



Grand Haven City Mayoral and Council Candidate Questionnaire

Name: _Mike Dora_____

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Employer: __Retired / Current Council Member_____

Office Being Sought: _Council Member City of Grand Haven_____

**Please feel free to attach a separate sheet if the space provided is not sufficient.*

General:

1. What qualifications/experience do you feel you possess that will enable you to fulfill the responsibilities of the elected office you are seeking?
4+ years on the planning commission as member, vice chair and chairperson. 44 years industrial manufacturing experience, including supervision, purchasing, maintenance, quality control, logistics, industrial engineering and working with MIOSHA, EGLE and DEQ. Participated on the affordable housing task force, Beyond The Pier steering committee, Infrastructure review committee. Attend numerous City boards and commissions meetings. Civically Involved in the community.

2. Have you ever run for political office before? If yes, please explain.
It was my plan to run for a Council Member seat in 2019. I had all the signatures and paperwork completed and ready to turn in. My father became ill and required care which I could not provide and be a Council Member as well. With his passing in September of that year and our current Mayor's election in November leaving an open 2 year Council seat I received a second chance to become a Council Member. I applied for the open Council Member seat and thru the process received 4 Council votes to fill the remaining 2 years of the vacated open seat.

3. If elected, what would be your top priorities and why?
 - A) The biggest issue facing the city at this time is the contamination on Harbor Island. With the discovery of PFAS, PFOA, PFOS, Ammonia and Cyanide contaminates we must be diligent in moving ahead in working with EGLE, DEQ to determine the extent of the contamination and the steps needed to move ahead with the cleanup or containment. The potential costs could be extensive depending on the course of action outlined by those overseeing the process. State and Federal funds are available and we must be aggressive in pursuing those at all levels.

- B) Our unfunded pension liabilities are currently running in excess of \$26,000,000 and at the current funding rate expected to be fully funded by 2040. This is a difficult target to hit as MERS annual evaluation of our liabilities takes into account return on investments as well as other financial factors to determine the funding rate. The past several years have not been in our favor and the trend may continue. Many other municipalities are moving away from these pension plans to other less costly options we must take a long hard look at these options as well. Reducing our exposure to future funding increases with a defined benefit plan and phasing our way into a defined contribution plan needs to be given a serious in depth review.

Economic Development, General Policy and Transportation

1. Please describe your general economic development philosophy for Northwest Ottawa County. Controlled development coupled with resident and business input and engagement to provide for the most sustainable path forward toward a less seasonable consumer environment for our retail merchants.

2. Do you support the use of tax abatements and /or special tax incentives to create jobs and spur economic growth? Why or why not?
Yes I do, We must take the steps required to be competitive in bringing in new growth and if that requires tax abatements or special tax incentives to draw commercial and retail business to our area we should provide those avenues. We must also be aware of the issues in doing so, with ever increasing wages and operating expenses at the City level we must be cautious in delaying a large portion of tax revenue to meet those needs.

3. What are your thoughts regarding the need for affordable workforce housing?
I participated on the affordable housing task force several years ago as a member of the Planning commission. The need to workers to live close to where the work was one of the major concerns we faced. Three goal statements came from the task force, 1, Everyone who works in Grand Haven should be able to live in Grand Haven. 2. Grand Haven should have a variety of housing options. 3. People who live in Grand Haven should be able to stay in Grand Haven as they age. The Robinson Landing community land trust fills a small portion of those goals adding similar opportunities where available would be even better.

4. As we move to a more regional community and in the face of continued fiscal constraints, what are your thoughts on consolidation of services (police, fire, schools, transportation to name a few)?
We have already taken some steps in the consolidation of our Police and Fire services at a City level. I am sure other opportunities exist however we must be cautious and not reduce the current level of service being provided in doing so.

5. Please provide your vision of what council can do to support Mainstreet DDA and all business districts that are spread throughout the City to ensure there is continuing business growth and new development that generates new tax base. Listen to what the business owners have to say and being open to trying new ideas. The outdoor dining is a prime example of listening to the needs and responding to the idea to make it work. No one knows what is the best for our retail businesses better than those who own and operate them each and every day. Working together we can make great things happen.

6. Please describe how you plan, if elected, to work toward funding/controlling legacy costs.
Please see 3. B

7. How would you propose to fund key community infrastructure needs that have been identified by city staff over the next three to seven year's?

We currently are looking at in excess of \$40,000,000 in upcoming infrastructure needs which represents approximately 15% of our total infrastructure value of \$600,000,000. Water and Sewer rates were recently increased with a planned 6% yearly increase over the next 4 years to help make up for previous years with little or no increases. Grant dollars are available and we must aggressively pursue those, however we will still need to contribute significant funds at the City level as well. Defining those areas for immediate, short term and long term need requirements and developing a multi year replacement priority plan will go a long way towards reducing the yearly dollar amount the City will have to fund for those needs.

8. Discuss how mass transit may assist with workforce development and what role local/state government may play in further expanding regional transportation services throughout West Michigan
Reliable public transportation can help by eliminating a portion of the costs associated with driving a personal vehicle to work and back every day reducing fuel, repair and maintenance costs. Those reductions could open up the door to many of the entry level jobs available today. I have stated in the past opening up other areas outside of the current range would broaden the available work force area and allow workers to reach out to a larger number of employers.

Please attach additional information regarding your community and business affiliations.