

Keller Mayor Candidate Responses to Questions from Hidden Lakes Residents

Question from Hidden Lakes	Response from Mayor Tandy	Response from Pat McGrail
<p>1. Do you think your job as a member of the city council is to do what <u>you</u> think is best for Keller OR do you think your job as member of the city council is to determine and implement the wishes of the Keller citizens?</p>	<p>An elected official's job is to be responsive to his or her constituents. It is not uncommon that citizens have differing opinions on an item before the Council. That is one of the most challenging aspects of the job. Since we are elected at large, meaning, we do not have member districts, the Council must consider the benefits or drawbacks based on the community as a whole.</p>	<p>The citizens of Keller elect representatives to do the Right Thing. No responsible member of the city council should ever look at anything but the community as a whole, and after hearing from all affected parties, make a decision based on the long-term good for all the residents of Keller.</p>
<p>2. What is your long-range vision for Keller? How will you work toward that vision and communicate it with the community and fellow Council members?</p>	<p>My long term vision for Keller is to continue to recruit quality development while maintaining or lowering our tax rate. I support providing top notch police and fire, expanding our park system, and providing the best possible services to our citizens. I started the City Page in the Keller Citizen; we have both cable access and a city website. I have also favored regular town hall meetings. www.cityofkeller.com</p>	<p>I realize that my work as Mayor will be pointless unless it reflects your will and your values, and my vision for Keller is one where the values of its citizens are reflected in the actions of its leaders.</p> <p>Keller is already a beautiful mix of master-planned communities and semi-rural beauty. My personal vision for Keller is continued development of the 377 and 1709 corridors, combined with quality residential development. The ever-increasing push to develop on smaller lots needs to stop.</p> <p>We should continue the development and enhancement of our parks system. In particular, our trail system needs to be completed as soon as possible—we shouldn't wait ten to fifteen years for developers to do it for us.</p>
<p>3. What principles or strategies do you think should guide city government and how would that be put into practice?</p>	<p>All government is of the people, by the people, for the people. Citizen participation through our boards and commissions, or elected office is the best way to have a direct effect on the guiding principles. We have several members from Hidden Lakes who currently volunteer their time to the city.</p>	<p>City government needs to focus on providing the basics, and then provide the amenities its citizens want and are willing to pay for. The basics are police, fire, water, sewer and roads. Of these, only police services are at the level they should be.</p>

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<p>4. It has been said Hidden Lakes building standards are too high for development in our city. Do agree or disagree and why? Any specific examples?</p>	<p>Hidden Lakes standards are not too high! I am proud to have served on P and Z and Council during the development phases of the Hidden Lakes. It is a premiere example of an excellent planned development community.</p>	<p>When I was on council, I was deeply involved in the planning and execution of the Hidden Lakes concept. I would love to see its success replicated in the current 900-home development in North Keller. High standards are a wonderful thing to achieve.</p> <p>High standards are what make Hidden Lakes the success it is for its residents and for Keller, but there are other areas of Keller where imposing such high standards would only lead to stagnation. For example, Old Town Keller would simply become a ghost town if we tried to impose ultra-high standards. We must seek the highest standards which are practical and achievable.</p>
<p>5. Is there or will there be a retail/business office master plan like Southlake? How will you incorporate citizen input and communicate that input to the citizens and potential businesses?</p>	<p>Both Southlake and Keller have land use plans that guide their development. In fact, the process of development is very similar in both cities. Our land use plan was developed through citizen participation and public hearing over the course of a year.</p>	<p>Town Center was such a plan— unfortunately it didn't work out. Much of the prime commercial and retail land there has now been consumed by high density residential development.</p> <p>Our last best opportunity for quality retail development is in the 377 corridor north of Johnson Rd. I expect to be heavily involved in the planning of this area.</p>
<p>6. Please tell us your opinion on the Quiktrip that will be built at Bear Creek and Davis. Should it be located there since the majority of residents in Hidden Lakes opposed the plan?</p>	<p>We are at a point in our development where we can and should be selective in what we approve. All gas stations require a "specific use permit" which is designed to require a higher threshold for approval. I do <i>not</i> think the QT was the "highest and best use" for the location.</p>	<p>As I stated in Question #1, the citizens of Keller elect representatives to do the Right Thing. No responsible member of the city council should ever look at anything but the community as a whole, and after hearing from all affected parties, make a decision based on the long-term good for all the residents of Keller.</p> <p>Having said that, I feel that the Quik Trip was not compatible with the area, and I would have had a hard time supporting it. Especially given the fact that two weeks later, the council denied a similar proposal on 1709 in the heart of our commercial corridor. This is a prime example of what needs to change at city hall.</p>

