



2024

Teton County Commission Candidate Questions

Name: Len Carlman

General election questions

1. Since the business community of Teton County are the collection entity that provides the lodging tax funding for our community, how will you ensure that the interests of business are integrated within the foundation of the Destination Management / Marketing Organization being proposed to the elected officials?

The lodging tax related interests of local business are well protected by state law and local agreements.¹ One of the best kinds of marketing is through the happy testimonies of visitors to Teton County who have had amazing experiences. We can learn from the marketing power of Yelp and Trip Advisor endorsements that so many businesses work hard to earn. We will continuously earn tremendous visitor loyalty and grassroots word-of-mouth advertising by being better hosts than our competitors. Taking care of the visitors who are here also respects the source of the money for TTB activities – our guests. I will urge the TTB, the Chamber of Commerce, and any other entity that uses TTB dollars to do everything possible to give our guests experiences of a lifetime. High level hospitality, from clean public restrooms to great public transportation and the provision of all the other public services noted as part of the answer to question #2 will help Jackson Hole businesses thrive for decades to come.

¹ Collection of the lodging tax is established by two authorities: (1) for the State of Wyoming and the 5% mandatory statewide lodging tax, through Wyoming Statute §39-15-104(h)(i-ii), and, (2) for the local option lodging tax, (percentage may vary), through W.S. §39-15-204. The law requires that business interests be advanced by stipulating that expenditures for travel and tourism promotion be limited to promotional materials, television and radio advertising, printed advertising, digital content, social media, promotion of tours, staging of events, educational materials, and other specific tourism related objectives. Sixty percent of the local option revenue must be used to promote travel and tourism within the town and county. The 2011 joint resolution of the Town of Jackson and Teton County that created the Joint Powers Travel and Tourism Board (TTB) includes a requirement that funds used by the TTB must promote travel and tourism. Any destination management and marketing organization that receives lodging tax funding must comply with these laws and agreements.

2. Considering it is 100 times more expensive to operate a small business in the Town of Jackson / Teton County and that sector employs over 70% of our workforce, how do you plan to help them stay in business?

The best way for local government to support local business in Teton County is to take care of the wildlife, scenic, clean water, cold water fisheries and cold climate natural resources that sustain our economy. I am proud that our Chamber of Commerce has long recognized and acted on this basic fact. Our community, including the Chamber of Commerce, has worked hard and achieved much in favor of wildlife and scenic protections. We have lots to do to protect our water, but there is great advocacy and momentum in that direction.

Climate change mitigation needs to be a high priority for our business community. I am excited to attend the Mountain Towns 2030 Climate Solutions Summit on October 15 and 16. I look forward to seeing many local business leaders there as well. I want to learn more about what local businesses and local government can do to rapidly decrease the unacceptably dangerous rate of global warming.

I do not believe it is 100 times more expensive to operate a business in Teton County than it is in our principal competitors' communities, such as Sun Valley, Idaho, Park City, Utah, and Aspen, Colorado. The Hungry Jack's General Store community owned business in Wilson demonstrates a tremendously innovative model to sustain both business and community character. Just as land trusts preserve open space through community investment and action, the community owned business model can also protect vital businesses in Jackson Hole. We "saved the block" in downtown Jackson, we saved the general store in Wilson, and, with foresight and commitment, we can save other hallmarks of a successful community.

Teton County government must continue to provide a safe, wholesome, and beloved community experience. That means we fix the potholes, adequately fund a good Sheriff's Department, maintain a terrific public library, keep up the fight against aquatic and botanical invasive species, provide a safe and functional courthouse and jail, maintain our world-class pathway system, support our amazing parks and recreation center and programs, offer a great annual county fair, support the human services that provide support for so many business owners and working people, and rise to the challenge of promoting sustainable travel and tourism.

3. With the Northern South Park project now getting the green light to build housing, how will you as an elected official ensure that housing gets built in a timely matter that meets the number one priority of our community?

The Northern South Park (NSP) project has a green light for its zoning, but it does not yet have a green light to build housing. The distinction is important. My reply is probably more technical than you're looking for, but you asked a land use planning question, and details count for a lot in modern planning and zoning. We need to ensure that the upcoming Master

Site Plan includes a thorough capital improvement plan that lays out appropriate infrastructure for deed restricted development and that the “Housing Element” lays out the process and timeline for building the 70% deed restricted housing. The approved NSP regulations were approved on March 5, 2024 and added to the LDRs on April 16 in a new Division, Division 4.5. The citations that follow are from Division 4.5.

4.5.2.F.2.a states: "Required Allocation. Development of any new units shall be comprised of at least 70% deed-restricted housing units and at least 40% of the new housing units shall specifically be affordable housing units." That must be assured in the Master Site Plan, Initial Plat Subdivision and subsequent Development Plan approvals. 4.5.2.F.2.b. states: "Affordable and Workforce Housing Plan. An application for development of unrestricted units or subdivision of unrestricted lots of record shall demonstrate compliance with the standards of this Section through inclusion of an Affordable and Workforce Housing Plan." 4.5.2.F.2.b.i. states: "Part of Development Plan Application. The Affordable and Workforce Housing Plan shall be a required component of a sufficient Development Plan application for subdivision of unrestricted lots of record or development of unrestricted units."

4.5.2.F.2.c.iii, Conveyance of Land, is important. The developer can choose to convey land. The land must be sufficient to accommodate 70% of all new development (the deed restricted units). But the developer can submit Development Applications for up to half of the remaining 30% (the unrestricted units) without a requirement that Development Applications for the 70% are submitted at the same time. Skeptics of the NSP Plan may interpret this to mean that the Developer will build up to half of the free-market units and that no deed restricted housing will ever get built. The only requirement is that they cannot get approval for the second half of the unrestricted units until building permits have been issued for at least 20% of the Affordable deed restricted units. Here's the example given: "EXAMPLE: The number of unrestricted new units allowed in NSP Area 1 is 180. When 90 (50% of 180) unrestricted new units in NSP Area 1 have received Development Plan approval, no Development Plans for additional unrestricted new units may be approved until building permits have been issued for at least 18 (20% of 90) Affordable new units in NSP Area 1."

Let's say Area 1 submits a Development Plan to max out their unrestricted market units to make as much money as possible as soon as possible. There is potential for a total of 600 new units. The developer has to first convey land to the JH Housing Trust or Teton Habitat that can accommodate 520 deed restricted units. The developer has to put in all the infrastructure to meet the needs of those units up to the edge of the 2.5 to 5-acre “blocks.” Then the developer can submit a Development Plans for a max of 90 unrestricted units. Once those plans are approved, the developer can build 90 units. No more market units can be developed until building permits have been approved for 18 of the Affordable deed restricted units. The Housing Trust is putting up 20 units on East Hansen in less than a year. Our community built 57 units at Jackson Place in less than 2 years. Developers think they can build 226 units at Virginian place in under 3 years. Habitat has taken longer: 6 years for 24 units. However, as I understand it, Habitat is looking at modular construction that can move faster. Very worst-case scenario is 90 units of small (mostly under 2,500 sf) market

housing and 18 units of Affordable deed restricted housing (in Area 1). If the scenario I've described comes to pass, (maximum near-term development for maximum near-term profit), the county commission needs to stand firm at 90 and approve no further Development Plans until the number of units of restricted housing catches up.