



LAWRENCE BOARD OF REALTORS®

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2021 CITY COMMISSION CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: Milton Scott
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Biographical Information

Occupation: Retired Housing Administrator/ Working part time as a Juvenile Corrections Officer with Douglas County Criminal Justice Services

Previous Government Experience: N/A

Involvement in Community Activities:

- Treasurer, Lawrence Justice Matters 2019 – current
- Chair, Trustees' Ministry, Ninth Street Missionary Baptist Church 2012 - 2019 and 1997 - 2000
- Chair, Ninth Street Missionary Outreach Center/ Executive Committee 2003 – present
- Chair, Douglas County Community Corrections Advisory Board 2012 – 2016, and Co-Chair 1992 -1993
- Member, Boys and Girls Club of Lawrence Board of Directors, 2009 – 2013
- Chair, Lawrence Free State High School Site Council 2005 – 2006
- Member, 7th District Judicial Nominating Commission 2004 – 2007
- President, League of Women Voters Lawrence-Douglas County 2001 -2002; 2000 – 2001 and 1996 - 1997
- Chair, Lawrence Housing Practitioners' Panel 2002
- Chair, Sunset Hill Elementary School Site Council
- Member, League of Women Voters of the United States Diversity Implementation Task Force 1997
- Member, Lawrence's Project Phoenix Gang Related Task Force 1994 – 1997
- Vice-Chair and Member, Lawrence Housing and Appeals Advisory Board 1988 - 1994
- Member, University of Kansas Commission on the Status of Women 1986

Positions on Important Issues

Priority Issues:

1. What are your three top public policy priorities if you are elected to the City Commission?

Affordable Housing
City Utility Rates
Infrastructure
Job Opportunities

Housing Affordability:

2. What does "housing affordability" mean to you?

A household that is paying 40% or less of their income for rent or mortgage.

3. In 2018, the Commission received the results of the BBC Housing Market Analysis. Among other things, that study told us:

- Between 2001 and 2018, Lawrence saw an 85% increase in the median price of sold and listed homes (Section II, page 9);
- An affordably priced home using the HUD 80% MFI (the definition adopted in Plan 2040 for "affordable housing") for Lawrence in 2019 is \$180,000 (Figure II-13, Section II, page 12);
- Nearly 50% of non-student renters in Lawrence want to buy a home and could afford a home priced between \$110,000 and \$262,000 (Section II, page 12);

Since then, housing prices have steadily increased in Lawrence while inventory has declined. How would you suggest Lawrence address this availability and affordability gap?

I believe there are opportunities for private and public partnership development to build affordable housing utilizing such programs as Section 42 Low-income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), Section 142 Tax Exempt Private Equity Bonds, Section 202 Housing for the elderly, Section 811 Housing for persons with disabilities, the Housing Trust Fund or Multifamily Tax Subsidy Project. Also, at least 15% of HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funds are set aside for specific type of nonprofits called a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO). A CHDO is a private nonprofit, community-based organization that has the capacity to develop affordable housing for the community it serves. The federal government encourages opportunities for a consortium whereby local governmental entities are able to join together and explore partnership for affordable housing programs in its region. The City should encourage any and all potential public/private development partnerships. In addition, the City should educate the community and the private sector of such housing program opportunities.

The City should also encourage utilization, to the maximum extent possible, federal funds to promote and offset homeownership subsidy opportunities, i.e., Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA).

4. The Lawrence Board of Realtors® believes that everyone in Lawrence should have access to safe, affordable housing and that everyone should be able to experience homeownership within their means. Meeting the demand for moderately priced housing is difficult. The City of Lawrence has identified Affordable Housing as a major priority. Do you support new development policies that increase the cost of residential development? Please explain.

I think that this is an opportunity for the City to encourage a reassessment of development site plans that encourage more affordable types of family housing both as rentals and units for purchase, such as duplexes, triplexes and/or fourplexes.

