2019 Greenville City Council Questionnaire

Describe your qualifications for office and identify up to five organizations or individuals who are actively supporting your candidacy and why their support is important.

I am the most qualified Greenville City Council District 1 candidate because my skill set covers the most important issues our City face: Actively advocating for a strong economy, protecting and investing in neighborhoods, and making good decisions about growth and what we want Greenville to look like in 20 years.

To be more specific:

Qualifications to Support a Strong Economy

• My entire career has been spent fighting for good jobs, more capital investment and small businesses (Greenville Chamber, SC Chamber, Upstate Chamber Coalition, Sunnie & DeWorken)
• I have a clear understanding the role local government should play in creating the right environment to promote a strong economy
  o Support small and locally-owned businesses
  o Be a strong voice for entrepreneurship and innovation
  o Work to recruit professional jobs to Greenville
  o Serve as a key partner to the business community

Qualifications to Support Neighborhoods

• North Main Community Association Board member and President
  o Worked to keep neighborhoods safe and informed, improved parks, built a reserve to $16,000 and significantly increased membership and participation.
• I am an active advocate for neighborhoods, including more sidewalks, safer crosswalks, slowing cars down, parks and green spaces

Qualifications to Address Growth

• I have the necessary mix of experience to address growth, including:
  o Neighborhood president and neighborhood advocate
  o Small business owner and 20 years working with businesses
  o Years experience with public transportation (incl. Vice Chair of GTA)
Below are four individuals who are supporting my candidacy for City Council.

These individuals can attest to my abilities in key areas that are needed to effectively serve on Greenville City Council, including problem solving and inclusiveness, support for economic development, advocate for public transportation and neighborhoods; and, finally, a high level of work ethic and an uncompromising integrity.

**Charles Dalton**

"I have known John DeWorken for nearly two decades. I can say without any doubt in my mind that John will do an excellent job for the City of Greenville. He will represent our city with uncompromising integrity, hard work, and thoughtfulness. I know this because I have seen his work firsthand at the Greenville Chamber and the Upstate Chamber Coalition, with his work at Clemson University, and now with his leadership in his community. I can say with confidence that the City of Greenville will be in good hands with John DeWorken on City Council."

**Paul Grier, Former Chairman, Greenville Transit Authority**

"John DeWorken’s service as Vice-Chair of the Greenville Transit Authority Board was invaluable. During a time when hard questions had to be asked and hard decisions had to be made, John was a non-anxious leader who examined the data, sought out and listened to a wide variety of constituents, and built consensus towards a pathway forward that would lead to sustainability.

John’s ability to navigate complex issues is one reason I support his candidacy for Greenville’s City Council."

**SC Representative Bruce Bannister**

"I support John DeWorken because no one will work harder. He has great integrity and will balance growth while not compromising our quality of life; and will continue support for our neighborhoods."

**Phyllis Gilreath, North Main Neighborhood Community Association**

"I've been a Board member for the North Main Community Association and an advocate for our neighborhoods for many years. So, I know John is by far the best candidate to make sure our neighborhoods are a priority in City Hall. He has spent years working for better neighborhoods. And, as such, I know at City Hall he will unapologetically advocate for safer neighborhoods, slower cars, community centers, safe crosswalks for our children and green spaces and neighborhood parks. He is our best choice for City Council!"
What are the greatest challenges facing the City of Greenville and what will you do as a Council Member to address them?

The greatest challenge facing the City is the ability to strike an effective balance between growth and its high standard of quality of life.

Here is how I will do it.

• Be more deliberative on decisions about growth
  • Update and use tools, such as zoning and planning, to shape the Greenville we desire to have in 20 to 40 years.

• Support a strong economy
  • Support small and locally-owned businesses, be a strong voice for entrepreneurship and innovation, and work to recruit professional jobs to Greenville.

• Invest in and protect neighborhoods
  • Ensure our neighborhoods are safe by slowing cars down, creating safe crosswalks for our children, investing in more sidewalks, and supporting law enforcement.
  • Keep neighborhoods beautiful and clean by supporting community parks, green spaces, trees and community centers; fighting commercial creep; and, re-instituting a glass recycling program.

