

## 2009 Candidate Questionnaire

### SECTION I

#### BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot

First Name	Middle Initial or Nickname	Last Name
Dennis	R.	Higgins

2. Office sought (include office, jurisdiction, position/district number):

**Kent City Council Pos. 4**

3. Are you the incumbent?       Yes       No

4. How long have you resided in this district/city?

**15 yrs.**

5. How long have you resided in King County?

**20 yrs.**

6. Is the office sought partisan or nonpartisan?       Partisan       Nonpartisan

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

#### CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: Dennis R. Higgins for Kent City Council Pos. 4

Address: P.O. Box 5605

City/State/Zip: Kent, WA 98064-5605

Campaign Phone: 253-508-9999

Campaign Fax: n/a

Campaign E-mail: dennis@dennisrhiggins.com

Campaign Website: http://www.dennisrhiggins.com

#### POLITICAL BACKGROUND

1. Beginning with the most recent position, please list public offices you have held. Include positions on appointive boards or commissions.

Public Office	Elective or Appointive?	Dates Held	Leadership Role (if any)
Kent Hotel/Motel Lodging Tax Advisory Committee	Appointive	Dec. 2007 - present	
Citizens for Kent Schools	Appointive	2001-02; 2005-06; 2009-present	Chair

2. If you ran for public office but were not elected, please list those races below:

Office Title	Year of Run

## SECTION II

In this section, we are seeking responses that reflect the four ratings criteria: involvement, effectiveness, character, and knowledge. These are defined as follows:

- **Involvement:** What has the candidate done previously in family, neighborhood, community, volunteer work, employment or public life to suggest readiness to accomplish challenging objectives? How do these activities demonstrate readiness for the challenges unique to the office sought?
  - **Effectiveness:** Has the candidate demonstrated promise of being productive in the office sought? Has the candidate shown the ability to work with other people?
  - **Character:** Do the candidate's personal traits show the ability to take on the responsibilities of campaigning for and holding the public office she or he is seeking? Is the candidate a leader, participant or observer? Is the candidate trustworthy, reliable and candid?
  - **Knowledge:** Has the candidate demonstrated the willingness and ability to learn and adapt? Does the candidate understand the duties and challenges of the office sought? Does the candidate have a firm grasp of the issues important to his or her constituency and their potential effects?
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1. In one page or less, why are you running for this office? (Note: the interview committee will be given a copy of this statement before your interview; at the beginning of your interview you will have the opportunity to expand on this statement in any way you wish.)

**Simply put, I have the experience Kent needs. I have been involved in all aspects of local government, including transportation, zoning, public safety, emergency management, public health and human services. My job as a mapping/information technology analyst and supervisor is to help cities, other local governments, and citizens make smart decisions based on data and analysis.**

**I want to help develop Kent's economy, preserve and enhance public safety and the environment, and craft responsible and innovative solutions to problems such as transportation.**

**Steering the city through an unprecedented budget situation is job number one. Kent must continue to actively promote economic development in an effort to provide good jobs close to home, and to help maintain the City's fiscal health. It will require broad-based knowledge of municipal government as well as hard work to lead the city through these financial times.**

**I will bring a much needed set of skills and experience to the Council. With my professional involvement in all aspects of municipal government I can hit the ground running, and my information technology perspective will help make better informed decisions.**

**Intangibles are also important. I commute to downtown Seattle daily – as do over one-third of Kent residents – but the commuter's perspective on our transportation system is missing from the current Council. My young family's involvement with PTA and public school activities will promote greater collaboration between the city and the School District.**

2. Describe your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek.

**First, I am hard-working and responsible. I follow through on commitments that I make. I study issues and prepare myself well for the many committee meetings and presentations that I give as part of my career and my community activities.**

**Second, I am a good listener and a respected leader. I am approachable and open-minded. I am actively interested in learning the perspectives of the people I work with, whether I completely agree with their point of view or not, in order to make informed decisions. I exert leadership carefully. I respect people's time and I speak up when needed to make a point, but I do not speak only for speaking's sake.**

**Lastly, I have extensive and broad-based municipal government experience. In my position at the King County GIS Center, I have worked on all aspects of municipal government, including public safety, transportation, land use planning, emergency management, facility siting and management, and information technology infrastructure. I create and manage an annual budget of over \$1 million; I hire, supervise, and evaluate the performance of several employees.**

3. Please describe, in sufficient detail, one to three accomplishments or contributions of which you are most proud. These examples should illustrate skills and capabilities you think apply to the office you are seeking. These accomplishments may have occurred at any time in your personal, professional, or public life.

