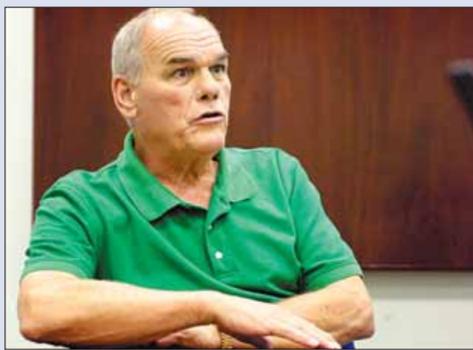


WHERE THEY STAND

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Greenwood mayor

Election Day: Nov. 6 ■ **Voting hours:** 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. ■ **Web extra:** Expanded answers and more questions at thejournalnet.com



CHARLES HENDERSON, Republican, incumbent

On Nov. 6, voters in Greenwood will pick a mayor. Assistant managing editor Michele Holtkamp-Frye interviewed the candidates on a wide range of issues. Voters have a right to know where the candidates stand. Use these pages as a guide to help you make your voting decision.



DAVID PAYNE, independent

Henderson

Need a variety. "I think that we have a good variety of jobs in Greenwood, and the culture of Greenwood is such that we need all kinds. We're a very diverse community when it comes to employment." Said Greenwood didn't suffer during the most recent recession because of diversity of employment. One company shutting down doesn't affect us overall. We're doing a pretty good job of mixing and matching. City does not have too many warehouse jobs. Could use more, but could use other higher paying skilled manufacturing jobs. Example is Urology of Indiana and the great jobs with high salaries in that building.



What types of industries and businesses are missing in Greenwood? Does Greenwood need more warehouse jobs? What is the mayor's role in recruiting new business?

Payne

City needs to have a strategic plan for the type of business wanted to locate here. Said the city has enough retail, warehouse and fast-food jobs. Some good quality restaurants are starting to come, and that's a plus. "It all gets back to sitting down in public forums and getting the shape of the community, and then making that happen. If we do it on our own, then it's only what government thinks it needs to be."

Henderson

City sort of had an overall policy of not doing abatements for anything other than manufacturing and distribution. Wouldn't do retail. Broke away from that with incentive for Cabela's. What businesses shouldn't qualify has to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Maybe a retailer like Cabela's should get an incentive, but a distribution company shouldn't get it. "We don't have that much space left for the big distribution. We're getting close to fulfilling that niche."



What types of businesses should get a tax abatement? Which should not?

Payne

Thinks that businesses that want to come to Greenwood and that are going to provide good, quality jobs with some decent salaries and won't be a drain on city services should be offered tax abatements. Those that shouldn't get abatements are retail. They provide jobs but draw money away from a community because they buy products elsewhere and the profits go elsewhere. A good-paying job is one that can support a family of four and allow for the purchase of a home.

Henderson

Some people say that, but the thing is, it hasn't. Officers combat that by aggressive patrol along County Line Road. City has more visibility than ever before. Chief is going to propose transferring money into overtime during holiday season just to increase patrol. He talked about hiring part-time officers, but since many of the city's officers have second jobs, just let officers have the extra time and pay them overtime. Then it doesn't cost the city any more in benefits or equipment.



Some say the city's crime rate, especially violent crime, will increase because of proximity to Indianapolis. How will you combat that?

Payne

Thinks the police department is doing the best it can with what it has to work with. Said department is understaffed and overworked and is now a reactive department instead of a proactive one. Crime does come here because of growth and proximity to Indianapolis. "We are seeing an increase in serious crime." 2006 was busiest year ever for the police department. Police have to be proactive. Officers want to be but can't do it right now. Getting more personnel is key. Won't happen overnight, but is a long-term process. Should add police officers on a routine basis. Then start instituting programs to help prevent crime. Preventing crime involves residents' involvement, not just the police department. That's why communication is so important. Would get residents involved in all aspects of city government.

Henderson

Is having regular conversations with Indiana Department of Transportation about that road. City is partnering with the county on the study. City's part is expanding our portion of County Roads 750 and 700 to four or five lanes.



