

Keith Collins

1. What are the most pressing issues facing your municipality and what are your plans to address them?

At the core of every issue the county has is the lack of transparency. Taxpayers and citizens deserve access to the government structure regardless of party or status. I believe as elected officials it is our responsibility to prove our value every day, and not just when it's time to be re-elected. Public hearings, meetings, and minutes should be held at a time when all residents with concerns can attend and should be made available to the public for those who cannot attend. Our county government should view the individual municipalities and their citizens as customers; customers with the expectation that their needs will be met and their voices will be heard. Every issue we have today stems from having representatives at the county level who do not listen, and are not available. Our county government is only as relevant and necessary as its leadership makes it; and I believe it's high time we restore balance, ethics, and transparency to increase our relevance and effectiveness.

There are ethical concerns that constrain the council's ability to be effective...we have people serving in various capacities that may prove a conflict of interest. County council is treated as a part time job, so council members serve in other patronage positions that push the envelope when it comes to conflict of interest and general ethics. Providing stewardship of a county containing over a half-million citizens and taxpayers should be considered a full time job. I can guarantee you our constituents want people in office who will pay full attention to their needs.

A county government should be efficient and serve as an example to state and municipal government. How efficient and effective can we possibly be without representation of both sides in a fair debate? We spend more money on corrections and patronage than we do on the taxpaying citizens of this county and that needs to change...period.

We do not have a county health department. I've asked why and have yet to receive a solid answer. Areas of our county are within the 25-mile zone of Limerick Nuclear Power Plant, there are threats like Swine Flu and areas of interest for a terrorist attack and here we stand, as a county, unprepared. This fact alone serves as the current county government's single greatest failure to serve the needs of the public at-large. Government should reflect the county, and right now it is a monolithic structure. I am running on the Democratic ticket, but I am running for good governance which has no party affiliation.

Infrastructure is vital to any county and is a key factor in attracting new businesses, Real Estate developments, and ultimately new home buyers. As a Delaware County Council member I will work to advance progressive ideas that alleviate congestion on the county's most vital arteries and major roads. Simple fixes like traffic light timings and turning lights/lanes in key high volume areas can greatly improve commute times for the county's residents. The relationship between commute times and real estate desirability is well known, so we need to make improving the

county commute a priority for county government. Two issues exist: It takes people a long time to get where they're going, and where they're going is outside of the county – so improving our job base is integral to improving desirability. Additionally, I believe technology is an important infrastructure that increases desirability for corporate developers, and I will work to improve the county's availability of key technologies including dark fiber and wireless. Put simply the council needs to work harder to be more competitive with surrounding counties from a residential development and business development perspective. Simply having an innovative voice on the council will ensure that new ideas are heard – and that in and of itself is progress. That is why I am running for this seat.

- 2. Many municipalities require property inspections, and making any necessary repairs as conditions to the transfer of real estate. Do you support or oppose the adoption or expansion of property transfer inspection requirements in your municipality? Please explain.**

I would support this – home ownership is an important and long-term investment in one's personal financial future. Ensuring that homes are properly inspected by certified 3rd party agencies is the only way to make sure that investment is a good one. At the county level, we should take the time to develop a standard for inspections and fair warranties.

- 3. REALTORS utilize signs to promote the sale of their listings, including open house and directional signs. Do you support or oppose allowing REALTORS using open house and directional signs as a means of marketing property? Please explain.**

I'm looking at this from a personal standpoint—what's best for my community? Real estate is an integral part of any community. Everybody needs to do as much as possible to facilitate the fair and equitable acquisition of real estate. Directional signs are necessary for the sale of a property. When people purchase homes that enhances the value of the community. A good family that moves into the community is well worth it.

- 4. Do you support the concept of multi-municipal planning and zoning? If so, do you feel it is appropriate for your jurisdiction? Please explain.**

The interaction between county government and municipal government must be collaborative in order to be effective. Make no mistake, as county officials we should lead change and influence progress, but we have to get the municipalities to get together. If you have a county or multi-municipality plan it could cut down on litigation and all of the things that create cost and waste. I would be in favor of it.

5. If approved by the Pennsylvania General Assembly, would you support an increase in the local portion of the real estate transfer tax?

Again, the only acceptable method of communication for leaders is collaboration. I believe collaboration between municipalities and the county government is the only way to ensure the sustainability and growth of the county structure without deflation or loss of value.

Municipalities need to first have lines of communication with county government, and I would work to establish that. Once those lines of communication have been established, we'll have the leverage to convince municipalities to reduce or abate the transfer tax to encourage new buyers. Increases would be ill-advised in my view, especially where other inefficiencies in municipal governments have neither been examined nor mitigated.

6. REALTORS are very knowledgeable about their communities and the real estate industry. As a municipal elected official, how would you utilize this expertise? Would you consider appointing individuals recommended by our organization to real estate-related boards and commissions?

I'm pro real estate. When I saw my sister in law over the years, I've learned the value and how it can enhance communities. One of the things that is always needed is affordable housing. The development of access to quality housing, pursuit of home ownership, and the motivation of renters to become owners are important skills realtors possess; skills that need to be leveraged by government in my opinion. Having access to realtors who are socially conscious stewards of their community is important for county and municipal governments. In a place like Chester City where they have the highest millage rate but the lowest property values, greater partnership between realtors and government would help improve conditions faster than anything the government can do alone. Proactive realtors would be a huge asset to the community. If we can partner with realtors to do that it would be phenomenal.