



# Warrenton Town Council Candidates: Responses to Pre-Forum Survey

Compiled on April 10, 2016

Revised on April 11, 2016 to include Mr. Henson's responses,  
which were received on 4/10/16 at 5:50pm.

All answers are presented in the same format as they were received and have not been edited. All respondents replied prior to release of the original document on 4/11/16.

**Ward 1: Jerry Wood**, incumbent (*no response received*)

**Ward 2: Alec Burnett**, running for first time

**Ward 3: Brett Hamby** and **Ken Henson** competing for an open seat

**Ward 4: Bob Kravetz**, incumbent

**Ward 5: Kevin Carter**, running for first time

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## **Q1: What are your top three areas of focus during your first 6 months in office?**

Mr. Burnett: Communication, Collaboration, Transparency

Mr. Hamby:

- General Fund Financial review
- Water and Sewer Audit
- Sidewalk connecting 5th Street lot to Claire's and Wort Hog Brewery area for pedestrian access

Mr. Henson:

1. Forge good working relationships with all key stakeholders in town governance: other councilpersons, the planning commissioners and ARB members, the town manager and key members of town staff, business and civic leaders.

2. Become more familiar with the intricacies of the town budget and the process by which budget decisions are made.
3. Immerse myself in the comprehensive plan revision process.

Mr. Kravetz: Not my first six months. The start of a second term. However, I will focus on the budget and eliminating unnecessary spending.

Mr. Carter:

- Getting up to speed on current issues and learning from town staff about challenges they face
- Balancing the budget.
- Advancing the revision of our Comprehensive plan.

## **Q2: What are your top three concerns for your first term in office?**

Mr. Burnett: Managed Growth, Fiscal Management, Community Engagement

Mr. Hamby:

- Balance the budget
- Revive commercial interest in Main Street properties (investment in improving structures)
- Streamline and innovate Zoning Ordinance to promote the desired and predictable type of development that will enhance and grow the Warrenton economy

Mr. Henson:

1. Growth. If managed thoughtfully and intelligently, new development can be a tremendous benefit to the town. If not, it has the potential to destroy those special and unique qualities that make Warrenton the town we all cherish.
2. Town finances. The town needs to be run efficiently, as if it were a business, continuing to provide top-notch service to its residents and businesses, while at the same time spending our tax dollars wisely.
3. Drugs. The distribution, sale and use of drugs of abuse poses the single largest threat our community faces. It will take the concerted efforts of not just our law enforcement agencies and judicial system, but everyone to combat and successfully eradicate this scourge.

Mr. Kravetz: Second Term! My concerns are the budget and eliminating deficit spending. Attempting to correct the shortage of police officers. Broadview Avenue

Mr. Carter:

- The need for long-term Budget projections.
- The Comprehensive Plan
- Infrastructure funding

**Q3: How would you explain to us the way that you work with others?**

Mr. Burnett: Always listen first. I prefer to understand the facts upfront enabling me to respond in a clear and topic focused manner.

Mr. Hamby:

- Team concept
- Respect all opinions
- Gather all facts to make the best decision for Warrenton

Mr. Henson: Long gone are the days when the doctor was the “captain of the ship”, and modern medicine is very much a team effort. Collaboration is crucial to a successful outcome. Being an excellent listener is not merely a positive attribute--it is a necessity. I am comfortable in either the role of team member or team leader as the situation warrants.

Mr. Kravetz: My style is collaborative.

Mr. Carter: I am very interested in other people’s views and work to understand and honor those views while presenting complementary or alternatives thoughts.

**Q4: What do you see as the greatest challenges facing the Town of Warrenton?**

Mr. Burnett: Staying true to our identity while balancing the need and reality of changing demands both within and outside of our control.

Mr. Hamby:

- Encouraging redevelopment in the Broadview Ave corridor, predictable outcomes
- Establish Main Street as a vibrant destination location as well as a walkable residential community
- Establish realistic build out numbers for current water and sewer systems

Mr. Henson: Deciding where and how Warrenton will grow is something that we as a town have to get right. The chance to completely revamp our comprehensive plan offers the town a tremendous opportunity to come together as a community and say what we want our town to look like as it grows, and hopefully prevent it from devolving into just another nondescript suburban town like so many of our neighbors to the north and east have become.

