

**PRESTON HOLLOW DEMOCRATS – DALLAS CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Candidate Name: Mac Smith**

**Council District: 13**

- 1. Describe your experiences and skills that have prepared you to be a member of the Dallas City Council, and on what committees would you like to serve to best use those skills and experiences.**

I am a licensed professional engineer. I earned a BS Civil Engineering and a PhD in environmental engineering from the University of Texas at Austin. I spent 20 years in the construction business in Dallas and twenty more managing major construction projects for Dallas Area Rapid Transit. The largest was a 400+ million dollar green line project from Buckner to Mockingbird Station. Public works is a major part of the City budget and fits my expertise. I also owned my own business. One of the tasks of a successful business person is cutting costs and delivering results in a cost effective manner.

- 2. What are your top three priorities if you are elected to City Council?**

- A. Freeze spending to reduce the tax rate. The Dallas tax rate is 77 cents per \$100 valuation. The tax rate in Houston and San Antonio is about 56 cents/\$100. Because valuations are rising faster than wages, rents are rising and we are being taxed out of our homes.
- B. A modest increase in the size of our police force and a major increase in its effectiveness. Ensure that police pensions are properly funded.
- C. Provide help to people who have been made homeless by circumstances (divorce, loss of jobs, accidents, etc) and return them to economic self sufficiency.  
Those who prefer the homeless lifestyle should be offer help in changing their lifestyle; but, made to understand that what goes on in Seattle and San Francisco will not be tolerated in Dallas.

- 3. We are a Democratic club. Would the Democratic party platform and values inform your service on the Dallas City Council, and if so, how?**

This is a non-partisan race. I am a fiscal conservative. Hopefully, delivering city services in a cost effective manner is part of the Democratic party platform and values.

- 4. What changes would you support to Dallas city government, including the police department, to enhance public safety in our community?**

- A. I would support a temporary surge of enforcement in high crime areas similar to the DPS surge two summers ago. That was very effective in reducing a spike in the murder rate. It took a great many illegal guns off the street and resulted in the arrest of several hundred felons. It had a very salutary effect on crime while it lasted.
- B. I would support devoting more resources to drug enforcement. There are multiple benefits to stopping the sale of illegal drugs. One is the reduction of deaths from drug overdoses. Drug overdoses are about six times as common as murders.

- 5. Homelessness is an increasing problem in our community and has become more visible in our council district. What do you believe is the best way to address this problem, both from the perspective of the persons experiencing homelessness and the surrounding community?**

There are basically two categories of homeless people. Those who have been made homeless because of circumstances; and, those who choose addiction and homelessness as a lifestyle. We should do our best to help those who have been made homeless by circumstances (divorce, health, loss of jobs, accidents, etc) and return them to economic self-sufficiency.

Those who prefer the homeless lifestyle should be offered help in changing their lifestyle: but, made to understand that what goes on in Seattle and San Francisco will not be tolerated in Dallas.

I do not believe that the City of Dallas is capable of building affordable "low income" housing. Homes should be provided through rental subsidies, preferably administered by the Dallas Housing Authority.

- 6. Our community was hit hard by the tornados in 2019 and has yet to recover. Homes and property were recently damaged by the severe winter weather. Does the City have a role in assisting with recovery, and if so, would you advocate for this and what would be your recommendations?**

Private owners need to rebuild their property with insurance proceeds and their own money. The City's role would be to expedite building permits, zoning changes, etc. Much of the delay in rebuilding is caused by business owners wanting to take advantage of insurance settlements to invest some new money and build new, modern structures.

Some of the houses on Royal Lane were not rebuilt because the owners wanted to sell the damaged buildings for the lot value. Many of those homes have been torn down and are being replaced by McMansions.

- 7. Have you reviewed the City budget? If so, what is your biggest concern and what would be your proposed solution to that concern?**

I have reviewed the City budget. My major concern is that we are overtaxed. The City of Dallas property tax rate is 77cents/\$100 valuation. The Houston and San Antonio rates are about 56 cents. I propose that we freeze spending until the rise in property valuations brings us into line with Houston and San Antonio. I am also concerned that we are, again, underfunding the police and fire pension fund but I do not find the facts in the budget to analyze the problem. I will work on that if elected.