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<p>7. Is there a master plan for the development of the Davis Blvd corridor in Keller? If not, what would you like to see happen there?</p>	<p>No, there is only a very small portion of Davis Blvd in the city of Keller. The development is guided by our land use plan.</p>	<p>There is not a master plan that I'm aware of. However, I would envision quality development that is compatible with the current zoning that is in place.</p>
<p>8. What plans do you have to ensure safety along Bear Creek Road between Keller Smithfield and Davis Blvd?</p>	<p>We have had some concerns raised by residents in Hidden Lakes about that stretch of road. Police Chief, Mark Hafner, has responded to requests by increasing traffic enforcement, with extra oversight during high volume recreational use. We are currently in the process of determining what our best options are given restrictions placed by state agencies.</p>	<p>Three items that I would propose for consideration are 1) signalized crosswalks at the Hidden Lakes clubhouse and at Preston, 2) reduced speed limits, and 3) increased enforcement.</p>
<p>9. How can Hidden Lakes work more closely and effectively with the City of Keller for our mutual benefit?</p>	<p>Hidden Lakes residents can continue to stay involved through volunteering to serve on our boards and commissions who advise the Council in our decision making or run for city Council! In the meantime, you should vote for candidates who most closely represent your vision and goals for Keller.</p>	<p>Given your population, I would like to see one of your residents on the city council, or at least increased participation on boards such as Planning & Zoning.</p>
<p>10. How do you feel about multi-family housing and low cost housing projects?</p>	<p>We have a variety of housing options currently available in Keller, including multi family. I would not favor any increased zoning for multi-family. I do not foresee low cost housing coming to Keller because the price of our land is too high for it to be a viable option.</p>	<p>Since its inception, Keller has enjoyed its "open spaces." Most Keller residents consider our town a peaceful haven in the ever-expanding Metroplex. I want to maintain that, and to do that, population growth must be managed. Therefore, I favor a very high percentage of LOW-density housing. The high density housing that is permitted should be of the highest possible quality.</p>

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<p>11. What will your priorities be if elected?</p>	<p>My priorities, if elected, are to continue to be pro active in business recruitment, fund all aspects of public safety, reauthorize the street maintenance tax so we can continue to repair and construct roads and expand our trails and park system.</p>	<p>1. Infrastructure and basic services. For example there should have been a Hidden Lakes fire station in service two years ago. Our lives and property are literally in jeopardy because of this failure to provide basic services. I will build this station and my goal is to improve our insurance (ISO) rating, which should lower our property insurance rates.</p> <p>2. Quality economic development. Our economic development director position was eliminated and since then we have been accepting the “low hanging fruit” that can be found in the strip malls of nearby towns. We need a full-time economic development director and we need to become more business-friendly.</p> <p>3. Taxes. For most of Ms. Tandy’s two terms, the tax rate went up. It came down a penny after the mayor’s library proposal failed. When I was on the council, the tax rate went down year after year for a total reduction of nearly 10 cents. I would like to return to those days. Unfortunately, our infrastructure has deteriorated, and the TIF district is still an unknown quantity, so I cannot promise a lower tax rate. What I can promise is dedication to a change in spending priorities with the idea of working our way back to a lower tax rate.</p>
<p>12. Mayor Tandy: What specific actions have you taken that improve Keller’s property values?</p>	<p>Implementing good development standards through our UDC (unified development code) is the single most important factor in maintaining property values. In addition, I was instrumental in developing the Keller Pointe, expanding our parks system, police expansion, and supporting the street maintenance sales tax.</p>	<p>--</p>

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<p>13. Pat McGrail: Do you agree with the actions of Mayor Tandy and Councilman Trine and what, if anything, would you do different to improve property values?</p>	<p>--</p>	<p>We as a City must maintain our Master Land Use Plan in order to continually enhance the value of existing and proposed future construction, both residential and commercial, and continually monitor all planning and zoning without granting so many exceptions to our zoning and UDC requirements or amending the Town Center concept plan for each new development.</p> <p>If I were to construe your question more broadly to include all actions, I passionately disagree with their tactics to bypass the voters on the Town Center library. Nor do I agree with their willingness to spend the taxpayers' money on public art when the Hidden Lakes fire station is years behind schedule and many miles of roads need complete reconstruction. Also, the use of kickbacks from our garbage vendor to fund the arts program is deceptive and wrong.</p>
<p>14. What is your opinion of the Uniform Development Code?</p>	<p>The UDC provides the guidelines for development. What you see today is a result of good planning which has resulted in increased property values making Keller one of the premiere communities of the area.</p>	<p>The UDC serves a useful purpose, but it has been executed with inflexibility to the extent that Keller has a reputation for being business UN-friendly. City staff are currently doing a review of the UDC. I eagerly await their recommendations.</p>
<p>15. What contributions have you made to Keller over the past two years?</p>	<p>The Mayor's job is to promote and represent the city. In that job, I believe I have been highly visible and active through my memberships in numerous organizations e.g.; NE Leadership, Chamber of Commerce, the Tarrant County 911 Board of Directors. I have traveled to conventions promoting Keller for economic development purposes and worked with individuals directly who are interested in coming to Keller. Also, I participate in many, many community events and love going to the schools throughout Keller promoting good citizenship!</p>	<p>I have served on the Citizens Bond Advisory Committee for the Keller Independent School District.</p> <p>In 2003, I stepped back to give Mayor Tandy room to lead.</p> <p>Based on her leadership of the last four years, many people in Keller have convinced me that it is time to become fully involved again. I raised my children here, I've retired here, and I'm going to stay here. Therefore I am ready to rededicate my energies full-time as mayor of Keller.</p>