• Continue to work on affordable housing for residents and workers
  • Support on-going City housing initiatives, such as funding the Greenville Housing Trust Fund to finance loans and land bank available land to maximize the number of available affordable housing units
  • Create a first-class transit system that provides citizens with access to jobs, healthcare and education, focusing on funding, personnel and relationship with County officials.
  • Work with the hospitality industry and the business community to ensure workers can affordably get to work and park
What do you believe is the most pressing issue facing office and employment growth in Greenville? What would you do about it as a Council member and what experience do you have dealing with such issues?

The most pressing issue facing office and employment growth in the City of Greenville is the lack of professional jobs and companies in the downtown area. This deficiency results in a higher office vacancy rate and missed opportunities, such as revenue lost at downtown small businesses and restaurants.

I will work with the business community, the downtown owners group, commercial realtors, stakeholders, City staff and others to adopt a strategic plan that could include some of the following proposals being discussed:

- Create a city-based incentive for professional job development that would address not only new businesses, but also existing businesses
- Utilize existing tourism marketing expertise to expand Greenville marketing to professional businesses and young professionals
- Partner with key stakeholders, such as NEXT, and major employers, such as Prisma, to recruit target innovation companies and assist in start ups
- Address parking (cost and availability) issues in the Central Business District

Finally, knowing that needs change over time, my role as City Councilman is to be responsive to the needs of the business community and ensure there is ample support for small businesses, entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic development efforts.

Experience:
I have nearly 20 years of experience working with these issues, which include seven years at the Greenville Chamber, two years at the SC Chamber, and ten years with The Sunnie & DeWorken Group.
The plans for a downtown conference or convention center have created much discussion amongst city residents. Do you support the project (or not), and what will you do to ensure it is completed (or scuttled)?

I fully support the Conference Center in downtown Greenville for three reasons:

• Attendees will create significant revenue for our small businesses
• The Conference Center will showcase some of the best art from our area
• The Conference Center will help recruit professional jobs to the area

I know how to advocate for important issues. I will use my skills I’ve obtained over the last 20 years to ensure this and other important Greenville initiatives are completed.
In June, the czb consultants working on the GVL2040 comprehensive plan released five “hunches” based on their preliminary research. Please respond to these selected assessments with your assessment of the state of the City.

a. “The gut feeling amongst Greenville residents may be that the city will, at some point, cease to be a place for middle- and working-class people.”
b. “The gut feeling amongst Greenville residents may be that the weekday commuting traffic has become unbearable.”
c. “The gut feeling amongst Greenville residents may be that the city will soon be a place where only high-earning households can afford to live.”
d. “The gut feeling amongst Greenville residents may be that the city has become a playground of sorts for young white people and that the very idea of an African-American community may now be in question.”

To address the “hunches,” I will focus on three areas:

- Support on-going City housing initiatives, such as funding the Greenville Housing Trust Fund to provide financing and land banking for affordable housing
- I will work to create a first-class transit system that provides citizens with access to jobs, healthcare and education.
- Finally, I will work with the business community to ensure workers can affordably get to work and park while downtown

As for traffic, we must look to technology to move cars efficiently through downtown.
The Greenville Chamber supports efforts to increase the availability of housing for our workforce. What can the City do to support these efforts? Do you support policies to support accessory dwelling units, more density, transit-oriented development, and other solutions? Please elaborate.

Affordable workforce housing availability is important to the city’s health. Here is my position:

- I support the $5M that will ultimately be set aside over the next few years by Greenville City Council for the Greenville Housing Trust Fund. Furthermore, expecting this fund to make a positive difference in housing affordability, I expect my support will continue.
- I am convinced that support for our transit system will grow; So, I support transit-oriented development.
- It is my understanding that Council and staff are discussing going to the bond market to realize upfront monies to fund affordable housing and public transportation. I am very much open to seeing what that would look like.
- Density must be handled deliberately. I believe that unchecked growth will have a negative impact on the quality of life enjoyed by citizens working and living downtown and for those living in our neighborhoods. Balance is key.
- Finally, land banking is a key tool to addressing affordability. I will support the City's efforts to look to acquire vacant and blighted land in targeted neighborhoods for the purpose of adding affordable housing on those parcels.
The City of Greenville and Greenville County are growing rapidly. Some of our new neighbors are retirees, but most come here to take jobs because of our success in economic development. As we create jobs, demand for housing increases. How will you balance the desire to preserve our city's character, continue economic development, and protect our city-center neighborhoods while balancing the need to provide decent, affordable housing to our city's residents.