Mr. Kravetz:

1. Eliminating the need to "raid" the reserve fund
2. Public Safety
3. Economic Development

Mr. Carter:

- Budget deficits
- The need for Comprehensive plan and zoning updates

- Long term planning
- Infrastructure and maintenance funding

**Q5: What do you see as the greatest challenges facing the Council?**

Mr. Burnett: Right now I see the biggest challenge being a sense of awareness of all the issues and ideas facing the town and the residents. Costco, movie theaters, bowling alleys, dog parks, libraries, parklets, and the list goes on and on.

Mr. Hamby:

- Open lines of communications
- Respect others opinions
- Trust committees to work in the best interest of Town

Mr. Henson: Finding, hiring and retaining top-notch people for key positions in town administration is crucially important to our success. I have been incredibly impressed with those whom I have had the opportunity to meet over the course of the campaign. Having and keeping managers of such high caliber in the top levels of town government ensures a much easier job for Town Council.

Mr. Kravetz: Same as #4

Mr. Carter: The need to be creative and forward thinking while dealing with the very challenging issue of balancing the budget for the long term.

**Q6: How do you feel about the divide between conservation and economic development? Real or perceived? Why?**

Mr. Burnett: I don't see at it as a divide but instead an opportunity to look at way we have merged ideologies in the past for ways to improve them in the future.

Mr. Hamby:

- Warrenton is a Town as well as the largest service district in Fauquier County, planned for growth
- Proper planning and zoning will encourage the type of commercial/industrial growth that will complement the town and help grow the economy
- Modernize and update the polices to acknowledge the cost of growth

Mr. Henson: For the most part, it is a matter of perception. Conservation, by definition, pertains to what occurs with undeveloped land, and is primarily of concern at the county level. Since the entirety of Warrenton is envisioned for development according to current zoning and as the county's primary service district, I believe preservation is a more pertinent consideration for the town. We must preserve that which makes Warrenton unique and historical when considering how and where the remaining undeveloped land within town is developed.

Mr. Kravetz: This is probably more relevant to the County than the Town.

Mr. Carter: I believe there is no good reason for a divide. We can accomplish the community's conservation goals while promoting economic development.

**Q7: Bigger picture: What do you think about all this noise around the campaign for President?**

Mr. Burnett: We should be grateful to live in a country that allows noise. People expressing themselves should be celebrated and encourage but should be done so constructively. We will never agree on everything and frankly I think it would be disastrous if we ever did or were told to do so.

Mr. Hamby:

- Warrenton is a Town as well as the largest service district in Fauquier County, planned for growth
- Proper planning and zoning will encourage the type of commercial/industrial growth that will complement the town and help grow the economy
- Modernize and update the polices to acknowledge the cost of growth

Mr. Henson: I've sought to run a campaign for public office of which I can be proud. I have tried to focus the discussion affirmatively on what I feel I can do for the benefit of the town, and I've tried to make clear my positions (while canvassing, in campaign literature, on my website and on social media) on what I feel are the significant issues facing Warrenton. With the gravity of some the issues our nation now faces, I would hope that our candidates for President could simply have done the same.

Mr. Kravetz: Silly question and is not relevant to the current campaign for Town Council.

Mr. Carter: I think it is a circus and very hard to predict an outcome. Our great republic has survived much worse and I have every confidence that there will be a new President in the White House next year.

**Q8: Bigger picture: What is the responsibility of the Council to work with the Board of Supervisors?**

Mr. Burnett: Similar to my answer to question #6. We can't be effective and remain in the best interest of both town and country residents without collaboration and an understanding that equitable concessions sometimes produce the best long term benefits.

Mr. Hamby:

- Recognize common goals
- Joint planning in Warrenton Service District
- Realize cost saving measures that benefit both town and county

Mr. Henson: It's important to remember that every resident of Warrenton is a resident of Fauquier County. We pay county taxes, our children attend county schools, we take advantage of recreational opportunities the county offers, etc. At the same time, Warrenton is the primary service district for Fauquier County. Warrenton is home to most county government operations, and is widely viewed by county residents as the commercial, cultural and geographic center of the county. Because of this

interconnectedness, it is imperative that the Town Council and the Board of Supervisors maintain excellent working relationships and open lines of communication.

Mr. Kravetz: The Council should work with the BOS on issues of common interest. There should not be an adversarial relationship. Working together has been happening for at least 1 year and will continue - especially in the area of economic development.

Mr. Carter: I believe it to be a fundamental responsibility and the relationship must be successful for the good of the overall community.

