

City Club Q&A from February 25, 2011

1) Many in the City feel that the Memorial Drive project is ill-conceived and driven by business interests. Would you consider asking for citizen approval on a ballot?

There are numerous reasons for the Memorial Drive Project moving forward some of which are mentioned below, but ultimately you should understand that significant commitments and obligations have been made. The City Council did not take this matter lightly. Many competent citizens and public servants have expended many hours over the past 10 years and the time has come to move forward.

1. It is responsive to input received from the public wanting to close the distance between the green belt and down town, at the same time proving a gathering place for civic and cultural events.
2. Memorial Drive is in need of significant repairs and rebuilding. We need to remove the crown in the road that is the result of a number of overlays through the years as well as to repair or replace curb and gutter and maintain and replace utilities under the road.
3. The Idaho Falls Redevelopment Agency has the funds for the road construction.
4. Suitable replacement downtown parking has been identified.
5. The Redevelopment Agency, Bonneville County and the City of Idaho Falls have agreed to a memorandum of understanding to proceed with the project.

This project ultimately will be a great expanded addition to the greenbelt area and provide a great venue to attract many activities along the river at the same time removing the parking that is unsightly and creates a barrier into the downtown district. We certainly hope that the downtown district will benefit from this project but I can tell you this project was not driven solely by business interests but by the local community and the hundreds and hundreds of tourists that come to our beautiful city each year.

2) Congratulations for your joint meeting with Ammon and their City Council. What opportunities (did) you discover? How are things with the county? (5) I am pleased to see the Cities of IF and Ammon holding meeting of their top elected officials. Keep at it... Question- Those of us who live South of Sunnyside in the county are hearing about future plans of possible annexation either to IF or Ammon. What do you think our future will bring and will we residents have input on the process? If so, what kind? (6) What long term goals did you set with the City of Ammon at your last soiree?

In answer to all of the questions regarding the City of Idaho Falls and the City of Ammon; We are pleased that a joint meeting took place on February 23rd. One of the main things we found is that both Cities have a considerable amount of issues we agree upon, then disagree. Each City is doing their very best to provide and maintain the best services possible at the same time creating a wonderful quality of life for their residents. From that meeting, it was determined several small committees would be formed, each addressing specific issues (Sewer Services, Hitt Road Corridor, Area of Impact/City Boundaries). We are in the process of creating these committees. We are optimistic that both cities will be able to work together. Most importantly, each of the respective cities citizens will have opportunities to give input regarding future growth and amenities. Many of those opportunities come by way of City Council Meetings and work sessions. These meeting are generally posted on the City Web Sites. In regards to the County, we have a working relationship with them as issues arise.

3) Your comments give the impression that the City exists to support business interests. What do you view as the roof of City government relative to the citizens of the community?

The economy of Idaho Falls is vital to the continued health of the community and its assets. Therefore, the City is interested in establishing a good environment for businesses. But the City is here primarily to serve the residents of the City and advance their interests. We hope we are listening to our residents and providing consistently good service such as police, fire, water, sewer, emergency medical, sanitation, power, and streets. Listening posts and other surveys have confirmed the City generally provides a high level of service to its residents

4) If you look back from your vantage point of 50 years from now, what did we do today that really made the difference in making a great town?

By being fiscally responsible so that we are able to provide great infrastructure upgrades such as our utilities and electrical needs thereby laying the foundation for our city to continue to grow and prosper. This infrastructure not only covers physical infrastructure such as power, water, sewer, airport, and streets but also the programs the City funds such as our many parks and recreation facilities, planning, code enforcement, police and fire protection, and library services, all of which ultimately enhances the quality of life in Idaho Falls.

5) The south side of Idaho Falls often literally “stinks”. What is being done to upgrade, improve, etc the sewage treatment plant?

First of all you need to know that the sewer plant was originally built in 1959 when there were very few buildings in the area at that time. The plant experienced some process failures in the

summer of 2009 which caused a particularly offensive odor. That problem was unique in that it has only occurred once in the life of the facility and has since been resolved. However, there always will be some odor from the WWTP, but upgrades planned for that facility in the next two years should improve the situation to some extent.

6) Activity CTR. Who owns the CTR?

The City has ownership of this facility (Activity Center on Skyline Drive). The City received this facility from GSA (Governmental Surplus Administration) at no cost through a competitive bidding process in which governmental agencies could apply. The facility is to be used for community recreational purposes mandated by the National Park Service.

7) Operation and finance short falls, does the City stand behind the shortfalls and if not the City-Who?

Yes. By law, the City cannot overspend.