

Johnson County Public Policy Council
2018 Johnson County Commission Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Ron Shaffer

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District: 1

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Campaign Website: www.ron-shaffer.com

Campaign Video Link: N/A

Occupation/Work History (last 5 years – 25 words or less):

Architect/Principal of RLS Architects in Johnson County, founded 1979. Registered Architect, Kansas and Missouri. Firm offers a full range of consultation, design and architectural services.

If you are or have been affiliated with a chamber of commerce or other business organization, please list what organization(s) and any leadership positions you have held:

Merriam Chamber of Commerce, Board Member 1986-1991, President 1988, Meritorious Service Award, 1990. Inaugural class Leadership Northeast, 1989. Northeast Johnson County Chamber of Commerce, 1991-present. Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, Board Member, 2013-2015. American Institute of Architects, Kansas City Chapter, 1980-present, Architect of the Year Award, 2014. For a complete resume, please see my website.

Other recent political/community experience? (25 words or less)

Johnson County Commissioner, 2015-present. Prairie Village Mayor, 1999-2015, City Council, 1989-1999. Mid-America Regional Council, Board/Chairman. National Association of Regional Councils, Board/President. United Community Services, Board.

As a candidate, what are your top three priorities for Johnson County (10 words or less per issue)?

Continue our quality of life at affordable costs. Continue funding improvements to infrastructure, parks, libraries, transportation. Defend vulnerable populations; seniors, developmentally/mentally challenged, disabled, poverty stricken, and those needing affordable housing.

Johnson County continues to grow dramatically. Recognizing that county government must respond to our county's continued population growth and the need to invest in services and infrastructure while, at the same time, dealing with state-imposed limitations on funds and revenue sources available to local units of government, please describe how you would approach managing the county budget (75 words or less):

A budget balancing act is always required for accustomed/expected citizen services and infrastructure needs. My 30 years of experience as an elected official at the City/County level gives me the background necessary to find innovative ways to continue to work together towards a budget which will not burden the taxpayer while maintaining/enhancing our quality of life. Developing a workable budget is the single most important responsibility of an elected official, and always my first priority.

There has been much discussion about regionalism. Please explain your views on regional cooperation (75 words or less):

We do not stand alone as a county. The attractiveness that brings citizens to Johnson County are shared throughout the regions counties and cities. My leadership as Chairman at MARC and NARC have broadened my understanding for regionalism. The same scenarios Johnson County faces are being addressed regionally as well as nationwide. By collaborating with these organizations, we will continue to create initiatives which can be leveraged as ways to share resources, funding and growth.

Describe your views on the balance between the distribution of costs and services between incorporated and unincorporated areas of Johnson County (50 words or less):

As the county continues to grow, we must find ways to provide new services to unincorporated areas of the county, while finding ways to lessen the burden on our established cities and neighborhoods, all in order to continue to keep them viable, affordable and in demand.

What are your views on the County-Assisted Road System program (CARS) and other county/city infrastructure partnerships? (50 words or less)

These partnerships are vital. CARS/SMAC leverage matching funds between the cities and the County which help keep our infrastructure strong and up-to-date. As well, these programs provide funding for expansion in our unincorporated areas. This collaboration creates innovative ways to find savings and eliminate any duplicative services.

Describe your views on the county's support of social services and the increased demands on the county created by limited state funding? (50 words or less)

While on the board of United Community Services, I became aware of growing poverty and affordable housing needs. We must educate our community to the needs of vulnerable populations living in poverty. By partnering with local not-for-profits and human service organizations, we must increase the interest and support needed.

What would you describe as the top five functions of county government? Please list them in your order of priority. (75 words or less)

Public Safety/Med-Act/Emergency Services. Infrastructure to keep our roads and bridges, storm drainage and wastewater at top-rate quality. Parks, libraries and cultural amenities. I support the Arts, reinvestment in Parks and Libraries. Social Services is a growing need in our County. Finding ways to reach these citizens with appropriate services must be addressed. Even though our great School Districts and Junior College are not a function of county government, we must continue to support them.

What project have you been most proud to work on? (50 words or less)

I am proud of being a Commissioner forwarding the planning for the new Courthouse, the new Medical Examiners Facility, Improvements to a major wastewater treatment facility, Parks, trails and new structures and new Libraries. I feel that my experience as an Architect lends credibility to these projects and is invaluable.

What do you believe most distinguishes you from your opponent(s) in this race? (75 words or less)

My 29 years of being an elected official in City/ County Government, Board Memberships and Chairs of regional (MARC) and national (NARC) quasi-governmental boards, as well as serving on not-for-profit boards qualifies me as the most experienced and best candidate for Johnson County Commissioner. My work as outlined on my website has spanned over 40 years. My passion is public service and I have dedicated my life to being "A pillar of the Community".