**Q9: Name at least three ways you propose to close the budget gap and move to an increasing surplus?**

Mr. Burnett: Strategic approach, balance focus and identification of ways by which to operate most efficiently. Budgets can only be created alongside a defined and realistic forward strategy and can only be effectively managed by striking a balance between the equal importance of revenue and the cost to support it. Focusing exclusively on either is short term thinking.

Mr. Hamby:

- Large surpluses are not necessary, responsible 10% reserves should be the goal
- Increase commercial/retail tax base
- Evaluate cash negative programs

Mr. Henson: With respect to increasing revenues, a modest increase in real estate tax rates seems reasonable at this time. Bringing new businesses to town, and expansion of existing businesses would result in sustainable increases in revenue.

On the expenditure side of the budget equation, we need to be very careful in adding personnel to the town's payrolls, doing so only in instances where the scope and quality of services the town provides would suffer without the proposed new hires.

Mr. Kravetz: 1 simple way --- spend only of "necessities" not on things that are "nice to have".

Mr. Carter: Ideally the only surpluses would be in capital reserve accounts. The balance of income is important so that our government doesn't over-tax or over-spend.

- The very best way to increase income to the town is through economic development. If businesses succeed our businesses tax revenues will increase.
- Make good decisions with a goal of being net positive or at least net neutral for any new initiatives. Consider long-term consequences of current decisions.
- Seek grants and low cost financing where appropriate to leverage our buying power.

**Q10: What do you think about Parklets?**

Mr. Burnett: I think it is healthy to investigate all areas of opportunity for growth but it is my understanding that this idea is just that and will be beta tested to determine plausibility. Once the beta period is over and subjective and objective analysis is collected, I would feel more comfortable offering an opinion.

Mr. Hamby:

- Trial program should be ran to evaluate the concept
- Take this opportunity to evaluate Main Street parking in general
- Any program that has the potential to increase pedestrian traffic on Main Street, should be investigated

Mr. Henson: I think that a trial of parklets on a limited basis, and for a single season (as has been proposed), is an entirely reasonable endeavor to pursue. If it benefits Old Town in the manner that its proponents suggest, is structured in such a way that it costs the town nothing, and reasonably provides for the safety of it's users, it would certainly be worth pursuing on a long-term basis. If after its first year, the consensus is that the parklets weren't of benefit, there would be no indication to continue the program.

Mr. Kravetz: If the goal is to create places along Main Street where people can linger and socialize then the same result can be achieved by installing benches without sacrificing valuable parking spaces. I also have a concern about safety.

Mr. Carter: I think Parklets are a creative idea that may help generate more energy in old town. The idea needs to be fully vetted before making the decision to move forward. A trial period makes a lot of sense.

#### **Q11: What do you think about the dog park issue?**

Mr. Burnett: Should never have become an issue. I endorse the idea for a host of reasons and feel that the council was transparent in their communication but it seems the majority of residents feel otherwise. We can learn from that and look at the different ways to communicate. It's more about what people hear than what is said therefore better messaging could possibly have prevented its reclassification as an issue.

Mr. Hamby:

- Seems to have support in the correct location
- Location should be a balance between users and neighbors
- Open process for site selection

Mr. Henson: A large number of residents in Warrenton want a dog park in town. Money has been proffered by the developer of Arrington Farms with which the cost of creating a dog park would be covered. Finding a suitable site, and doing so within the time constraints of the proffer agreement, has been and continues to be the biggest challenge. For the sake of the many folks that want a dog park, it is my hope that a site that is suitable to neighboring property owners can soon be identified.

Mr. Kravetz: I support a dog park and, hopefully, we'll find the right spot.

Mr. Carter: The Dog park sounds like a good idea. Clearly the location is a challenging issue that needs serious deliberation and long term funding is a serious concern. With those issues resolved I would be in support of a dog park.

**Q12: Do you support or oppose Costco coming to Warrenton?**

Mr. Burnett: Costco is a very smart business model. They recognize opportunity here based on their revenue and customer traffic stream data from the Manassas location and others. I see Costco as more of a need based business for the general public therefore I'd prefer to retain the tax revenue and local employment opportunities. This is said not knowing what concessions have been made to get the business and those details would have to be closely looked at before I could make a concrete answer.