In addition, I support the review of current local utility rates. On September 24, 2020 the Lawrence-Journal World reported that the average 2020 utility bills in Lawrence is higher than in most small metro areas. In fact, Lawrence ranked in the top 20 for highest utility bill averages. Due to the higher-than-average utility rates coupled with an expensive housing market, lower income households generally experience a much larger financial impact.

Would you support new development policies that would incentivize new residential development meeting market demand to supply workforce housing at \$250,000 or less? Please explain.

I would support this. The two issues mentioned above could be part of the solution. In addition, the city should encourage new development that is part of a long-term strategy in its development and planning.

Energy Efficiency

5. In March 2020, the City of Lawrence adopted Ordinance 9744, establishing a goal of 100% clean, renewable energy in all municipal operations by 2025 and city-wide by 2030. The Kansas Legislature pre-empted this ordinance during the 2021 session with the Energy Choice Act. What is your opinion regarding clean energy policies and how should we balance environmentally conscious policies with the rising cost of housing and utilities?

I support policies that will reduce energy costs for Lawrence residents and would support studying how best to achieve that while using or switching to more sustainable forms of energy.

Sidewalks

6. The City of Lawrence has implemented a policy requiring landowners to maintain and repair sidewalks on their property or the City will do so at the landowner's expense. Do you support this policy? Please explain.

I do not think this is the best approach. In recognizing that good sidewalks benefit neighborhoods, I believe the City should not add any additional expenses to the landowners. Instead, this is an opportunity for the City to offer a limited source of funding to offset upkeep of the sidewalk repair geared especially to the elderly through its current street maintenance funds or other potential resources as a means to assist.

Economic Development:

7. In 2012, the Lawrence City Commission and the Douglas County Commission approved a proposal submitted by the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce to create the Joint Economic Development Council that is responsible for a wide range of economic development activities in our community. Do you support this partnership, and do you support the continued funding of the Joint Economic Development Council? Do you intend to promote economic development in the City of Lawrence and Douglas County? Please explain your answer.

The City of Lawrence and Douglas County both should encourage regional efforts to achieve further economic development opportunities by bringing other communities in the region to the table, i.e., Baldwin City, the City of Eudora, the City of Lecompton and the City of Topeka. Thus, I support the continuation of the Joint Economic Development Council because it allows for the City and County to pull its resources and to garner collaboration and cooperation opportunities. The promotion of economic development in the City of Lawrence and Douglas County is a goal that I have set. Job opportunities are one of the topmost priorities of my campaign.

8. When appropriate, do you support the use of economic development incentives (such as industrial revenue bonds, tax abatements, rebates, community improvement districts, etc.) to attract or retain jobs and economic development investments in our community? Please explain your answer.

Each development or redevelopment should be assessed for incentives on its own merits. The use of economic development incentives must provide measurable benefits for the City, USD #497 and the County. In addition, the City, USD #497 and the County must be vigilant about making sure that the desired outcomes have been obtained. I also support a measure to have the Public Incentives Review Committee (PIRC) annually review each development incentive and report its findings back to the City Commission and other governing bodies. This will help guide the City, USD #497 and the County in ultimately approving any future development incentives.

9. How would you propose to balance the need for economic development and increasing density in our City with preservation of the City's character and historic resources and monuments?

The City should encourage new development that is strategic in development and planning and simultaneously the City needs to be very cognizant of historic buildings and areas and preserve them even if repurposing is necessary. Lawrence's historic architecture should be preserved.

City Budget Issues and Property Taxes:

10. In terms of your priorities on the City Commission, how highly would you prioritize your commitment to decreasing, or limiting future increases in the mill levy rate?

I am strongly committed to maintaining the current mill levy or limiting any future increase in the mill levy rate.

Thank you for your valuable time and cooperation in completing this candidate questionnaire. Your response will be greatly appreciated and will be distributed to our membership so they can make an adequate judgment on the merits of the candidates. Please return this questionnaire to our office by June 18, 2021.

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