County officials are considering an east-west thoroughfare linking Interstate 65 to State Road 37. The proposed routes would involve Worthsville Road. What is Greenwood's role in building that road? What's your approach to helping the city land a Worthsville Road interchange?

Payne

City needs east-west road and interchange. Involves other governments as well, but city should be involved so it can be maintained to the standards that we want it to be. Is on the transportation committee for the city's comprehensive plan. Wants better traffic flow throughout the city. Wants to get State Road 135 back to the type of road it was intended to be, which was a north-south road with local traffic diverted onto frontage roads. Will have a financial commitment.

Henderson

Yes, will follow it. Always have and always will. Will not go against what the law is. Said there isn't another government body in the county that has had fewer closed door sessions.



Will you follow the letter and spirit of the Open Door Law? What if an attorney, elected official or anyone else makes a recommendation or request that goes against what you know the law is?

Payne

Will absolutely fulfill letter and spirit of the Open Door Law. Thinks it would be interesting if someone wanted to do something outside the boundaries of that law and would wonder if that is the kind of person the city should be doing business with. Law is there for a purpose. Would not do business with anyone who suggested otherwise.

Henderson

Greenwood will never have a downtown like the one that existed in 1950 or like other cities located away from a metropolitan area have. Wants to tear down some buildings on Madison Avenue and widen the street, take out old parks department garages and put in a walking park, gazebos and fountains and have developers open coffee shops. Wants to make area an arts and crafts fair attraction and tie in with the amphitheater. Private sector has to step up to a certain degree and be willing to invest if city is willing to help. City can help by changing some zoning rules, such as the requirements on parking spaces and not requiring as big of setbacks. Could also work with utilities to relocate poles and lines.



Is revitalization of downtown Greenwood a top priority? Why? Should taxpayer dollars be used? What do you propose be done? What will it take for the historic downtown area to truly function and thrive?

Payne

Is a priority, but is a long-term project. Has had a lot of false starts. City needs to take an active role. Would explore the possibility of making that a tax-increment financing district to improve the infrastructure and buildings, and would explore how to give grants to property owners to revitalize their properties. Downtown includes Market Plaza area. A developer could really turn that area around with business condos. Doesn't have an immediate solution. Some committees have some great ideas for the area and wants that to continue. City has to take a leadership role and push the effort.

Henderson

City has a very good police department. Been better supervised in past three years than has been for quite some time. Police are doing a good job at solving and preventing crime. Said city hasn't had bank robberies since started parking cars at banks. Chief is going to have to assess the department and personnel needs and present a proposal to the council. "As you know, I froze the budget. The new council coming in, they are going to get a list of everything in the budget that was a one-time thing." Council will learn how much money is in the budget but can't be spent. If, early in the year, city needs new police officers or firefighters, and after state legislature is done in March, council can decide to add new police officers or firefighters.



What is your assessment of the Greenwood Police Department? Are city police adequately supervised and are they preventing and solving crime? Should the city create positions for additional police officers?

Payne

No matter how well-trained an agency is, if you don't have the personnel, just can't be effective. Department is probably at least 10 road officers and five investigators short of what is needed now to have an effective department. Said department lacks supervision. "The problem is there is no direction." Officers are out trying to do what they believe should be done. "In essence, I know the current mayor always says 'Do more with less.' It doesn't matter how smart you are or how smart you're trying to work, you can't be in two places at once." On one night, if only five officers are working, a situation could happen where two officers respond to an accident, another goes to the mall on a shoplifting report and another is taking a complaint or report, only one officer is left to handle the entire city until the others are free. Was chief of investigations four years ago, and at that time nine detectives had 40 to 50 active cases each. Detectives are forced to constantly investigate the cases that are easy to solve just so they could close some files and manage the caseload, but they receive more cases every day. Current chief has said that 2006 was the busiest year ever. "My assessment is they are doing the best job they can with what they have to work with." The department is not adequately supervised from the top two or three officials. Would advocate adding more personnel. Would replace city's police chief, Joe Pitcher.