**I am proud of my efforts to improve the schools my children have attended. These efforts have spanned many years, different committees and activities. Specifically, I am most proud of my work on the Kent School District levy campaigns, where I coordinated the design, purchase, construction, distribution, maintenance, cleanup and storage of yard signs. The Kent School District depends on continued levy funding for approximately one in five teaching positions, making the elections critical for maintaining class size and quality of instruction. Because of my successful stewardship of the sign sub-committee, I was promoted by my peers to chair of the Citizens for Kent Schools.**

**I am also very proud of the large body of work I have performed throughout my career to make information more accessible and useable by the public. When I was a programmer in the mid-late 1990's I led an early effort to put maps and detailed property, district and tax information onto King County's website. Today that effort continues in the form of King County "iMap", the most widely-used King County website, which our employees built and maintain. We are constantly pursuing ways to add to the large amount of information that is already available, and to make it easier to use. I believe my background in information technology will be extremely valuable on the city council.**

4. Please list or describe current and past activities in the community in which you have acquired skills that relate to the office you seek. Include your role in the activity and the year(s) in which you were involved. Involvement consists of many areas such as family, neighborhood, community, employment, or public life.

#### **Kent School District**

- **Citizen's Facilities Planning Committee: 1998-1999: reviewed and prioritized district needs for new and refurbished school facilities; recommended items for inclusion in 2000 bond proposal**
- **Citizen's Boundary Committee: 2006-2007: created and reviewed proposals for balancing enrollment at elementary, middle, and high schools in the district; solicited public comment; recommended final boundary proposal to the School Board**

#### **PTA**

- **Soos Creek PTA: Legislation Chair, 1996-1998: numerous committees and volunteer activities in support of educational and community enrichment opportunities at the school**
- **Martin Sortun PTA: Legislation Chair, 2004-present: numerous committees and volunteer activities in support of educational and community enrichment opportunities at the school**
- **Kent Area Council PTA: Legislation Chair, 1998-2000, 2004-present: review and report on legislative action at the school district, city, county, state, and federal levels that impact quality of education and the betterment of children; numerous committees such as Audit, Awards, and Scholarship**
- **Golden Acorn Award winner, Soos Creek PTA 2000; Kent Area Council PTA 2000; Martin Sortun PTA 2007: "presented to a volunteer in recognition of his/her dedication and service to children and youth"**
- **Outstanding Advocate Award winner: Kent Area Council PTA 2007: "presented to recognize and honor individuals for their advocacy work on behalf of children and youth"**

#### **Community Organizations**

- **City of Kent Lodging Tax Advisory Committee: 2007-present: review income from City of Kent lodging tax and advise/recommend the Kent City Council on tax rates and proposed uses of tax revenue, in an effort to promote and increase tourism in the City of Kent**
- **Citizens for Kent Schools: 2001-2002, 2005-2006, 2009-2010 (acting Chair): campaign work in support of Kent Sch. Dist. levy and bond elections; chaired the yard sign committee in 2005-2006**
- **Citizens for Kent Recreation and Aquatics Future: Treasurer, 2008-present: responsible for managing committee finances and reporting contributions/expenditures to the Washington Public Disclosure Commission; committee supports bond election campaign for a new public pool in Kent**
- **Kiwanis Club of Kent: Friday Noon Club Member: 2008-present: community volunteer activities**
- **St. John the Baptist Catholic Church: Youth Group Outreach Co-chair, 2007-present: compile resources for youth group volunteer opportunities in the community, i.e. food banks, clothing drives, yard work help for the infirm, etc.**

5. Please describe the duties of the office you seek. Which are the most important duties and why?

**The Kent City Council sets policy for and provides oversight of the city government. The members are the voice and representatives of the citizens of Kent. The council examines city functions at a macro- and micro- level, and proposes/reviews changes to the laws that affect/control city functions. The council reviews, suggests changes to, and gives final approval to the budget that is proposed by the executive (mayor). The most important duty of the council is to reach out to the citizens that are represented, to solicit input and feedback, and to connect citizens with their government.**