

2023 Williamson GOP Voter's Guide - City of Franklin, Alderman At-Large Position D

Please tell us about you and your family. What are your qualifications, skills, and experience? Tell us about your faith, your civic involvement about any character traits that will help you be an effective alderman or mayor.

Ann Petersen

Married to James Petersen, Attorney, Two sons. Masters degree in Mathematics, taught math for over 30 years at Columbia State Community College. Long Time Member of First Presbyterian Church, Franklin. Alderman, 2007 to present. Franklin Planning Commission 1987 to Present. I study all materials and do my homework.

Jeff Feldman

My name is Jeff Feldman, my wife's name is Natalie and our dog's name is Boca. I'm originally born and raised in the suburbs of Chicago which instilled integrity, honesty and a hard work mentality in me. I always dreamed of living by the ocean, so after college I left for Las Vegas where I enjoyed living until I followed my dream and moved to Los Angeles. I got to live in wonderful places like Beverly Hills, on the beach and eventually in Laguna Beach on the ocean. I appreciated everyday living there. At one point for a short stint, I moved back to Chicago and lived in Wrigleyville for 2 years. During that time, I had a really rare aggressive form of Cancer. I underwent 4 10 hour surgeries over 5 months with 6 weeks of aggressive radiation during that time. As a Cancer survivor it changed my outlook on life in a very positive, joyful and faith related way. The best part my 2 years in Chicago was the Cubs winning the World Series. I moved back to CA and bought a house in Laguna Beach where I met my wife. Natalie was raised in Newport Beach CA, is an interior designer and very much supportive of being a public servant. I have done many things in my life from Sales and Management in Tech, Realtor and developer, social media company founder, consultant, therapist, consultant and have been a part of several businesses in which I built and sold. I've spent most of my life as a leader, people manager, and therapist. My faith has always been very important to me and I have always believed and followed God. Being raised Jewish, God was very much a big part of my life. Over the past few years I have been learning and leaning more towards Christianity. This year I became a Christian and was baptized, it was the most glorious day.

I have been involved in local politics for over a decade. I was appointed or elected in every city I have lived in. My calling in life is to be a leader who listens to the people and stands up for others.

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Why are you running?

Ann Petersen

I want to use my knowledge of how the city works to continue serving the city of Franklin.

Jeff Feldman

I'm running for Alderman for a few reasons. We moved here to get back to our countries roots. The first thing we noticed when we got here was how nice and respectful people were. Then I started to hear things like schools and cities were under attack, the people of Franklin were under attack. I started to see the same problems I saw in California. So I got involed in WilCo GOP, City of Franklin and our local neighborhoods. When I started to go to BOMA meetings and stood up for what I believed in and saw others doing that I was excited. But that changed quickly as I saw our elected leaders make decisions to support their own agendas. They forgot that they represent the people, they are OUR voice. I'm running to restore the voices of the people. With a proven track record of leadership for over a decade as a public servant, I'm commeted to being engaging and listening, a champion of small businesses, BOLDLY reintroducing transparency, honor and the truth while couragously fighting for your individual freedoms.

What is your view about the U.S. Constitution and how it should be interpreted?

Ann Petersen

The Constitution is the Supreme Law of the Land. It should be interpreted literally whenever possible.

Jeff Feldman

The Constitution is the basic set of rules that guides how the United States government works. It lays out the structure of the government, with different branches like the President, Congress, and the courts. The Constitution also spells out the rights and freedoms that every American has, like freedom of speech and the right to vote. It's like a blueprint for how our country is supposed to run and how our rights are protected. This is simple, but as a constitutional conservative, I believe we need to get back to understanding that our country was founded on judeo Christian values. We have forgotten that the people run this country and the elected officals work for the people.

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What does liberty mean to you? How does government influence liberty?

Ann Petersen

Liberty means freedom. Government should preserve our freedom.

Jeff Feldman

Patrick Henry's meaning of "liberty" referred to personal and collective freedom from oppression and tyranny. He believed that individuals should have the right to live their lives with self-determination, free from unjust restrictions imposed by a distant and powerful government. To him, "liberty" encompassed the idea of being able to make choices, express opinions, and participate in governing oneself without undue interference. Patrick Henry has always been my model to follow as a leader to stand up for others.

