

Fort Bragg Advocate News Candidate questions for the
May 7, 2013 Municipal Election for Fort Bragg City Council

Answered by Derek Hoyle

1) *Give a little background about yourself, touching on these key points:*

-How long have you lived in Fort Bragg?

-What is your level of education?

-What is your current occupation?

After visiting Fort Bragg in 1983, I gladly moved to the Mendocino Coast in 1992 and have been enjoying life in Fort Bragg for the last 13 years, currently in my small rented alley house near Harold O. Bainbridge Park.

I don't have much in the way of a formal College education as I've been a life long entrepreneur, and having started three small businesses before I was even out of high school, I just kept following that path much to my satisfaction.

I do have some well rounded 'credentials' and credits from San Jose City College (Small Business Management Certificates), DeAnza College (Auto Tech Certificates), Foothill College (Broadcast radio/mass media studies), and College of the Redwoods (Fine Art), and the Mendocino Art Center (Fine Art), but I never pursued any sort of degree as I never saw a practical reason for spending the time on one along my life path.

As to my occupation, currently I'm just about finished up as the Executive Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters Mendocino County, so I'm very open to other positions and opportunities.

2) *Why are you running for City Council?*

Because I love Fort Bragg and it's people, I love the small town atmosphere and geographic location, so I want to see Fort Bragg thrive, unlike so many former mill towns that are in poor economic health and are barely surviving.

Quality of Life is one of my paramount focuses, if we don't take care of that we'll have a town as bland, ugly and dingy and many others already are, and this is too unique a town to let decay into a place where nobody wants to live or visit.

I believe that I can help make a positive difference in Fort Bragg's future by working with the Citizens and Businesses to focus on what it is that defines Fort Bragg, good and bad, so we can work on improving those not so good areas.

3) *What have you done to prepare yourself to serve as a council member?*

My web site covers that in much more detail, but basically I've attended most every City Council Meeting since April of 2009, and attended roughly three quarters of the City Council Committee Meetings for the last 2 1/2 years, and nearly every Mill Site Meeting and more, and most all of the City Staff already knows me, which gives me an excellent background on how the City works, so if I'm elected I won't need to spend much time to be brought up to speed.

4) *What community, nonprofit or volunteer groups are you involved with, and in what capacity?*

Again, my web site has much more info, but as the Executive Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters Mendocino County INC, I've spent the last year dissolving the Corporation and I'm nearly finished, it's a very sad state of affairs and reflects poorly on our current culture that seems to feel that our youth aren't worth nurturing.

I'm the Recording Secretary and Meeting Facilitator for the Mendocino Coast Biomass Collaboration which has been exploring ways to utilize excess forest biomass to produce electricity and/or bio-fuel, and bring some well paying jobs to the community.

As an FCC Licensed Amateur Radio Operator (Ham), I'm active locally by coordinating with the Police, Sheriff, County Office of Emergency Services, Hospital and other Health Care facilities to ensure that they all have Ham Radio stations and antennas ready to use in case of a wide scale disaster or other emergency.

I also participate in several of the weekly local Ham Radio Emergency Nets that take place on designated frequencies, this in order to keep in practice for an actual emergency.

I'm also a member of the Fort Bragg - Mendocino Coast Historical Society, and was on their board for 2 years, and a Docent in the stately Guest House Museum for nearly 6 years.

Over the years I've volunteered for many local service organizations like the Lions, Parents & Friends, KNYO Radio, the Fort Bragg Grange, Neighborhood Watch, Noyo Food Forest, North Coast Toy Run and more.

5) *Do you see any possibility for a conflict of interest between your occupation or personal life and serving as a council member?*

None what so ever, and should one should arise, I'm prepared to recuse myself from any discussion or vote on the issue at hand.

6) *Since none of you are incumbents, are there any subjects, such as redevelopment of the former Georgia Pacific mill site or City infrastructure issues, that you need to learn more about? Are there any regular City Council topics about which you feel more informed than most residents?*

While I can always learn more detail on any subject, I'm possibly the most informed candidate in the current election, due to my many years of attending City Council and Committee Meetings and asking questions and making Public Comments on City Issues, so I'm already seriously involved in City Government as a Concerned Citizen.

7) *In these particularly tough economic times, are there any budget categories in which you would like to see City spending increased, decreased or eliminated? How would you prioritize the City's spending and why?*

I'm very impressed at the City's continued healthy fiscal state, they are quite responsible with 'our' money and in most cases spend it most wisely.

I recently attended the City's mid-year budget review (5 hours) and the City/C.V. Starr mid-year budget review (4 hours), and I have to say that it appears to me that money is being spent and budgeted wisely and somewhat conservatively, which has turned out to be a good thing in a couple of cases, so I'm not really seeing any major places for possible improvement at this point in time.

8) *A council member needs support from a majority of the council to pass resolutions and ordinances. How do you see yourself working with other council members and City staff?*

Due to my high level of civic involvement I already know all of the Council Members and nearly all of the City Staff, and get along with all of them on a personal and professional level, so I foresee no problems in that area.

But should a problem arise, I'm quite able to maintain professional decorum for the greater good of the community.

