

**Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods City Commission 2017 General Election Candidate Questionnaire**  
**Dr. Mike Anderson**

Name, E-mail address, best phone number to contact you

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1. Have you ever attended a LAN meeting? Why/Why not?

- I have not. At the ELNA meetings Cindy always did such a wonderful job of summarizing the meetings. I also routinely look at your meeting minutes on your website. My goal is certainly to start making more.

2. What is your opinion of LAN?

- I appreciate any association that looks to better Lawrence. More specifically, I appreciate that LAN strives to encourage the cooperation of neighborhoods. Social cohesion is an important aspect of any city.

3. Does your neighborhood have a neighborhood organization? If yes, are you a member?

- Yes it does. And yes, I am a member. I'm on the board of the East Lawrence Neighborhood Association

4. What community organizations are/have you been involved in?

- I have emceed or assisted in the fundraisers for several not-for-profits in Lawrence. I have worked closely with Visiting Nurses, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club of Lawrence, Lawrence Humane Society, Lawrence Memorial Hospital Endowment, The Ballard Center, Douglas County CASA, Lawrence Arts Center, Van Go Inc. I might be forgetting others. In November I'll be working with Just Food. I also am hoping to be a board member for Stop Gap.

5. What city or county boards/commissions have you served on? If none, why do you think you're qualified to be a city commissioner?

- I have yet to serve on one. I have been fortunate to be endorsed by several former city and county commissioners, and even former Kansas Governor, Kathleen Sebelius. I've asked them what makes a successful city commissioner. And they all say the same thing, 1) the ability to research and sort through a plethora of information, and 2) the ability to listen. These are two of my strongest attributes. I received my PhD in Communication Studies from KU. I have a first authored publication in a peer reviewed academic journal and have published in several academic books. I am highly proficient in research methods. I even taught research methods at the collegiate level. I can determine good arguments, good methodologies, and good evidence from bad ones. I can make a decision that is best for all of Lawrence and not just a small group of people. I also have a strong knowledge of the city. Please keep in mind that for the last six years I worked in a newsroom. Through my work at Channel 6 I was able to initiate a lot of relationships in this town and really get a grasp of the pulse of the city.

6. Would you support gathering the zip codes of employees from businesses that receive tax abatements, in order to determine if we're providing jobs for workers in Lawrence/Douglas County? If so, would you work to implement this policy, if elected? If not, why not?

- In many ways I consider myself a scientist. And in any good study you need to discover a way to effectively conceptualize and operationalize your variables. I have no problem gathering zip codes. It is important that we have the ability to gauge the success and failures of any decision.
7. Would you support gathering information from Peaselee Tech regarding job placement of graduates in order to determine that they are filling jobs in Lawrence/Douglas County? If so, would you work to implement this, if elected? If not, why not?
- I believe my answer for question 6 would mirror my answer for this question.
8. What qualities and skills would you look for in a planning commissioner?
- 1) An analytical mind, 2) the ability to listen, 3) a strong grasp of city issues and ordinances, 4) ability to recognize common decision making biases, 5) dedication to the city.
9. What qualities and skills would you look for in a BZA commissioner?
- The same qualities listed in question 8. The only thing I'd add is relevant experience in the field of zoning. Being on this commission requires a more specific knowledge and skill set. Therefore I'd hope that a commissioner had specific and relevant job experience in this field.
10. Does Lawrence need a convention center downtown? If yes, what public incentives (if any) would you support to build it? If you don't support it, why not?
- It needs a conference center downtown. I'd certainly approve tax incentives for such a project. I cannot begin to describe how important a conference center would be towards the city. One need only to look at the economic impact of the Manhattan conference center had on that city. A conference center would greatly help retail, especially downtown. Lawrence is missing out on a huge opportunity by not having one.
11. Do you support the use of public incentives to facilitate development of a grocery store in the Borders building? Why/ Why not?
- It's not just a grocery store. It will also feature several units of affordable housing. So yes, I support the use of public incentives in this case. The grocery store would benefit the hundreds of people who now live downtown, it would benefit the majority of residents in East Lawrence, and every resident in North Lawrence.
12. If a development that receives public incentives includes affordable housing, how long should the housing remain available as "affordable"?
- This answer depends on several variables including the amount and type of public incentives. Ideally as long as possible.
13. How would you like to see Neighborhood Revitalization Act incentives used in the future?
- On projects that will enhance overall quality of life in areas or properties that the community values. NRA's are an effective tool to increase the tax base, which should currently be our key goal. The city, county, and school district have no upfront costs and still get the same amount of tax revenue they did on the original

unimproved property. Currently I think we're doing fairly well on using these incentives. Last year 5 companies received NRA rebates. And once the NRA expires the taxes realized would be 255% more than what the properties would have generated if they were left as is.