Henderson

In some instances, it is absolutely not. On the board of zoning appeals and the planning commissioner, mayor is not allowed to interfere and those boards can't be affected by politics. Appoints members and tells them his philosophy. Has one appointee to the police merit and fire merit commissions. Then stays away.



Should the mayor get involved in decisions made by his appointees on various boards or commissions? If so, how and when? What if they don't listen to your recommendation?

Payne

No matter what happens in the city, the buck stops at the mayor's office. That position is responsible. Mayor has opportunity to make appointments to all boards and commissions. Those appointees should hold same principles as mayor does. Not sure the mayor should always be directly involved, but when something is controversial, mayor should find out what is going on and why and explain it to the public. There are going to be problems and challenges and disagreements, and that's fine and that needs to happen. Good healthy discussion is good. That's how you grow. Mayor needs to understand what happened and why and decide if he should be involved. At least get both sides at the table.

Henderson

Does want the park board to wait until after legislature does something about property taxes. But wants the plan brought forward so the council and the public can see it. But park board shouldn't ask for money yet, and no action will be taken. Said he miscommunicated that. Doesn't know how much money should be spent. Has heard \$10 million to \$20 million, and the numbers are all over the board. All four park board members asked to serve and are not his puppets. Wants the trails done. Wants to see the city get a new pool. Said the aquatic center grew out of that and that is the park board's plans, not his, and that is OK. "It's one of those things that got caught up with everyone focused on the pool and the aquatic center, and that sort of got lost in the mix. The public, even myself, sort of got into this thing of where it is all about the pool when it really wasn't." Trails are moving forward. Got the parkland in one big clump. Park board needs to come forward and show whole plan, and pool is just a part of it. Has done some of that.



The park board has been planning development of a 72-acre park to include softball fields, trails, a dog park and a pool. A similar park in Kokomo cost \$6.5 million. Do you support the plan? Why or why not? What kind of pool should be built? How much money should be spent?

Payne

Agrees that the city needs a new pool facility. Not sold that city needs something as elaborate as what's been proposed. Would be a lot of money. If every other issue in the city was resolved, the city had the cash, and he was sure the public wanted it, then maybe. Recognizes that the project has been pared down and the park board has conducted surveys. But in campaigning has knocked on 1,500 doors, and public is overwhelmingly not in support. "So people aren't voicing their opinion until you knock on their door." May be some flaw in the park department survey. Park board says current pool loses some significant money each year. Seems like a lot of money considering the short season it is in use. But none of the city services exists to make money. City government is not in business of making a profit, so equating the cost as to why city needs to build a new pool is probably not valid. "We are not there to make money. We are there to provide services." Would support a bigger pool. Doesn't think the new park is the best location. Wishes there was a better place. Doesn't think the city should spend the amount of money the park board is proposing. Favors construction in phases. "To spend that money right up front when there are so many other things, I think it is foolish at this point."

Henderson

"If you had to say we're going to have one or the other, I'd have to say trails because I think more people are going to benefit from that." But both have high priority; both are needed.



What's more important: Trails or a new pool?

Payne

Depends on each person and their status in life. Both share equal importance to difference groups of people. At his life stage, trails are more important. But a pool is more important to a neighbor with kids. Both given equal consideration because they serve different segments of society.

Henderson

Asked who has been accused. Said that the city reviews all the claims, and board of works member Warren Beville reviews claims closely. When he has questions, he goes to the person who submitted it and copies the mayor. Whenever you have someone who has an opportunity to misuse funds, you hope you have people with the character who aren't going to do that. In past years, has restricted the use of credit cards and the number of credit cards that employees have, and who can charge and who can't. "We monitor that very closely." Clerk-treasurer has statutory authority to not pay a claim if she deems it not payable. She has responsibility to review and look at claims, and deny claims and explain why.



Public officials throughout Johnson County have been accused of using taxpayer-owned property for private work, giving it away, stealing from the coffers, running up extremely high cell phone bills or staying overnight at conferences but never attending the sessions. How would you make sure that such exploitations or nepotism does not occur in the city?