Henry's words encapsulated the sentiment of many colonists who felt that their rights were being infringed upon by the British government. His call for "liberty or death" was a rallying cry for those who were willing to fight for their independence and the right to determine their own destiny. We are living in times today where a lot of of feel that our rights are being infringed upon. This is why I'm running for

What is the primary role of government?

Ann Petersen

Legislative branch - Pass laws. Executive Branch - Carry out those laws. Judicial branch – Decide constitutionality of laws and resolve disputes.

Jeff Feldman

My favorite explanation has always been Ronald Reagan's. The primary role of government can be summarized in his belief in limited government and individual freedom. The government's fundamental purpose as ensuring the protection of individual rights and providing a stable framework for society. The government should be a guardian of liberty, standing to protect citizens' rights while avoiding unnecessary intrusion into their lives. When government grows too large and overly involved in economic and personal affairs, it can stifle individual initiative, hinder economic growth, and undermine personal freedoms. This approach prioritized fostering an environment where people could pursue their aspirations without undue government interference.

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What are the three most critical issues facing Franklin today and how would you propose that Franklin address each issue?

Ann Petersen

- (a) Road Projects, such as getting Mack Hatcher SE 4 laned 96 E to Columbia Ave.
- (b) Continue to support Departments of the City, such as Fire, Police, Garbage pickup so they can continue high level of service for citizens.
- (c) BOMA will be prioritizing capital improvements anticipated to be needed in the next 10 years.

Jeff Feldman

There are several issues facing Franklin today but my top ones are:

Listening to the citizens and restoring their voices. I watched in person time after time the people stand up and tell their leaders whom they voted for what they wanted and their leaders did their will, not the peoples will.

Supporting families and businesses. During the last 3 years, the will of the people was infringed upon by the leaders who were elected. Schools and businesses were shut down, people were made to wear masks, with no proven scientific reasons for that. We all know more situations like this are coming and I feel it's important to lead and let the people decide what is best.

Managing the growth of Franklin while preserving its history requires a thoughtful and balanced approach. This can be achieved by implementing strict zoning regulations and design guidelines in historically significant areas, encouraging adaptive reuse of existing buildings, and promoting mixed-use developments that harmonize with the city's historical charm. Engaging the community in decision-making processes, offering incentives for historical preservation, and regularly reviewing the impact of new development can ensure that growth is aligned with the city's heritage. By fostering collaboration between local government, residents, businesses, and preservation organizations, Franklin can maintain its unique historical character while accommodating responsible growth that benefits both present and future generations.

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Do you have any concerns about how city officials are appointed? What involvement, if any, should the BOMA have in recommending and/or approving appointments?

Ann Petersen

No. BOMA is involved.

Jeff Feldman

Transparency is a major concern for me when it comes to appointees. Currently if you want to be on a commission, you make friends with the mayor. When an opening appears, the mayor appoints his friends. That is not beneficial to the city or its citizens. When there are committee openings, the city should post them and have citizens fill out an application. That opening would be open for 60 days to the public. Once that ends, the applications would be looked over by BOMA. The top 3 or 5 would be interviewed by BOMA in a public session and then voted on to the committee. Mayor would only break the tie if there is one.

What concerns do you have regarding Franklin's finances and how would you propose they be resolved?

Ann Petersen

Franklin's finances are very sound. It will take careful, knowledgeable and diligent effort to keep it that way.

Jeff Feldman

A major concern is the new city hall the mayor wants to build. It will cost every citizen, man, woman and child \$1500 to build a building that we do not need. We need a less expensive and more appropriate location near the police HQ. That would lower the costs by 40%. Most city halls are attached or next to the police HQ in the country, so this plan works. Also, the city is in debt and now the city is looking to buy a piece of land from the mayor's friends for \$7M of which the city does not have the money, nor does it need the land. This is something that should be brought to the public. There is no transparency in the city and I think that is #1 on my goals to change.

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What is your commitment to the Envision Franklin document? What changes would you propose, if any, to the Envision Franklin document?