Mr. Hamby:

- Support Costco, prefer being within Town limits
- Major boost to economy and tax base
- Make facility fit Warrenton, not cookie cutter design

Mr. Henson: Since there doesn't appear to be a suitable site for a proposed Costco within the town's boundaries, the decision of whether or not Costco locates in the area will ultimately be made by the county. The town has been asked to provide utilities to the currently proposed site near the northern edge of town. As such, I think that the town should be represented in the planning process currently being considered by the county, with the goal of minimizing potential negative aesthetic and traffic impacts at the town's northern gateway.

Mr. Kravetz: I'm neutral until I see more information on the site, the traffic considerations, etc.

Mr. Carter: I am not immediately in favor or opposed to Costco in Warrenton. The Location again is a major concern and needs to be fully considered and alternatives reviewed carefully. As with any new business in town it should comply with the guiding principles of the zoning regulations and the comprehensive plan.

**Q13: Is the WARF an asset or albatross? Why?**

Mr. Burnett: The WARF itself is an asset. It is a wonderful facility that promotes health, fellowship, competition and a host of other community benefits. The real question should be about the management of the operation. Have studies been done to determine pricing thresholds? Its location and variety of amenities are best in class but what are we doing to market it? Being resident funded needs to be taken into consideration in both of the above. We need to make it work otherwise we will find ourselves with another Mosby Museum situation.

Mr. Hamby:



- Very nice facility for a Town the size of Warrenton
- Need to acknowledge that Parks and Rec facilities are rarely revenue neutral
- Facility has been a major strain on Town finances, need to recognize this and make appropriate changes in the future

Mr. Henson: The consideration of a community's health and physical well-being is gaining traction as an increasingly important aspect of public policy and planning. Having a facility of the caliber of the WARF places Warrenton ahead of the curve on these issues, and way ahead of surrounding municipalities much larger than our's. I can't say whether or not I would've supported building the WARF had I been on Town Council at the time that decision was made, but the facility is here, it belongs to our community, we should be justly proud of it, and it deserves the full support of the town.

Mr. Kravetz: Asset. If you look around us, every neighboring county provides recreation facilities for its citizens. Fairfax County has at least 5 recreation facilities supported by taxpayer funds.

Mr. Carter: I do not see the WARF as an albatross. It is a fantastic facility that is well liked by the community and serves a need. I do believe the town needs to engage in some long term strategic planning for the WARF to determine the best way forward in stopping the operating loss and addressing the future capital needs. Once this is complete the community should be made aware of the plan so that the issue of questioning past decisions can be put to rest.

#### **Q14: What should be done about the Mosby Museum?**

Mr. Burnett: Whatever it takes to retain its ability to educate and celebrate our history and heritage.

Mr. Hamby:

- Acknowledge that significant Town resource have been expended on this structure
- Full understand easement, briefing to full council, full understanding of potential 3rd party contractors
- Acknowledge that model being recommended by task force is based on Old Jail Museum, which is losing money

Mr. Henson: The conclusions of the task force that recently extensively studied what options are available for the Mosby house ought to be given the utmost consideration in deciding the best course of action. Much time, effort and expense has been expended in making the house ideally suited to life as a museum, preserving it's historic character in the process. Finding the right private entity with which to partner that can operate it as a museum could capitalize upon the town's proximity to other nearby Civil War tourism sites. Such an arrangement would cost the town essentially nothing, and every visitor that comes to the museum is a potential shopper, diner, lodger, etc.

Mr. Kravetz: The Council is still studying that issue and has requested staff to provide more information from the State Dept. of Historic Resources so that we can make a rational decision. I am, however, opposed to spending any more taxpayer money on it.

Mr. Carter: I think the all options should be considered and further study of the easement restrictions and possible removal of those restrictions should be researched. It definitely should not be allowed to continue in a deficit position.

**Q15: What is to be done about Broadview?**

Mr. Burnett: Too complex of a question to answer absent of details. Happy to provide an opinion once details are known.

Mr. Hamby:

- Move forward with compromise plan developed between VDOT and business owners
- Re-establish funding of revenue share with VDOT
- Highest priority transportation issue in Warrenton

Mr. Henson: As I see it, there are four concerns with Broadview, and I'll list them here in order of priority as I perceive them: public safety, efficient movement of ever-increasing volumes of traffic, business accessibility, and aesthetics. The plan to construct a number of median islands along Broadview has been thoroughly studied, and seems to be a very reasonable approach that should help significantly to make the area safer, while having limited or no negative effect on access to nearby businesses. It has the potential to beautify the area considerably. Fixing rush hour traffic flow along Broadview will require much more creative (and likely expensive) solutions that may ultimately have to be contemplated if the population of northern Culpeper county grows as has been planned.