Payne

"I think all those people ought to be in jail. I really do. It's just an atrocity of trust." Lead by example. "You don't take advantage of situations. It's just not right." Would hire people of integrity who are honest. There has to be a constant assessment of what's going on as you do it. Can't just hire them and send them out into the world and never communicate with them. Would hire good quality people who understand their role and have a desire to do what is best. The moment you find out that something like that has occurred, you put a stop to it, terminate the employee, clean it up, let the public know, and move on and then start to rebuild the trust.

Henderson

No.



Should taxpayers pay for spouses or other family members or friends to accompany city officials on trips?

Payne

No. Absolutely not.

Henderson

Top priorities are any neighborhoods with the old concrete streets, such as Cielo Vista, Whispering Trails, Crestview. Then worst streets with asphalt are Glen Oak Commons. Based on what we've done, to bring city to where we are just in a maintenance level for streets, not rebuilding, need another \$5 million to \$6 million in major work. Then city would need about \$1.5 million every year in maintenance. Will ask the new city council in January to do a bond of \$3 million to \$4 million. Every year of waiting causes more and more deterioration, and streets fall further and further behind. Resents the fact that people are saying there has been no plan. There has been many times, and the city council has said no.



Which streets are the priorities to be repaired and how would you pay for those repairs?

Payne

Said that's a matter of sitting down with the city council. There will be several new faces, and they are going to have to say how they want to do this. Wants to come up with a plan and the best way to do this. Doesn't have a list of streets that need to be repaired. Said the mayor has talked about streets in his own neighborhood that need repaired, but there are some streets that are in worse shape. Would provide leadership from the mayor's office to the city council. Would come up with a plan. "If it's bonding, then we bond. If we can find money elsewhere, let's use that money." Wouldn't always favor borrowing from other city funds, because that could cause problems as well.

Henderson

City is doing that. Urology of Indiana has life sciences jobs. Buildings and areas on Emerson Avenue and County Line Road are getting tax abatements, and that is helping bring those kinds of jobs is. Asset is location between two hospitals and the spin-off business from that. One office might have one doctor but 10 technicians.



How can the city attract life sciences jobs, as the comprehensive plan recommends?

Payne

Said the city must go after those kinds of jobs. Would work to sell the area to those employers. Would talk about transportation and the existing life sciences jobs in Indianapolis. Would lay out the benefits and get people to come here. Thinks the Johnson County Development Corp. ought to be more active in doing that. City ought to be working hand in hand in attracting the type of business that we would like to have here in town.

Henderson

City didn't use any taxpayer money for that project. Only tax money is the tax money from Cabela's paying property taxes. Will know if they are thriving when the businesses that they said will come actually come. Negotiated the deal for two years. "I don't think we could have gotten a better deal." Two other locations that may have gotten it instead of Greenwood.



Businesses and residents questioned the decision to give a tax break to Cabela's, saying that the retailer may not bring the amount of people and tourism it claimed. How will you know if it paid off? How could you have gotten a better deal for Greenwood?

Payne

Wasn't involved in the negotiations. Knows that Cabela's has a core group of businesses that follows it where ever it goes. They are going to have to have that core group of businesses. One major concern is there was a time you could be assured that a corporation was going to exist forever. But that isn't the way it works anymore. What if it goes away? What if there is a bankruptcy? What if it just sits? Is the city really not liable ever for those bonds? Hopes that contract requires Cabela's to report back to the city in certain increments and is required to make certain progress. Would rather have seen a shorter deal, rather than this 20- to 22-year deal. Definitely is a risk that the city is taking. If it pans out, will be the best thing for Greenwood in a long time. Thinks the deal was too fast from the time the public learned about it to final approval. Didn't provide enough time for real evaluation.

Henderson

Asked how much the property tax rate went up. "We're going to do what we've been doing." Said rate didn't go up because of city government, but because the state shifted other burdens, such as inventory tax, reduced property tax credit. That's what caused it to go up. Will continue to hold the line and do the best possible. Said the property tax rate went down for several years, and then the state got involved in reassessments. Rate is state's fault.



The city's property tax rate went up this year. What are you going to do about property taxes?

Payne

Cities can make sure that whatever money is being spent is being used efficiently, not being wasted and that officials do not ask for any more than we absolutely need to provide services.