

Board of Directors

- Bert Bosse
- Jim Cartiglia
- Kathy Crisp
- Jim Fordice
- Gil Hutchinson
- David Kumatz
- George Malo
- Devin McClendon
- Alex Noble
- Stephen Prince
- James Selleh
- Jimmy Wilson

Advisors

Ken Connelly

Special Advisor to the Board

Wheelhouse Market Advisors

Marketing

Photography

Angie Miller

Photography

March 28, 2013

News Release and [Survey Results](#)

Citizens for Brentwood Green Space Announces Results Of City Commission Candidate Questionnaire

BRENTWOOD, TN – March 28, 2013 – Citizens for Brentwood Green Space (CBGS) President Gil Hutchinson today announced the results of a recently completed survey of candidates running for the Brentwood City Commission. “As in the last election, questions were put together by our Board of Directors to help the community gain a better understanding of where each candidate stands on preserving our cherished green space,” remarked Hutchinson. “These are really strong questions and we have very clear responses. We believe people interested in green space preservation can formulate a view towards who they will vote for from these questions and answers”.

The preservation of green space consistently ranks among the major issues in Brentwood. The City’s 2020 Plan Update confirmed that:

- Strong public interest continues in the idea of public acquisition of open space. “Management of Growth” and Preservation of Open Space” were identified as the top two most important issues among the twenty-three services and characteristics of Brentwood that were listed. In addition:
 - o 91% of our citizens ranked Growth Management as “Very important” or “Important.”
 - o 61% thought that the Preservation of the Remaining Farms and Other Large Open Space Tracts in the Community should be a “High Priority” for Brentwood. When combined with those that think this should be at “Mid to High Priority,” the percentage climbed to 81%.

The Citizens for Brentwood Green Space, Inc. is a volunteer citizens group organized as a nonprofit corporation. Their mission since 2004 has been to support and stimulate community action to preserve open space in the city of Brentwood. The group is currently active in fund raising towards helping the City of Brentwood purchase the remaining 80 acres of property near Ravenswood Farm at the new Marcella Vivrette Smith Park.

About Citizens for Brentwood Green Space, Inc.

The Citizens for Brentwood Green Space, Inc. is a volunteer citizens group organized as a 501(c) (3) nonprofit corporation. Our mission is to preserve open space in the form of parks, trails, historic sites, and flood plains while being sensitive to the rights of landowners and developers. CBGS desires to assure that ongoing development of land resources is accomplished in a way that is beneficial to landowners, to existing citizens of the city, and to future generations of Brentwood residents. For more information please visit www.brentwoodgreenspace.org, our Facebook site “Brentwood Green Space” and Twitter @BrentwoodGreenS.

Media

Contact: Gil Hutchinson, President / 615-300-0647

Attachment

[Survey Results](#)

2013 Brentwood Green Space Questionnaire

The Citizens for Brentwood Green Space, Inc. (CBGS) is a volunteer citizens group organized as a 501(c) (3) nonprofit corporation. A series of questions about green space preservation were submitted to Brentwood City Commission candidates.

Below are the responses, in alphabetical order, from candidates Jay Galbreath, Mark Gorman, Rhea Little, Jason Richardson, Regina Smithson and Paul Webb.

Green Space Questions

1. Where would you rank the preservation of green space in Brentwood compared to other priorities facing the City?

Galbreath: I would rank preserving green space as a very high priority. The residents' responses in both the original 2020 plan and its 2006 update consistently ranked green space preservation and the preservation of scenic hills and vistas as priorities rivaled only by managing growth, maintaining roads, and keeping the quality of schools.

Gorman: In terms of priorities, the residents I have spoken with appreciate our parks and feel preservation of green space is an important consideration; additionally, many feel that with approximately 850 acres of parks, that there are currently other issues of concern to residents that include traffic, safety and security, overcrowding of schools, keeping taxes low, senior housing, and managing growth that should be prioritized before using more City tax dollars to purchase more green space.

Little: As expected, our top priorities as a government should be those services which provide for the safety and welfare of our citizens. Beyond that, those services that are focused on providing a high quality of life would follow. In Brentwood we are fortunate to have had strong fiscal management for more than 20 years and thus, have been able to take advantage of opportunities such as the acquisition of Smith Park when possible. Comparative with other similar options for where our city can carefully invest our tax dollars, the acquisition, improvement and expansion of green space and park land has been near the top of the list, right up there with our library.