14. Review the 2018-2022 Capital Improvement Plan. Identify 3 items that you think Lawrence can live without over the next five years and why.

- As a City Commissioner my job would be to go through all of these and have a discussion with the city staff to determine a why now answer. Because I have not done that I can't give you a definitive answer. However, with the knowledge I currently have I would choose: 1) 765 Single axle dump truck replacement – it's not scheduled to be replaced until 2021. It can go a couple more years. It's taking money from the special gas tax fund. And it's a level 4 priority, 2) Acoustic panels in SPL Gyms – can wait another year and it's \$200,000 from the general fund, 3) Combination hook lift truck – I'm always hesitant to take anything away from public works but we can live without this for another five years, and it's the lowest level priority.

15. What is your opinion regarding development in the floodplain?

- I'm okay with it as long as the development is following the cities rules and regulations for floodplain development.

16. Does the city need to connect 19th Street to Venture Park? Why/Why not?

- Venture Park needs a second exit. If engineers believe 19<sup>th</sup> street is the most logical place for that exit then I am currently fine with that. I read Mr. Almon's letter to the city. It contains some wonderful arguments. However, at this time with the information I have I struggle to see a clear second option for the Venture Park exit. But I'm open to hearing arguments.

17. Does the city need to create specific regulations regarding AirBnB accommodations? If so, what would you recommend? If not, why not?

- Great question. I still need to do more research in this area. I don't have a definite answer at this time.

18. Would you support the state's proposal for a whitewater rafting park at Clinton Lake, which would be funded by STAR bonds? Why/Why not?

- Possibly. Their other establishments in North Carolina has shown economic promise. I'm certainly open to the idea. But I still have so many questions that haven't been answered. I can't make a definitive statement at this time with the information that I have.

19. Have you reviewed the draft Horizon 2020 update? If yes, what is your overall opinion of it? If no, why not?

- I appreciate the updated annexation policies and expectations to require demonstrating a need for growth in chapter 4. That indeed strengthens the connection between Capital Improvement Planning and supporting growth. This also aligns stronger with the chapter on growth and development. I also appreciate how Chapter seven on Industrial & Employment related land use puts a stronger emphasis on creating employment opportunities. And of course you know I'm happy to see the economic development chapter put a stronger emphasis on job creation and development. Business expansion and retention is one of the most important goals for Lawrence. I feel very strongly about issues 2, 7, 8, 9, & 16.

20. Do you support getting rid of the synthetic ice rink at the library? Why/Why not?

- If elected, getting rid of that rink will be the first thing I do. If I have to sell it myself on Ebay I will. Words cannot express how much I despise that rink. It's the worst \$100,000 the city has ever spent in the history of humankind.

21. Do you support the fireworks ban? If so, what, specifically, would you recommend to provide more effective enforcement? If not, why not?

- I do. But I would love to see if we have the ability to lift the ban on July 4<sup>th</sup> from 9-11pm. That would give anybody with PTSD time to prepare and would still allow people the chance to celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup>.

22. Should the City take over the maintenance of sidewalks from individual property owners, thus sharing the cost city-wide? If yes, how would you suggest it be funded? If no, why not?

- Not at this time. No. Places where the city pays 100% of the sidewalk cost don't always have better sidewalks. In several cases, the quality of the sidewalk is worse in these towns. That being said I'm very open to hearing about different sidewalk repair options. In the future I could see Lawrence going to a property owner opt-in fee paid into a "concrete utility fund" similar to Englewood, Colorado. Or perhaps an allocation program based on modal split objectives similar to San Luis Obispo. While these cities have a population that is a fraction of Lawrence, certainly these ideas are something worth exploring. At the present moment I'd like to see us focus on improving the current system. I understand that all sidewalks aren't equal. Some sidewalks are major arteries leading to schools or public facilities, and some property owners might not have the physical or monetary capabilities of fixing their sidewalks. I support any program that would allow residents to apply for financial assistance. I also believe there is more the city can do to make the process easier on residents. Perhaps the city has a master services agreement with 2-3 businesses, or at the very least provides resources to allow residents to quickly and efficiently receive cost estimates from businesses.