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<p>16. In the debate Tuesday evening there were conflicting accounts of Mr. McGrail's support of attracting businesses into Keller (i.e. Cotton Patch restaurant and What-a-Burger) and Mr. Brown's approval of the development of Hidden Lakes sub-division. Please clarify this discrepancy.</p>	<p>On 12/01/98, Mr. McGrail made the motion to approve Cotton Patch restaurant but it included so many restrictions that they ultimately decided not to come to Keller. I sat with Mr. McGrail on the Council when he demanded that Whataburger use green awnings instead of their corporate orange and white. The day after the meeting, word spread throughout the development community that Keller was "difficult". They resubmitted after Mr. McGrail was no longer on the Council.</p>	<p>These two issues are far more complex than Mayor Tandy and Councilman Trine inferred at the candidate forum. The bottom line is that I wanted both of these developments in Keller. I would be happy to discuss the complexities of both these issues with any of Hidden Lakes' residents. I can be reached at 817/428-8481.</p>
<p>17. Are there plans to widen Rufe Snow from Bear Creek Parkway to Burseley Road and do you/would you support that street project?</p>	<p>Yes, engineering is planned after October 2007. Tarrant County has money from their successful bond program last year that may provide some funding to help offset the cost.</p>	<p>I think the expansion you are referring to is from Bear Creek Parkway to Rapp Road. I'm also pretty sure that this project, valued at about \$8 million, was included in the Tarrant County bond package passed last November. I wholeheartedly support it.</p>
<p>18. Aside from a "freedom of speech" argument, what is your opinion of the advisability and impact on the community resulting from sitting members of the City Council criticizing the Mayor and other council members on a public website?</p>	<p>One of the most difficult aspects of learning to serve in an elected position is to understand how the body functions. Issues are discussed, votes are taken, and the Council moves on. While I may not agree with everything the Council may have decided, once the vote is taken, I support that decision. When members go back and criticize the decisions of an individual or council member, it undermines the process. Many people think, and I agree, that the safety of email or computer allows people to say things they would never do so openly. I believe that face to face interaction, particularly if there is a dispute, is the most straightforward and honorable way to conduct business.</p>	<p>I am more concerned about a mayor who publicly berates a council member on television than I am a blog. When a council member did some anonymous research and suggested the city might benefit from an outside performance review, she accused him of undermining the city and accused all the new council members of "sabotage." The mayor clearly cannot get along with council members who are not like-minded. As for the blog, Jim Carson is a unique individual in government. He believes in total openness. He thinks you the citizen should know exactly what is going on at city hall and how he feels about it. At the same time he without fail invites criticism and in fact has criticized himself on the blog. Unlike the mayor I think healthy, but civil disagreements on the council are necessary to arrive at the best decisions. I can and will get along with Mr. Carson and the other council members, and we will succeed in fulfilling Keller's promise.</p>

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<p>Additional Statement</p>	<p>I am glad the residents of Hidden Lakes have shown increased interest in our local elections. You certainly have the ability to be a significant voice in our community.</p> <p>I have worked closely with our city staff for the past four years and consider it an honor to have served as your Mayor. The recent and unfortunate departure of our city manager should signal that the political climate continues to erode. Call it a seismic shift. If elected, I will continue to work hard for the citizens of Keller to the best of my ability. You must now decide if you want to change directions and go down a different path. I hope you will take the time to carefully read the answers the candidates have provided so you can make an informed decision.</p> <p>Please call or email me if you have any other questions.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Thank you for your time.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mayor Julie Tandy</p> <p style="text-align: center;">www.tandyformayor.com</p>	<p>[None provided]</p>