Richardson: I rank traffic management as the first priority we currently face. I cannot imagine what Brentwood would be like without our Green Spaces. I have mentioned previously how my son and I enjoy walking (and talking) in our parks, but even more important to me is my past experience. I saw a city similar to Brentwood go from a pastoral landscape to an urban landscape. Roswell is a northern suburb of Atlanta. It took all of ten years for that to happen and the impact is dramatic. I will fight hard to make certain that the impression you have as you drive around Brentwood is a pastoral one, not an urban one.

Smithson: As my record shows I believe preservation of green space is and has always been a top priority. When I started on the commission 22 years ago the city had 81 acres of parks, we now have 888 acres of parks. We had no bike trails. We now have 15+ miles of bike trails. This does not count the fact that I have continued to keep our one acre zoning in place that provides all neighborhoods

green space. The OSRD and OSRD-IP neighborhoods have their own open space that can never be developed.

Webb: Preserving green space is very important to me and to Brentwood. I have often said that Brentwood is a wonderful green island between Nashville and Franklin. This is due in part to our one acre residential density, but it is also a testament to the city's efforts to preserve as much open green space as possible. Of course, there are limits to how much can be done with the available public funds. That's one reason it's important for us to work with landowners and developers to encourage green space preservation.

2. Do you feel like Brentwood has enough park land and green space?

Galbreath: We are fortunate for the park land that we have, and its acquisition and development have been a strategic part of what makes Brentwood the community that it is. With the new acquisition and the beginning of construction of Smith Park as well as recent additions such as Owl Creek Park and Margaret Hayes Powel Park, I do believe we have sufficient park space for the community. Green space is a different question. As far as green space, the definition in my mind includes the green hillsides and vistas, the large open farms that we enjoy today, and the open space created by our one-acre density lots and more recently the OSRD zoning. I believe that Brentwood today has plenty of green space, and that we have a responsibility to ensure that we continue to develop our remaining open area responsibly to preserve as much as we can.

Gorman: The case can always be made that we could use more park land and green space but there are costs associated with acquiring green space and ongoing maintenance costs that should be thoroughly understood by the community before using tax dollars to add more.

Little: Personally, I would love to have a great deal more. As well, I'd like to see us continue to connect the city via bike/walking trails and to fulfill the complete plan for Smith Park. If we continue to be responsible with the city's finances, we will remain well-positioned for future opportunities. Of course, we must approach these priorities with a prudent eye.

Richardson: I think we have a lot, but I also think that's a deceiving impression. We have several privately owned areas of Brentwood right now that lend to the "feel" of Green space, but that land doesn't always have to be green if sold. Franklin Road does NOT need to become another Highway 96; it needs to be maintained as green. No, I think we have more opportunities for parks in Brentwood. We need to maintain our main revenue source with businesses, but we can do that and still maintain our pastoral feel.

Smithson: I don't think any city would feel they have as much green space as they would like to have but I feel as a city we have done an exceptional job. Despite the city being only 44 years old and having to build its own infrastructure including the library, the police and fire department, water & sewer department, etc., acquisition of green space has never suffered in its priority. As the city continues to develop I believe we should strive to make sure the balance continues between development (whether subdivisions or commercial) and green space.

Webb: Brentwood's parks are one of our most impressive assets. Our residents have 884 acres of parks, trails and greenways for organized outdoor activities as well as space for solitude and quiet. I think the more park space we have the better for our citizens.

3. As a City Commissioner, please outline your view on the role you believe the City should play in the acquisition of park land or dedicated green space in our community. Please address whether you feel the city should be active in the acquisition of such types of land or passive and addressing only requests or offers made by various developers.

Galbreath: The role of the City Commission is to continue to analyze specific properties as the opportunities arise and determine if acquisition of additional land is fiscally responsible and/or necessary to retain the "look and feel" that the residents of Brentwood desire. At this point, I don't feel that the city is in dire need to actively pursue additional properties for purchase. The City Commission should always consider the offers from developers for open space over and above the open space zoning requirements if the opportunity arises.

Gorman: It depends on the specific circumstances and the actual needs as to which role City officials should play.