23. One of the city's critical success factors in the Strategic Plan includes the following:

*Commitment to Core Services :Core municipal services reflect legal mandates and the City's commitment to meet health, safety and welfare needs and maintain assets while adapting service levels to meet evolving community expectations.*

Please identify what you consider to be core services and how they should be funded.

- The must haves. Fire, medical, police (public safety), water/wastewater, mental health. Funded through the general fund.

24. Do you think the city commission should add the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting per month back on its schedule? Why/Why not?

- I don't. I think Mr. Markus is right in this. It's not a standard practice with other towns and I have yet to hear a solid convincing argument why it needs to be back on the schedule.

25. Do you support or oppose each of the three sales tax initiatives? Why/Why not?.

Q1: Public Transit

- I haven't decided yet. I still have to November 7<sup>th</sup>. I am leaning towards support. I wish we had the hub decided before this vote. I do believe public transit is very important. Some businesses like Cottonwood rely

heavily on the “T.” I do think we already have a fair amount of funding going towards transportation, which is why I have yet to decide.

#### Q2: Infrastructure

- Support. Through my door knocking I have found that infrastructure is the number 1 concern of Lawrence citizens. And I do believe this sales tax initiative would help.

#### Q3: Affordable Housing

- Oppose. We do not have a plan in place for affordable housing. How can we tax the public without a plan. This doesn't sunset until 2019. Let's take it off the ballot. Let's spend the year coming up with a plan, find out how much it will cost, and then ask the taxpayer for an increase in that exact amount next year. It's problematic that \$10.5 million will just be up in the air with no plan. 10.5 is such a round number that it scares me.

26. Tell us something you hear out on the campaign trail that we haven't asked and how you address it.

- The number one question I get asked is, are you a democrat or republican. I don't know if other candidates get asked this or if it's something about me. But that question really bothers me. I always tell people when asked that it is a non-partisan election, and I believe my ideologies and ideas are beneficial to all people of Lawrence. I like this race because people are forced to vote on the issues and a candidate's expertise. It bothers me that not only 14% of Lawrence votes, but that a large portion of those seem to care about my political affiliation. I also wish people wouldn't see me as just, “that talk show host guy.” I have to work very hard to combat that stigma. That is why I never crack jokes and remain very serious whenever I talk. I hope people don't vote on what I do, but rather what I can do for this city.

27. Is there a particular issue you're passionate about that hasn't been covered that you'd like to tell us about?

- Yes. We need to do more asset management at KU. There needs to be a stronger relationship between the city, KU, and the Peaslee center. I would like to see a position created that acts as a liaison between the three and works with Julie Nagel at the BTBC on a entrepreneurship program aimed at encouraging and aiding in entrepreneurship for current individuals in Lawrence and especially individuals graduating from KU. Also, their role will involve recruiting other start-ups to come to Lawrence to grow their business. Lawrence could be the hub for animal pharmaceuticals and aerospace engineering. We could have Peaslee teach courses in these areas (like C++ programming, coding, working pipettes) so that the workforce is here. A strong entrepreneurship program is vital towards economic vitality. One of the main reasons Google brought so many jobs to Boulder, Colorado is because of the current nature of entrepreneurship in that town, and the amount of start-ups that are growing and starting in that area. What a tremendous way to grow the tax base. Lawrence needs to do more to encourage start-ups like merchtable.com to start and grow in Lawrence.

28. Tell us a secret about yourself.

- Ummmm? I assume this is a trick question. So I don't think you're looking for a standard answer such as “I can't swim” or “I didn't kiss a girl until 9<sup>th</sup> grade.” Perhaps you're looking for me to say that I don't have any secrets, thus convincing you that I believe in transparency and would be a very open commissioner. I thought about saying no, in the chance you want me to solely focus on the issues. But that seems too negative and cutting. So my answer is: you first.