

Watchmen Voter Guide for City of Hayden: City Council - Seat 2

** Click on each candidate's name to see their completed questionnaire **

	Richard 'Dick' Panabaker	Nicole Barnett	Ed DePriest
<p>1. What is your name, what office are you running for and why are you running for this position?</p>	Declined to Respond	Declined to Respond	<p>My name is Ed DePriest and I am running for Seat #2 on the Hayden City Council.</p> <p>I am running for the Hayden City Council because I am seeing the city that I live in, as well as the entire area of north Idaho, turn into what I escaped from 27 years ago in southern California.</p> <p>I see poorly planned growth overwhelming and deteriorating the quality of life that I moved here for. I see growth not paying for growth and a future of higher taxes, fees, Bonds, etc... being placed on the current residents to pay for the increasingly stressed infrastructure and services that this poorly planned growth and density is bringing.</p> <p>I see increasingly grid-locked roads, schools crowded beyond capacity, infrastructure, services, sewer, solid waste, recreational areas, etc... being overwhelmed and unable to stay up with the growth.</p> <p>I hear the Sheriff, Fire Chiefs, and Courts talking about the demands that this poorly managed and planned growth is bringing and will continue to bring. I ask,,, who and how, is this going to be paid for?</p> <p>I want to change the direction that the current representatives are taking Hayden and try and keep what has historically been a small town feel that Hayden has been known for.</p>
<p>2. How could our city be improved? Please provide your top 2-3 ideas.</p>	Declined to Respond	Declined to Respond	<p>In my opinion, the most important issue is to get a grasp on the growth issue and the deteriorating quality of life that is coming with the growth. The most visible is the traffic, but also the overcrowding of the schools and every public place. The services and infrastructure are not able to keep up with the growth and taxes and fees are going to be increasingly used to pay for the needs. Public Safety (Sheriff, Fire, EMS) are not able to meet their service standards.</p> <p>To deal with the growth, I will continue to work to amend the current 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map, which are facilitating the dense development. The current plan is designed to facilitate a population of 36,000 in the next 15-20 years. Hayden is currently around 16,000 people. The current plan has Mixed Use (apartment type multi-family dwellings) surrounding and bisecting the city, and is intended to be the primary vehicle to facilitate the largest percentage of the projected 36,000 people. That needs to be amended to lower density and larger lots to preserve some space as the city extends west into the prairie.</p> <p>Many people have heard the term 'tax shift.' We are told that property taxes are increasing because there is an imbalance of tax liability between homeowners and business. I will work to encourage the city to zone for, and actively recruit, more business and light industrial, especially in the area around the airport. More business will shift the tax burden to a more balanced level between homeowners and business.</p> <p>I am for strict scrutiny of the budget. I believe that the responsibilities of the city should be the public safety (Sheriff, Fire, EMS), zoning and building, roads, sewers, water, solid waste, and a quality Park and Recreation department. I will focus on those areas and work to ensure that the public safety agencies are funded to allow them to meet their service standards.</p>