Balance is key. Greenville’s future depends on a successful balance between economic development, growth, neighborhoods and affordability.

- **Growth** must add value to the very people who live and work here. Therefore, I will advocate for a more deliberative process to growth by updating and utilizing zoning and planning tools.
- I will work to continue increasing investments in our **neighborhoods**, green spaces and neighborhood community parks.
- I will work with economic developers to ensure they have the tools necessary to **continue growing jobs**, opportunities for our citizens and the economy.
- I will support City **housing** initiatives, create a first-class **transit** system that provides citizens with access to jobs, healthcare and education, and work with the hospitality industry and business community to ensure workers can affordably get to work and park.
The Greenville Chamber and the City of Greenville have partnered for decades to face and tackle issues important to Greenville. Where do you see important areas on which to collaborate between the City and the business community? What experience do you have to ensure successful collaboration in these areas?

Areas
Areas on which to collaborate are numerous and many. Although this is not an exhaustive list, let me name a few.

- Job Creation: Partner to look for ways to support small businesses, professional job recruitment, entrepreneurship, and economic development
- Affordability: Work together to find housing solutions
- Public Transportation: Collaborate to create first class transit system
- Talent Recruitment: Partner to recruit sector leaders to Greenville

Experience
I have spent my entire professional career creating and leading key strategic partnerships between the business community and government to tackle important issues. Now, I will do the same as a member of City Council.

Because of our rapid growth, the city’s infrastructure is being tested as never before. What will you do as a City Council member to address items such as road and sewer infrastructure, and what experience do you have to address this issue?

I will work to provide an annual significant investment in road and sewer infrastructure, as it is vital to the well being of a community.

Roads must be maintained for three reasons: Roads must be safe; they must allow for commercial vehicles to move products efficiently; and roads must be maintained to incent economic development.

Providing effective sewer infrastructure is essential to meet the needs of a growing economy. Without the proper infrastructure, companies, including professional jobs, will look elsewhere to grow or relocate.

Experience:
I have nearly 20 years of experience working on infrastructure issues, which include seven years at the Greenville Chamber, two years at the SC Chamber, and ten years with The Sunnie & DeWorken Group.
Greenville's investment in transit is significantly lower than our peer communities. (Greenville spends $3.80 per capita, Birmingham spends about $46 per capita and Columbia spends about $56 per capita.) Do you support increased funding and investment in Greenlink? If so, what would you do to address funding for Greenlink and collaboration with the County. Please outline the experience you have to help this effort.

I enthusiastically support increased funding and investment in Greenlink. On City Council, I will lead the effort to increase funding for Greenlink. I also will take a lead role as a partner with the County to continue increasing support for the transit system.

My experience in transit runs deep and wide, including the following:

- **Vice Chairman, Greenville Transit Authority**
  - Part of the team that saved GTA from insolvency
    - Initiated the FBI to investigate the incompetent management
    - Fired management team and executive director
    - Removed status quo chairman and replaced to seek change
    - Moved GTA under management of the City
    - Brought solvency and sustainability back to the embattled system
- **History of successfully collaborating**
  - My entire career and volunteer history is founded in collaboration
  - I will use this skill to work closely with County Council to continue increased support
A major issue over the next decade will be the redevelopment of the 37 acres at County Square. The Chamber believes this is a transformative economic development project for both Greenville County and the City of Greenville. How will you work with the County to ensure completion of this project?

Though there have been some political bumps, I don’t believe the completion of this project is at question. What I do believe and agree with is that is a transformative project.

Because this development will have a significant impact on Greenville for generations to come, it is imperative that I, along with Council, planning staff, and stakeholders work closely with the County and the developers to ensure that this development serves as an asset to and remains in the spirit of our great community.

Furthermore, we must continue to address issues that are byproducts of significant growth, such as this development. Those issues include the following: We must recruit more professional jobs to Greenville to ensure office space downtown is filled; we must ensure parking is adequate for this development and that it does not negatively impact other businesses or the Greenville Drive; And, because this development will have an impact on traffic, we must find solutions to the increased traffic that we will see because of this development and others.

The issue of business license fees is a recurring battle in Columbia that pits the local business community against the City of Greenville. Are you open to streamlining and standardizing the process, and will you be open to compromise with the business community to find a solution that will be acceptable to both business and the City?

Yes.