

**Citizens for a Fair Ferndale
Candidates Forum
Sunday, October 23, 2011
1:00pm - 3:00pm
Ferndale Public Library**

Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Dan Martin

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1. Why did you decide to run for Mayor/Council?

I am running for City Council to be the voice and advocate for the residents and businesses of Ferndale. As I learned there was going to be an opening on Council, I knew that as a candidate I had a unique background of experience and education to actively tackle the issues that Ferndale was facing on day one.

On a personal level, I have really connected with the community in Ferndale. The diversity, vibrancy of the downtown and most importantly the people have made me lay down roots here and invest in this community in a very real way. As roles that I have played in Ferndale are drawing to a close, I have looked at new ways I can contribute and make a more significant impact to the City that I truly love, and am very driven to making an even better place to live, work, and raise a family.

2. What is your vision for Ferndale? Over the next four years? Over the next ten years?

My vision for Ferndale is a community that continues to be diverse and accepting, environmentally friendly, economically strong and a place where people come to when they are ready to settle down, and choose to stay in when they have the option of moving away. In ten years I envision Ferndale being all these things in addition to being part of a regional mass transit solution and including more businesses and residents engaged in the new high tech economic sector.

3. What two (2) things are you going to do that will bring your vision to reality?

The first thing I would do would be to strengthen our neighborhoods through the support of neighborhood associations and block clubs. At one point Ferndale had over 40 neighborhood associations. Now there are currently less than half of that. The City can facilitate the creation of these groups by providing resources and cultivating leadership and longevity. These organizations help drive community engagement and have many positive benefits for the city and the neighborhoods.

Secondly, Ferndale needs to address incentivizing existing businesses to stay in Ferndale through targeted economic packages similar to the one that Garden Fresh Salsa received. I would encourage

an economic development policy Ferndale should also target those high tech business that add high value and jobs locally.

4. Of all the issues facing Ferndale, what two (2) would you give top priority and why?

The key issues we are facing are the economic conditions of the region and how it affects the economic health of the City. Earlier this year, voters approved a mileage increase in order to retain critical services and levels of operation. As City Councilman I will protect that investment by ensuring sound fiscal policies that not only look to address short term needs of the city but long term growth opportunities as well. This includes ensuring Ferndale retains adequate police and fire protection.

Ferndale also needs to keep moving forward in its economic development, not only in the downtown are but by ensuring businesses on Livernois and Hilton are able to stay in Ferndale and promote new growth. Ferndale simply cannot return to a time where there was not a vibrant downtown community and encouraging business growth in other areas will bring needed jobs to the area. Growth needs to be balanced with the needs of the residents, of course, and residents need a collaborative voice in that process.

5. Ferndale prides itself on an active citizenry. A) What two (2) things would you tell someone who "just wanted to help", or who "just wanted to get involved"? B) Please list and briefly describe three (3) resources (print, electronic, or otherwise) that residents who want to get involved should go to for ideas, background, facts or figures.

Ferndale is one of the easiest cities to get involved with. I have heard many people ask how they can get involved and immediately 5 people come out of the woodwork to recruit them to volunteer for their charity or their cause. The three specific resources I would recommend are to use Ferndale's website as a starting point to look at various boards and commissions as well as other charitable organizations in the city, which includes contact information, and reach out to the one that calls to you. While on the Internet, most Ferndale charitable organizations maintain an active Web presence for potential volunteers to refer to. Secondly, I would advise people to watch Council meetings as various opportunities to get involved are frequently publicized there. Ferndale thrives on being good neighbors to each other. Lastly, the DDA or the Chamber can provide direction as well for organizations, upcoming fairs and other volunteer opportunities.

6. *How do you see the council and other city leaders continuing and improving communication between Ferndale and its neighbor cities?*

Ferndale has a strong history of pursuing opportunities for regional collaboration. My vision or Council is to continue this by representing Ferndale on regional boards and projects, such as mass transit. Another important example of strengthening collaboration with neighboring communities would be to come together and developing a regional Climate Action Plan. As dedicated as Ferndale is to environmental sustainability, significant efforts in this area will only be accomplished regionally and with public/private partnerships. We need to develop a regional vision for the greening of our communities. There are organizations that are starting this work today. We need to embrace it and help drive it forward.

7. *Please explain the importance of the city's Master Plan. Is it still relevant in this economic climate? When and how should it be reviewed?*

A city's Master Plan is a plan giving comprehensive guidance or instruction of the city's direction. Ferndale did its last comprehensive review in 2008. The Master Plan must be reviewed every 5 years. That does not mean that it cannot be reviewed sooner. The Master Plan is important as it provides direction for the development of the City reflective of the intent and vision of the policy makers at the time the plan is last created or reviewed. It provides stability and information vital to stakeholders for their own planning and work execution. It is, however, crafted with many unknowns and assumptions, so in a fluid economic environment or when key personnel change it is critical to review the document more frequently.

A Master Plan needs to be a community effort. Input from each stakeholder is critical in crafting a comprehensive direction for the city. Our own master plan could be strengthened by measurable goals and objectives against which policy makers can evaluate our progress.

8. How can the city help residents who are facing foreclosure?

The city can help residents facing foreclosure in a number of ways. The first is to have directories available as to where residents may find resources or help at each stage of the foreclosure process. These resources should be available online and in print at City Hall and the Public Library. The web sites should also be communicated to residents as part of other communications the city sends out.

9. The state of our schools (perceived or real) is vitally important. What kind of collaboration between the city and the schools do you see happening?

I do not currently see collaboration between the cities and the schools as strong as it should be. The school system is vital to keeping residents to Ferndale and attracting new residents. It also can have a direct impact on property value. I appreciate the regular updates that the district's communications director makes at City Council, but I do not see the same occurring in return. In addition, I would advocate for a joint committee of Council, the City Manager and school officials to develop a comprehensive plan of opportunities to collaborate with each other and to see through the execution of each activity. While it is important to respect the individual jurisdictions between the school district and the City, each is serving much of the same constituencies and could do better and possibly realize cost savings by collaborating on communications and other activities each is charged with.

10. Did you support the Headlee Override ballot question that was passed in May of this year? If so, explain, in your view, how this millage positively affected our City. If not, explain, in your view, how this millage has negatively affected our City.

I did support the Headlee Override ballot question. It was a tough decision, as I know many residents will have some level of difficulty with additional tax payments, but I believed that it was necessary for short term continuation of vital services, including public safety. City Council had at that point made significant budget reductions and candidly I did not believe that the Ferndale could safely absorb additional cuts to the level required without the Override.

I am grateful that the residents approved the ballot question, but I believe that this is a stop gap measure and I believe in doing everything in my power as your next City Councilperson to keep the amount of taxes levied at a minimal level while safeguarding the city today and providing important investment for the future. Without investing in our future Ferndale will have even further difficulty recovering property value in the future which will ultimately make the additional taxes levied by the Override unnecessary.