

Lincoln Chamber of Commerce Candidate Questionnaire



James Herrold – District 4

1. The Citizen’s Transportation Coalition recommended an increase in the local option sales tax to help finance Lincoln’s streets infrastructure needs. Are you supportive of the proposed quarter-cent sales tax increase?

I hope Lincoln voters defeat the sales tax increase. Our streets need attention and have needed it for years. But we don’t need new money - we need a new strategy. I will look diligently for waste in the budget and inefficiencies in our current processes for building and maintaining roads. I will examine the best practices of other cities and counties using their best ideas to improve Lincoln’s streets. We can have better roads without increasing tax rates.

2. The City receives approximately \$.16 of every dollar a city property owner pays in property taxes. What action would you take given the double-digit increase in proposed residential property valuations?

I will craft and champion budget policies that return more of the people’s money to them or let them keep more of it in the first place. This includes reducing the mill levy on properties so taxes on those properties do not increase and even go down. I will insist LPS and Lancaster County officials do the same. I will reject any policy that attempts to find special, unnecessary projects to spend any “windfall”. It is the people’s money.

3. What strategies would you pursue to keep the city affordable to live in?

To address issues of affordability (e.g. housing costs), we must address root problems. Property and sales taxes, land-use restrictions, and restrictive zoning are all burdens the government puts on us making everything from clothing to housing more expensive. Reducing these burdens is the only real way to address the issue of making Lincoln a more affordable place to live.

4. Lincoln is expected to receive additional revenue from internet sales tax collections. What should the City of Lincoln do with the additional revenues?

Revenues from sales taxes on products purchased online should go to the general fund like other sales tax revenues. This new revenue should not be used for new, special projects. Instead, it should be used to broaden the base and, where feasible, lower overall tax rates.

5. What do you see as the City’s role in retaining incumbent businesses and attracting new businesses and employees?

We should make sure the local economy is attractive to new businesses. Government can do that in a variety of ways, but the best things we can do are keep taxes low and not have burdensome regulations that would be unattractive to new businesses and force existing businesses out. Lowering taxes will also make Lincoln a more affordable place to live and work, which will, in turn, attract and retain employees for businesses.

6. What will you do to drive innovation in the Lincoln community?

Innovation often comes from the bottom up. I have much more faith in the everyday people living in the community to innovate in their own ways than I do in city managers and planners to dictate what that innovation should look like. I will, however, look to other cities’ best practices (e.g. snow removal procedures, road repair techniques, efficient and effective law enforcement, etc) to learn from them. I also encourage people with ideas to go to the city council meetings to share their ideas, especially during the open microphone sessions.