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3. What are your views on the rapid growth of North Idaho? How should the city council manage growth?	Declined to Respond	Declined to Respond	<p>As I wrote in question #2, rapid growth is the most important issue facing our city. I'm going to sound like the proverbial broken record, but the city council needs to amend the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map, which is currently, (as much as the planning dept and current council will deny it) designed to accommodate the projected population of 36,000 people in the next 15-20 years. If you look at the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) you will see purple surrounding and bisecting the city. That purple is Mixed Use type. Mixed Use type is basically apartment type residential with the recommendation of commercial on the first floor. It is designed to facilitate high density residential housing. Mixed Use needs to be removed and the city should stay with the 2019 Zone Map. As has been done in the past, if a developer/builder wants to build a project that is not within the zoning, they can present their project and request a variance or exception, or the legal classification. The city council will then consider the project and determine if it is responsible growth and in the best interest of the city and the people at that point in time. Does it benefit the city? Is it needed by the city? How will it affect the quality of life in the city? How will it affect the infrastructure and services? Will it pay for itself? How will it affect traffic? How will it affect the schools, recreation areas, natural resources, etc...?</p> <p>Hayden has historically been a small-town feel, somewhat bedroom community. It has been primarily single-family homes and larger lots, with rural and agricultural land to the west. The city council should attempt to maintain as much of that lifestyle as possible.</p>
4. In your opinion what best serves the public, elected officials, or appointed officials?	Declined to Respond	Declined to Respond	<p>I believe that elected officials are best for the public. I know that the county is having this debate currently. Elected officials provide accountability and allow the people that they serve and represent to remove them, through the vote, if the elected officials do not represent the desires of the people.</p>
5. What role should the city council have in the design and authorization of new developments?	Declined to Respond	Declined to Respond	<p>The city council is responsible for the continuity of the city. Zoning, development, building standards and densities have a profound affect on the day-to-day quality of life in the city. Management of the affects of development on the entire city is the key to decision making related to development.</p> <p>Zoning has been the tool of management for decades, if not centuries. The landowner has Property Rights, which in my opinion, is the right to use his/her/their property however they chose, as long as it meets the zoning allowed. The role of the city council should be to evaluate developments on their impact on the community. Will the development benefit the city and the people? What affect will the development have on the traffic, schools, infrastructure and services, etc...</p>
6. In your opinion, should any services currently provided by the city be cut, eliminated, or privatized?	Declined to Respond	Declined to Respond	<p>I believe that the city should be responsible for public safety, maintenance of the roads, sewers, water, and solid waste systems. The city should also develop and manage the annexation, development, and building of land and structures. I also believe that a quality Park and Recreation department is important to the city.</p> <p>From what I have seen in relation to the city of Hayden, I would take a close look at the level of staffing of all departments and scrutinize the expenditures of each department. Without having the opportunity and access to the inner workings of each department, it is difficult, and I believe, short-sighted, to make suggestions without being fully informed and having hard data to make such important decisions.</p>

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7. Do you believe access to city managed water and sewer should be increased to rural communities and why?	Declined to Respond	Declined to Respond	<p>To be honest, I'm somewhat unsure of the question. As I understand it, currently, most "rural" areas are in the county and are five acre lots that are on septic and water well. Not knowing every city's code, I believe that most require hook up to city water and sewer when annexed into the city.</p> <p>Most "rural" areas are integrated into city water and sewer systems through the annexation process. When a landowner or developer wants access to the water and sewer, they apply for annexation and connection to the water and sewer.</p> <p>If, for some reason, rural areas within a city, which are currently not on city water and sewer, want to be connected, then that property owner should bear all of the costs to hook into the city systems, and then pay the usual cost of service.</p>
8. How do you plan on keeping a healthy reserve fund but not raising taxes?	Declined to Respond	Declined to Respond	<p>Hopefully, the city has a reserve fund that is presently healthy. Once at that "healthy" point, taxes should be calculated to meet the operation expenses of the city. The reserve fund should be for emergency situations, not as a shortfall fund. Raising taxes should not be connected to the reserve fund. The calculations of taxes should be based on the projected budget needs. Keeping the taxes down is accomplished by prudent and responsible management of the city services.</p>
9. What is your opinion of the increased push for affordable housing?	Declined to Respond	Declined to Respond	<p>Affordable housing is a serious issue in our city and county. The events of the last two years have accelerated the migration of people to the area from all over the country, and the world to some extent. This influx of people, most with housing budgets of, on average, \$750K (Redfin), has created a situation where many residents are now unable to afford the cost of housing. This is the result of those coming having the available resources/budgets which have allowed them to engage in bidding wars, often overbidding an asking price by \$100K or more, which has driven the prices up. The average price of a home is in the mid-to-high \$400K's. Most workers in the area cannot afford the prices based on the wages that they earn.</p> <p>What is "affordable" housing? What is the price? What does the dwelling look like? How many square feet, bedroom and bathrooms? What size lot? What amenities, etc...?</p> <p>Then, what is the target population that cannot afford the current housing? What are their demographics? What is their income? What can they afford for a down payment? What kind of monthly PITI/rent and living expenses can they afford?</p> <p>Then, the big question is: Can, or will, builders build homes at the prices that the target market can afford? Where will these dwelling be built? How will these dwelling affect the city?</p> <p>I think that the housing market will level off at some point in time, but, barring an economic downturn of some proportion, prices will not drop to the "affordable" level for most residents who now cannot afford housing. If we do have such a downturn, and prices do drop, that target population will be the first to be affected financially, so it really probably won't help.</p> <p>I do not believe in subsidized housing, as that is really taxpayer dollars going to the developers and/or landlords through the front or back door. However you look at it, the subsidization is tax dollars that are either given as some form of tax credit to developers, which is tax money that never goes into the fund, or if direct payments to occupants, it is tax dollars from the fund. Either way, it is the taxpayer having to pay more taxes to fund the subsidization.</p> <p>I believe the way to help find housing for those who cannot afford it, is to bring jobs that pay higher wages than the target population is now making. So many are working relatively low paying service jobs. Those workers must be educated and/or trained for higher skilled jobs.</p>