Ann Petersen

Envision Franklin is a planning commission document not a BOMA document. A new proposed version is coming out in the next few weeks and I will be very interested to see what staff is proposing.

Jeff Feldman

Having attended the Envision Franklin event, a couple things pop out at me. 1. The city wants to build large projects of mass density even though the city has more than twice the amount that is needed. 2. The planning commission, the planning department are not holding developers accountable for infrastructure. This is something that must change.

For new development, how do you think the additional infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, police, ambulances, fire, etc.) should be funded?

Ann Petersen

Franklin has adopted impact fees to require new development to pay its way. These should be regularly reviewed. Some are being reviewed at present.

Jeff Feldman

I think all new development should be funded by the developer.

Some citizens have expressed concern that the building in which City Hall resides is no longer adequate. What are your thoughts?

Ann Petersen

Plans are already underway to construct a new city hall. This will be a major project money-wise and time-wise.

Jeff Feldman

A major concern is the new city hall the mayor wants to build. It will cost every citizen, man, woman and child \$1500 to build a building that we do not need. We need a less expensive and more appropriate location near the police HQ. That would lower the costs by 40%. Most city halls are attached or next to the police HQ in the country, so this plan works.

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What are your views concerning Franklin giving tax breaks to attract new businesses?

Ann Petersen

Only extraordinary businesses should get tax breaks. The national headquarters for Nissan is a good example. IN-N-OUT BURGER is opening their first eastern territory office in Franklin.

Jeff Feldman

I don't believe we should give tax breaks to any new business coming to Franklin. The breaks for a business are that they will have a growing, affluent town full of educated and capable employees to choose from. For instance In and Out, giving them hundreds of thousands of dollars only takes away from the city budget and it increases the pressure on the citizens. They would come here anyway as there is so many benefits to being in Franklin.

"Should the City of Franklin have a code of decency for events held at publicly owned venues? How should the attendance by children be addressed at events which may contain adult content, including sexual content?"

Ann Petersen

No. Events held in Franklin at public venues must follow the State of Tennessee Code of Decency.

Jeff Feldman

A decency code? Yes, there should be, here it is. NO events with adult and sexual content should be allowed on public grounds ever. It's that simple. If there is an adult/sexual event it can be held on private property. Zero Tolerance.

Is it the government's role to ensure the availability of affordable housing? If so, how?

Ann Petersen

The City works with a several agencies such as Franklin Housing Authority to promote affordable housing.

Jeff Feldman

The market and developers determine what is affordable. It's not the cities role to determine the market.

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What are your thoughts about the "Middle Eight" development project?

Ann Petersen

I opposed it. 39 units per acre is too dense for this area.

Jeff Feldman

There are many thoughts. This project was not supported by the people and the people's voices were not heard. The project looks out of place, is way too dense at 38.4 units/acre, is in a flood plane, is potentially on historic land that has not been tested and everyone knows that if it wasn't Toby, it would never have passed. When you can walk around a city and everyone tells you that, yet the leaders push it through, you know it's wrong. I would never vote for it.

What do you think about how Franklin handled the pandemic? What would you have done differently?

Ann Petersen

Franklin and Williamson County handled the pandemic extremely well.

Jeff Feldman

I did not live here during that time. But from what I know it was handled poorly. Talking to citizens and business owners there was a common theme. The mayor pushed his power and his cultural ideology on the citizens. Extending the mask mandate without science, closing businesses, threatening business owners, that is no way to run a city. As an elected leader, you must listen to the people. People are smart, they know what they need to do.

As a citizen and a voter, do you think the county and the state have any election integrity issues? If so, what are the issues?

Ann Petersen

Election integrity issues are rare in Williamson County and the State of Tennessee.

Jeff Feldman

I think 100% there are gigantic election integrity issues. There should be hand marked paper ballots and only voting on a single day.

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How should the City of Franklin make decisions regarding the placement of historical markers?

Ann Petersen

This should be done in close cooperation with the Historical Society.

Jeff Feldman

I think that historical markers like the ones we have are incredibly educational. I think it's important to have them and to be able to share history with others. This should be a BOMA decision and one that is made only after listening to the people.