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Q1

Candidate Name

Darren Hill

Q2

Email Address (for follow-up only)

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Q3

Ward 1

Ward/Constituency

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Q4

What do you envision the City's role to be in economic development?

We need to continue working through SREDA and its independent board of directors. I would also like to convene a roundtable of business community members to discuss this exact topic. To discuss what else the city can be doing. We are not the business experts so we should turn to those that are.

Q5

How can the City help businesses survive through the COVID-19 pandemic?

First, SREDA should turn most of its resources to our local businesses and help keep them sustainable.

The city needs to relieve as much financial burden as we can on the businesses that require it. I am prepared to waive property tax for a year for businesses that meet established criteria. It could be all or a portion of the 2021 tax. I would ask the province to do exactly the same with their education tax. I would then back fill the tax revenue hole from reserves. This is when reserves should be used, for unexpected emergencies.

Reduced utility rates could also be considered on an as needed basis.

Keep in mind, this could also be partially offset with some service level adjustments if possible.

Q6

Crime and safety are key election issues. What is your plan to address these concerns, including your position on defunding the police?

I plan to work with the Board of Police Commissioners as they are the governing body of the Saskatoon Police Service. It is structured that way through legislation to prevent political influence/meddling in policing. That being said, I work closely with the Staff Sargents responsible for areas in my Ward and I will continue to do so to address the local issues.

My position on defunding the police depends entirely on your definition of "defunding the police". There are a number of ways people use the words "defund the police".

I will say that I don't believe that a sworn officer with a gun should be the first on the scene in many circumstances. However, you cant start shifting financial resources from SPS to another agency without them first being able to demonstrate that they can handle their existing responsibilities and that they have the skill and ability to accomplish what the intent of the shift is.

That being said, there is nothing wrong with having conversations around how things can be done differently and better. Included in those conversations should be the authority to shift some responsibilities to special constables ort community safety officers. For example, do we really need 5 sworn officers with guns conducting a radar trap? Because it fall sunder the g=highway traffic act - we have to. Lets get the legislation changed so the sworn officers can be spending that time on guns and gangs

Q7

What are your priorities for major capital projects in Saskatoon?

Regular construction and development must keep moving along as it is a huge driver in the economy.

Many municipal projects should be put on pause until the pandemic is no longer a threat. We cant be making decisions on arenas and convention centers until we know that there will actually be a market for them.

Council should revisit all decisions made pre-COVID. We must look critically at all projects and ensure that what was approved before COVID hit, is what the community will still require post pandemic.

City Council must have the ability to focus on the immediate needs of safety and wellbeing, while still looking towards the future and understanding how every decision made and every action taken will impact today and the tomorrows to follow.

2020 Municipal Election Candidate Questionnaire

Q8

Do you share the concerns many residents and businesses have regarding increased taxes and user fees?

Yes,

Please elaborate::

I will fight to limit tax increases to the rate of inflation to ease financial pressures on already struggling families and businesses.

Q9

What steps would you recommend the City take to curb or mitigate rising operational costs?

when City expenditures were growing too quickly as a result of three and four percent annual population growth, and other cost pressures, the City, in 2013, adopted a Continuous Improvement Strategy, a corporate-wide approach to ensuring effectiveness and improving efficiencies in municipal services and operations. Today, this strategy has resulted in millions of dollars of cost savings or reallocations.

Q10

If necessary, would you support any initiatives City Administration may take to freeze or even reduce staffing levels?

Please elaborate::

Yes and No - A blanket freeze/reduce is not the way to approach this. If that is a goal of the administration they will have to demonstrate how it fits in the continuous improvement strategy and the strategic plan. Then present an operational plan on how they are going to achieve their goal.

Q11

How do you believe that the City should spend COVID-19 relief money provided by the provincial or federal government? Do you believe that relief money should be spent in the area for which it is specified (e.g. infrastructure, etc.)?

Yes, it should be spent where it was intended to go.

Q12

Do you believe the decision regarding the Main Library funding/debt should be revisited?

No,

Please elaborate::

I have received two legal opinions on this smatter and both have indicated that Council's decision has been acted on by the library board to such a degree that the decision can not be reversed. However, the entire world changed shortly after that decision was made. Immediately after the election, I will be putting forward a motion, asking Council to ask the library to pause the project. Not to adjust any funding or promised borrowing, but to simply pause and rethink some things. We must look critically at all projects and ensure that what was approved before COVID hit, is what the community will still require post pandemic. We have also learned a great about our community and the needs of many and of the few. We should have conversations with the provincial and federal governments and see what partnerships can be formed to incorporate services and programs like a housing coordinator, counselling services, health services, etc. We need to ensure every possible resource goes into programs and services incorporated into one square box, not a legacy building.

Q13

What is your #1 priority on your election platform?

COVID-19 has shown us that it can bring a community and an entire economy to a grinding halt. We need to take steps to ensure we don't require a second lockdown which is not only devastating to the economy, but also to our mental wellbeing. This makes community safety and financial management top priorities in the coming term.