9) *Do you have ideas for local improvements that you think have not been discussed or considered publicly? As examples, Vice Mayor Meg Courtney is very involved in creating legislation to increase recycling and reduce illegal dumping around the region. Former council member Dan Gjerde is knowledgeable about many transportation issues. He works toward greener transportation, such as promoting electric vehicle and bicycle use. What local issue might be your strong suit and how might you facilitate discussion to increase awareness of that issue?*

I'm very interested in assisting Council Member Deitz with bringing Internet Fiber

Optic connections to Fort Bragg which would be a powerful business attractant for the high tech sector.

And I'm currently exploring a business opportunity that could bring 10-15 permanent jobs to Fort Bragg, and will potentially clean up a toxic site and also close several waste streams that currently cost money to remove from our area.

I also have a keen interest in Bicycle Transportation and Electric Vehicles, both of which I have plenty of actual experience with.

10) A comment on our Facebook page asks: What do you see as the biggest obstacles to bringing businesses with quality jobs to the coast? What do you think are solutions to removing those obstacles so employers will want to locate here?

I see several possible obstacles.

One is the lack of high tech infrastructure, i.e. fiber optic links. Two, transportation in/out of the City for business and goods manufactured here. Three, we don't have the high tech skilled individuals for these potential jobs so setting up training programs is essential, and I'm glad to say that the City Council is on top of that issue and has been actively working on it. And issue Four, water.

Fort Bragg doesn't have enough water to support any more large businesses or industry that consumes large quantities of water and unless the lapsed Pudding Creek water rights can be reestablished for the Cities use, any growth will have to be in sectors that use only minimal amounts of water.

Thankfully, the City staff has been working on this crucial issue for some years now and it's only a matter of time before we'll know if those water rights can be reestablished for the benefit of the City, meanwhile they are seeking to improve the capacity of current water sources.

The water, high tech training and fiber optic issues are already being addressed, but the transportation issue has been basically dismissed as hopeless. I don't believe that to be the case and I'm currently looking into the Rail connection issues again, as a reliable rail connection would be a huge economic boost for the City.

Recently I've been speaking with a representative from the North Coast Railroad Authority, and we both feel that with some directed and concerted effort, we can have a nationwide rail link again.

I also believe we should investigate using ocean transportation in some cases for

bulk and/or oversized goods, which could open the door to other types of industry locating here.

11) *Another commenter asked: What industry do you feel could be brought into Fort Bragg that pays a living wage to get people back to work and off the welfare rolls?*

There is no obvious solution to this problem due to points I've made previously concerning high tech infrastructure/training and transportation and perhaps water, and until those issues are addressed in a sufficient manner, than no industry of any size will be motivated to locate here.

For this reason, I promote establishing many small 'cottage' specialty businesses that can be marketed under an attractive well crafted 'Fort Bragg, California' label Worldwide, these types of businesses only hire 2 to 5 people, but with enough of them it can amount to a significant drop in unemployment, add to our tax base and attract visitors from the world over.

12) *Some coast residents think we need large retailers like Big 5, Big Lots, Trader Joe's, Safeway Gas and PetCo on the Mendocino Coast. What would you say to them?*

I would say that most of those mentioned have likely run their financial numbers and deemed Fort Bragg and surrounding areas too economically depressed to make such an investment at this time and in the foreseeable future.

Also I don't want a large square footage store in Fort Bragg, it wouldn't fit in with our small town character, however, I do see a potential opportunity for an appropriately sized retail chain business coming to town because we sure do need more jobs around here.

I believe that most of the folks who would shop at such a store already drive over the hill to shop anyhow, and I believe that alone would mitigate any serious loss of business with established local 'mom & pop' stores.

I'd much rather see the sales tax money stay in Fort Bragg than elsewhere, plus our citizens would save on fuel costs by not having to go over the hill so much.

The local 'mom & pop' stores will always have the edge with genuine and personalized small town 'customer service', which many of us value over a small savings per item purchased at a chain store.

13) *If you are not elected, will you remain active in community affairs? If so, how? If you are elected, what can community members do to help you be informed and involved in important local issues?*

I'm currently the Chair of the Fort Bragg Planning Commission (a volunteer position) and I see no reason to stop serving the Citizens of Fort Bragg in that capacity if I don't win the City Council election.

And if I'm elected, I'll start a free email based listserv where I'll keep Citizens apprised of City Council affairs in a timely manner, and a running dialog can occur on any issue a Citizen wants to bring up.

And without the hassle of dealing with Facebook, Google or some other proprietary web based forum.

I'll always have an 'open door' policy in my office at City Hall during the posted hours I'm there.

14) Any closing comments?

If you want to learn more about me please see my web site at derekhoyle.net and I'd like to say that I love living in Fort Bragg, it's People are truly some of the friendliest anywhere.

In closing, I ask you to remember that I've prepared for the last four years to assume this important civic position, and I'm ready to serve the citizens of Fort Bragg if they feel that I'm the right person to steward us into a positive future.

Please vote for Derek Hoyle, in the May 7th special election. Thank you.