

READER



CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE 2023

Compiled by Zach Hagadone, Soncirey Mitchell and Ben Olson

1. Why are you running for mayor?

2. What would be your top three priorities if elected?

3. What do you see as the No. 1 challenge facing Sandpoint, and how do you propose to address it?

4. It's no secret that many people in the community feel City Hall is disconnected from what actually affects residents and have doubts about the equitable stewardship of their town on a number of fronts. If elected, how will you speak to these concerns and chart a path forward that a majority of citizens feel is in their best interests?

Sandpoint City Council

Elle Susnis



Age: 56

Birthplace and residence: birthplace, Chicago; residence, South Sandpoint, 38 years

How many years lived in Bonner Co.: 48

Past/current government service (if applicable): appointed past volunteer commissioner, Sandpoint Arts Commission (seven years, two as chair); appointed current volunteer commissioner and chair of the Sandpoint, Arts, Culture and Historical Preservation Commission (two years)

Profession: graphic designer/screen-printer, Clearwater Gear, 33 years

Education: graduate of Sandpoint High School

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1. Sandpoint is at a fork in the road. The influx of population means that change is inevitable. We are going to have to choose whether we let the growth happen unchecked, or we as a community fight to keep our small-town community character. I will continue the work I have been doing as a volunteer on the Sandpoint Arts, Culture and Historic Preservation Commission to create protections for our historic downtown buildings and future infill. As a longtime local who grew up here, I believe I have a unique perspective to bring to the council.

2. a. Improved communication between city elect/staff and our constituents, especially before and during large projects. Providing timely information in utility bills (mail and email), increased social media postings, attending public events, flyers, door knocks to raise awareness.

b. Using public input to guide staff regarding prioritizing and

allocating funding to the most critical infrastructure projects.

c. Preserving community character, especially historic preservation of the downtown core. Using our ACHP Master Plan, the updated Comp Plan (when adopted) and results of the Downtown Waterfront Competition (when adopted) to codify design and height guidelines, we can protect the look and feel of our hometown.

3. Preserving our community character. That elusive feeling that makes Sandpoint so unique. This encompasses more than I can say here in 100

words, so let's start with our historic buildings. Since the lumber mills shut down in the '80s, we've chased economic development for decades, rightly so. But sometimes it's been at the expense of those homey, quirky places and historic touchstones that make Sandpoint so wonderful. I believe it will take the citizens, city elect/staff, and property owners working together toward responsible development to ensure we don't lose any more of our hometown charm.

4. I believe getting people involved in initial project planning is key ahead of the big decisions. Above I touched on communication to citizens as a starting point. I also think that the city has been shortsighted in not activating popular volunteer citizen advisory commissions like the Tree Commission and the Bike/Ped Commission, and ad hoc committees for projects. Our ACHP Commission is a working commission and our members have willingly put in many hours of volunteer time. This commission work instills a real sense of pride in doing good work, which has a ripple effect in the community.