

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
Thomas	E "Tom"	Vance

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

Sammamish City Council, Position 3

3. Are you the incumbent? Yes No

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

15 years

5. How long have you resided in King County?

1978-81, 1993-2009

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

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: Tom Vance for Council

Address: 22406 NE 25th Way

City/State/Zip: Sammamish, WA 98074

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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)
Sammamish Planning Commission	Appointive	2008-2009	Chair (2009) Vice Chair (2008)
Sammamish Park Bond Advisory Committee	Appointive	2006-2007	Chair

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

Office Title	Year of Run

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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.)

I've lived here since 1994. I care about Sammamish. I want Sammamish to develop into the great city described in our Vision Statement: "The vision of Sammamish is a community of families. A blend of small-town atmosphere with a suburban character...."

I bring an enthusiasm for the process and the subject matter of city government. I believe I bring an ability to work with others to arrive at consensus on the difficult issues. When called, I can provide leadership to move an issue or process along a path to completion.

As a City, we are celebrating our 10th year in 2009. The next 10 years will bring big challenges as we confront growth management, the development of our traffic and transit system, keeping up our parks and recreation system, and developing the civic institutions, such as a Teen Center and a Community Center that will serve our citizens.

The Town Center development will be an important part of our future, as a gathering place for our citizens, as a way of managing our growth, as a vehicle for introducing new ideas that can be applied across the city.

As Chair of the Planning Commission, I am currently working on the development regulations and design standards for the Town Center. I would like to take this experience and knowledge to the next level: the City Council.

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

I think I have the ability to listen, discuss and ask questions to understand the issues. I can lead the discussion if needed. I think I have a good ability to gauge the group's need to learn and discuss before making final decisions.

I have friends that I have worked with for years that are advocates or activists for various issues, including environmental issues, trails and open space, or roads and transit. While I may be as passionate about the issues as they are, I am more likely than some of them to be willing to move the issue along incrementally if that is the only way to get something accomplished in the long run.

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.

1. In 2007, I was appointed to the Parks Bond Advisory Committee. This was a committee charged with evaluating a very long list of potential parks projects; selecting appropriate projects, and presenting the list and a recommendation for a parks bond to the City Council.

I was selected to co-chair this committee. When the other co-chair was unable to lead the discussion, I set our weekly agendas and led the discussion.

The City staff had set up a rather structured process for evaluating the nearly \$100 million in projects. I understood right away that the process would work well with a committee of four or five members. We had a sixteen person group, with strong personalities, many with competing agendas -- sports fields, trails and open space, an aquatic center. No one had a real understanding of all the projects. I understood that the group was going to need an extended period of questions, answers and discussion (sometimes heated) of all the projects.

I am quite sure that the City staff were concerned that we were not going to make our deadlines. When it appeared to me, however, that the group (including myself) had achieved a good understanding of all the projects, and had time to think about all the various strategies for putting together a list of projects for a bond, I decided to take the discussion to a different level. Instead of working with large notebooks filled with information on projects, I asked our then new Parks Director to bring her laptop computer to the next meeting and have an overhead projector and screen set up for our next meeting. I requested that she include all the projects, divided by type on an excel spreadsheet, complete with attached costs. In one meeting we were able to eliminate nearly \$60 million in projects.

From that point on, we refined the list and created a cogent rationale for a selection of parks projects to turn over to the City Council. Final vote in the committee for the recommendation was 12-2.

2. One of the most potentially contentious duties of a political party chair is to conduct an endorsements meeting, especially during a presidential election year. These meetings typically have high attendance and voting members are typically very passionate about their candidate. As Chair of the 5th District Democrats, I presided over the endorsement meeting in 2004. At the end of the meeting, we had endorsed a complete set of candidates. I was gratified when a key supporter (also a member of a local school board) for one of the statewide candidates approached me after the meeting and told me that although his candidate did not win endorsement, he thought the endorsement process had been conducted in a fair and equitable manner, and that he appreciated my leadership.

Of course, I hope that the above help to describe my organizational and leadership skills. More that that, however, I think they illustrate the need to be as fair and equitable as possible, making sure everyone in the room has a chance to understand and fully discuss the issues before decisions are made. Sometimes there is a perception that there are winners and losers in a decision a City Council must make. In such cases, the Council must make sure that everyone concerned is engaged and gets a fair hearing. If that happens, there is much less chance of acrimony afterwards.

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.

2001- 2007 King County Elections, Volunteer voting location Inspector. Worked most elections in this period. The Inspector is charged with managing a voting location. Obviously, organizing and managing people is important, but I think that I learned as much about patience as anything else.

Chair, 5th District Democrats, 2002-2004. Sharpened my organizing skills. By the end of 2003, the local party was reduced to a dozen or so people meeting at a local high school library. By the end of 2004, 75 to 125 people would come to meetings and our mailing list had grown to several hundred.

Elected delegate to the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston. There are only about 90 delegates, and only 5 came from the 8th Congressional District. You have to convince a lot of people that you are the right person to represent them.

2005-2007: Wrote and Edited an email newsletter, "Sammamish Comment: Stuff happening around the City of Sammamish." This was a non-partisan discussion of topics such as the Sammamish Town Center, parks and recreation, growth management, TDR, roads and transit and other issues typically being discussed either at the Council or with one of the commissions.

2006-2007: Park Bond Advisory Committee. I chaired this committee. See my comments in Section 3.

2008-2009: Sammamish Planning Commission. Served as Vice Chair in 2008, Chair in 2009. Current work on design standards, development regulations, zoning and other issues of the Sammamish Town Center development.

1979-Present: Happily married to Mary Lynn Vance, who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1991, became disabled by MS fatigue in 1993. I was chief caregiver during her pioneering stem cell transplant for MS in 1999 (at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, UW Medical Center), which stopped the progression of the disease. I continue to be her primary caregiver.

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

Sammamish has a Council-Manager government, with a City Manager who manages the day to day activities of the city. The council elects a Mayor annually from among the Council to chair city council meetings and act as a representative of the Council and the City.

Our Council is elected at-large, so that each councilperson can be said to represent the city as a whole. Our City Council proposes and passes ordinances, approves changes to the Comprehensive Plan, and makes other resolutions and decisions.

Although the center of the Council's work is at the twice monthly public meetings and the twice monthly public study sessions, councilpersons will also have responsibilities working with outside organizations that might involve fire and rescue, traffic and transit, or growth management among other areas of interest to the city.

One of the continuing issues facing each councilperson is balancing the needs of individual citizens or citizens groups with the needs of the city as a whole.

Perhaps the most important responsibility of the Council as a whole is in ensuring the financial viability of the City. The current council has done a great job of managing our finances: no current debt; AAA bond rating. I would want to continue the six year forecasting process that Councilperson Fellingge helped establish.

My experience and observation suggests that our most successful councilpersons have been those who were best prepared, through thorough study of the issues involved and information provided. Of course, this has also been my experience at the Planning Commission.

It has been said that the average city councilperson should expect to spend as much as 20 hours a week in activities and study time on Council business. I can well believe it.