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Q1

Candidate Name

Jim Rhode

Q2

Email Address (for follow-up only)

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Q3

Ward 7

Ward/Constituency

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Q4

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

The city needs to be a business hub. We need to be open to business. In order to do this, we need to ensure that we reduce red tape and barriers; creating more efficient and timely processes. For example, permits and licenses, rezoning and infill when appropriate. Our bylaws and regulations must not impede investment nor hamper or limit our businesses ability to be competitiveness outside of our borders.

Q5

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

There are two key things the city can do to help businesses survive through the pandemic. First and foremost, we must allow businesses to operate without any unnecessary restrictions or limitations. We need to keep businesses open, allowing the market/customer to determine. Second, as we look to help businesses directly; when it comes to utility and property taxes, simple deferral is not the solution.

Q6

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

My platform clearly states that I support our police, fire and other essential services. I do not support defunding the police. I do believe we need to review the mandate of the Police; ensure we resource them accordingly to deliver on that mandate and hold them accountable to it. There is no doubt that we have safety issues in our city, including in our downtown, that need to be addressed. Dealing with mental health and addictions, by all levels of government, will be required to ensure we get to the root cause. Saskatoon must do better.

Q7

What are your priorities for major capital projects in Saskatoon?

Our cities infrastructure, including roads and sidewalks must be a priority. We need to put on hold and have a sober second look at mega projects, such as the library and BRT.

Q8

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

Yes,

Please elaborate::

Annual Property tax increases in the 3-7% range and utilities, such as water, going up in excess of 20% in three years is NOT sustainable. We need to be more in line with inflation and consumer price index. I will fight for a zero percent property tax increase for one year to let businesses and families take a deep breath and get their feet back on the ground.

Q9

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

First, there are many inefficiencies within the cities operations that need to be addressed. Without reducing services, we can find efficiencies and streamline processes. There is much room, using the principles of continuous improvement, to hold operational costs. Second, the city's strategic plan is too broad. We need to get better at doing fewer things.

Q10

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

Yes,

Please elaborate::

Yes. I do not support a broad-based hiring freeze. There are areas that we may still need strategic investment for the health and safety of our community while there may be other areas, we need to reduce investment. I do support a strategic hiring freeze that looks at each service and administrative department.

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, I believe the relief money should be spent in the area specified, where appropriate. I do not support a "spend it because it is out there" approach. We also need to take into account what our required investment may be on top of the relief as well as how much it will cost the city to maintain and operationalize the initial investment in the future.

Q12

Yes

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

Q13

What is your #1 priority on your election platform?

Supporting small to medium size businesses and keeping people employed.