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10. How should the public's input be taken into consideration and implemented in the decision-making process?	Declined to Respond	Declined to Respond	<p>The most obvious, and which has worked extremely well in Hayden, is the old-fashioned encouragement to attend council, planning, and other city meetings and email with ideas and concerns. In Hayden, we have affected change already, and it is because the people have awakened and started attending meetings, emailing, calling, and getting involved.</p> <p>With social media being so integrated in our lives today, the most effective way to integrate public input is to have a presence on Facebook, or a website, etc... I founded a FB group: Responsible North Idaho Growth, and it serves to facilitate information exchange. I would create the same format for the citizens to easily learn about information, events, issues, etc...</p> <p>Periodic Town Hall type meetings give people the opportunity to express themselves.</p> <p>Voting is the most effective tool for the public to affect change or to place people who will represent them in representative positions.</p> <p>All input from citizen's should be considered. The substance and validity of the public input should be seriously considered, and if productive and reasonable, initiated into the adoption process.</p>
11. Is there anything in your personal or business life that would be a conflict of interest in your ability to serve the people of this city?	Declined to Respond	Declined to Respond	Absolutely not. I am a retired school teacher and continue to coach football at the high school. I am not involved in any business or ventures that I could foresee coming before the council, and if I did, I would recuse myself.
12. Should the concept of "equitable outcome" be implemented as a part of the city council's decision-making process? Why or why not?	Declined to Respond	Declined to Respond	No. This is the United States of America and I believe that people should have an equal opportunity to reach for the highest level that they can. All outcomes should be based on the efforts, skills, and qualifications of the individual. In my life, and my world, he/she who prepares and works the hardest will reap the rewards of their efforts. The same is true for the decision-making process. Who, or what, is the most qualified, or best for the city, should be rewarded. Whether something is more or less "equal" for someone, or something, should not come into the equation.
13. What role should the health board play in the city council's decision-making process?	Declined to Respond	Declined to Respond	<p>This is a vague question, as there are a myriad of potential public health issues. Are we talking about the plague, measles, lice, or masks and vaccines?</p> <p>I believe that the state and then county and/or Panhandle Health have the jurisdiction on public health issues. I believe that any public health situation serious enough to get to the level of a City Council having to interject itself, would certainly have been addressed at the state, county, and/or Panhandle Health level before reaching a city level.</p> <p>I would not favor a city mandating public health decisions.</p>

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14. What is your background and why do you feel it qualifies you for this position?	Declined to Respond	Declined to Respond	<p>Although now retired, I have been a high school teacher and coach almost all of my adult life. These positions require discipline, management skills, planning, the ability to look beyond the present, organizing skills, communication skills, collaboration skills, teamwork skills, perseverance, and sacrificing personal desires for the good of the team.</p> <p>I started a group in January: Responsible North Idaho Growth. That group currently has approximately 3,200 people. In the city of Hayden, I have attended and spoken at almost every City Council meeting and have attended and spoken at many Planning Commission meetings.</p> <p>I have educated myself as to the workings of the city, but most specifically, have educated myself as to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map. Through attendance and motivating the people, we have succeeded in convincing the mayor and current council members to pause and agree to revisit housing and density elements of the Comp Plan and Future Land Use Map.</p> <p>I graduated from the University of Idaho with a 3.9 GPA, which, in my opinion indicates that I have the ability to learn what I might not know. I understand financing, budgeting, staffing, and personnel management.</p> <p>I believe that my life experiences, as well as teaching and coaching experience, and the above skills will serve me when it comes to the demands of a Councilman.</p>