVID-19 is affecting all levels of our society.  It demonstrates the importance of being able to tackle complex problems and effectively communicating with residents.  Governor Beshear is doing an excellent job of defining and presenting plans for Kentucky.  The City needs to promote action and build confidence by frequently updating the City website and submitting newspaper articles. Sharing how the City is implementing protective actions of social distancing and hygiene is important.  Explaining how residents can still obtain permits and participate in Commission and Department meetings should be stated on the website.

The Emergency Response Plan needs to be updated with input from first responders and Frankfort Regional Medical Center.  Then each step of the plan should be implemented, coordinating efforts with the City, County, and the Hospital to prepare for higher levels of illness.

Advising our most vulnerable citizens about resources is essential, especially food availability for those who have depleted their finances.  I have researched donated meal/grocery options and have developed an up-to-date Food Resource Guide, now posted on Facebook AnnaMarieRosen2020.  I encourage you to share this information with those in need.  Please consider making a donation of food or money to these organizations to help support their work.