Mr. Kravetz: Broadview Ave. needs to be modernized and redone to create more crosswalks and eliminate all the accidents waiting to happen.

Mr. Carter: Broadview needs to be improved and the previous plan that was contemplated and partly funded should be resurrected. VDOT funding needs to be reestablished.

**Q16: How do we attract more business to Main Street storefronts?**

Mr. Burnett: We need to remain on the cutting edge of business friendly policies. The focus should be on retaining and growing existing businesses as their success is the best sales tool possible for attracting new ventures. Businesses face a series of ever changing challenges and the successful ones are able to adapt to those changes and flourish. We need to have an understanding of what those challenges are and be prepared to provide support to both current and future businesses to overcome them.

Mr. Hamby:

- Improve condition and access to existing parking lots, alternate one way streets between Main and Lee
- Research incentives to property owners to upgrade and enhance their floor space
- Increase number of people living in Old Town via well planned in-fill development

Mr. Henson: An empty storefront in Old Town is a sorely missed opportunity, and too many have been vacant for too long. As a conservative, I'm all for letting the market determine rental values, but I hate

seeing dormant retail space in the central business district. Gaining a “critical mass” of retail establishments downtown, however that can be achieved, would firmly establish Warrenton as a shopping destination for people well beyond Fauquier County, and lead to a self-sustaining, vibrant regional hub of commerce. Once that happens, everyone will want to be a part of the Old Town scene.

Mr. Kravetz: We're trying to do that through our Economic Development Manager. However, as I have stated numerous times, there is more to this Town than Main Street. Our efforts should be Town-wide.

Mr. Carter: Continue to support a vigorous economic development effort. Help business owners by making government processes cooperative and efficient. Address the need for a comprehensive parking study.

#### **Q17: How many more housing units can Warrenton accept?**

Mr. Burnett: How many can our infrastructure support? We should get far away from the “build it and they will come” philosophy. Utilities, schools, traffic, public safety, community services and a host of other areas need to be fully assessed to determine their current capacity levels and future growth potential as a first step.

Mr. Hamby:

- Focus on infill development that respects existing character of neighborhoods and are walkable
- Large scale single family developments are built out
- Increase availability of high quality work-force housing

Mr. Henson: That question is answered by the existing town zoning. If current zoning is followed, there is sufficient water and wastewater treatment capacity to serve the remaining residentially zoned land within the town. Deviations from current zoning that permits residential development within previously commercial or industrial zoned parcels, or increasing density in existing residential zones, should be permitted only if there is significant net benefit to the town by so doing.

Mr. Kravetz: With what has been approved and not yet built I think we're getting close to the end.

Mr. Carter: I do not know enough about this subject to answer this question. I will certainly get up to speed on this issue as I learn more about the undeveloped land in the town and the zoning for those parcels.

#### **Q18: What type of businesses do you want to see in Warrenton?**

Mr. Burnett: Businesses that support our economic drivers such as tourism and agriculture.

Mr. Hamby:

- Match businesses to the various areas of town

- Encourage and support locally owned businesses, while realizing a slight growth in regional or nationally owned businesses
- Updated zoning and comprehensive planning to support overall goals and objectives

Mr. Henson: That is a question that will ultimately be answered by the residents of the town and the market, but my personal preference is for businesses that provide unique retail and dining opportunities--stores and restaurants that augment the reputation of Warrenton as a destination not to be missed. A business that provides our local workforce with employment opportunities, expands the town's tax base and can be located within an area of town that fits well with surrounding businesses and residents should be welcomed.

Mr. Kravetz: ?

Mr. Carter: Successful businesses.

**Q19: The Council is 7 votes. How do you plan to get 3 others on the issues that you care about?**

Mr. Burnett: My answer would exclusively depend on the issue itself since different methods need to be used for different situations.

Mr. Hamby:

- Open dialog
- Compromise
- Provide proper time and background information leading up to decision making votes

Mr. Henson: Consensus starts with effective listening--you have to hear and understand what your fellow councilpersons' positions and concerns are before you can begin to find common ground. In return, being able to express my views on an issue in a way that is calm, reasoned and non confrontational is most likely to convince others why there may be a better way to approach something.

Mr. Kravetz: By working with my colleagues.

Mr. Carter: I plan to communicate my ideas effectively and ask for my colleagues support.