Little: I believe there is a mixed approach that does not favor either option exclusively. Yes, the city should be proactive in looking for opportunities to preserve our beautiful pastures and hillsides. If a land owner approaches the city we should welcome the conversation and act diligently to evaluate the opportunity. However, I am not in favor of creating a "master list" of what we want to acquire. This will only lead to more difficult negotiations when they present themselves. Rather, I would like to see us develop a long range "wish list" to address particular areas of town or types of parks/facilities our community would like to have in the future. Something similar to the Brentwood 2020 Plan for green space and park land preservation.

Richardson: Addressing requests by developers might take a while. Not sure how much money there is in green spaces for developers. I think two things can come into play. The 2020 Plan states the desire to obtain specific land and preserve it as green space and I would make sure that should that land ever come up for sale that we attempt to grab it for that purpose.

Smithson: While serving as a city commissioner we have "purchased" over 500 acres of parks including Smith Park (320 acres) Crocket Park (200+ acres) and the additional acreage for River Park (15+ acres) without these being "development" driven. These were outright purchases and had nothing to do with development. This is the kind of leadership I have shown over the years as a commissioner and will continue to show. I think the city's record and my record shows we are active in pursuing non-development driven green space.

Webb: In order to maximize our green space, I believe the city should be open to listening to offers brought by the landowners to donate property in a land trust. I want the city to help landowners preserve their Brentwood property. We are not in a position to purchase more park land now because of the recent purchase and development of Smith Park.

4. The City has a three year option to purchase approximately 80 additional acres in the northwest corner of the new Smith Park. This option expires at the end of 2013. Are you in favor of the City acquiring this land?

a. If yes, why are you in favor and how would you propose the community acquire this land?

b. If no, why are you not in favor?

Galbreath: I am in favor of acquiring the additional 80 acres if we are able to raise the \$3 million in support from the community as promised. If the funds are not able to be raised, I would not support the purchase of the additional acreage. The existing 320 acre park is the largest land purchase in the city's history, and with the 80 acres that remain contiguous to Carriage Hills and Montclair subdivisions, an additional 80 homes on that property from future development would not be a bad outcome for the city.

Gorman: Considering the City has committed over \$15 million of City tax dollars already to the Smith Park (approximately \$400 per resident, not including ongoing operating costs), I would question the need to spend another \$3 million of City tax dollars, to acquire property already zoned residential, while there are other infrastructure needs that are currently more important. Through a conservation easement, the landowner could permanently protect the property without having to give up ownership and create potential tax advantages if they truly support conservation of the property adjoining Smith Park.

There are a range of options including private donor contributions, conservation easements, property exchange and other possible solutions that should be exhausted before any consideration of using more City tax dollars to purchase 80 acres of residentially zoned property.

Little: It will need to be a combination of several resources. We need a true cooperation between the public and private sector. This should include both the resources brought about by our city as well as those resources, financial included, brought about by organizations and corporations that call Brentwood home (including the Citizen's For Brentwood Green Space). Every citizen of Brentwood who enjoys our parks and appreciates our green space should give honest consideration to contributing to the CBGS Smith Park Fund.

Richardson: I am not familiar enough with the details of Smith Park and the opportunity here. I would need to see the 80 acres and what other opportunities could occur there. I sadly don't have enough information to answer this question as a yes or no. Before the end of the year I would expect that we'd see options presented. I would have to make a decision based on those presentations.

Smithson: I believe the 80 additional acres in the northwest corner of the new Smith Park would be a great addition to the city's park system. If the commitment we now have from the Brentwood Green Space Committee and grants from the federal and/or state government come about, we as a city should have the ability to make up the remainder of the \$3,000,000 price tag.

Webb: I would really like to see the city acquire the additional acreage adjacent to Smith Park. Having such a large addition would enhance what I hope will be one of our most beautiful and most used parks. I am encouraged by the efforts of Citizens for Brentwood Green Space to raise the funds

to help with the purchase of this additional acreage. This fund raising campaign gives Brentwood residents an opportunity to have a direct influence on making our city an even better place to live. We can look at that park and know that we were instrumental in making it possible through our private donations. The city should continue to look at all possible options available to acquire this property for our future.

5. There are still a significant number of sizeable properties in Brentwood (i.e. 200+ acres) that are potentially available for green space or park land. What approaches would you pursue or support to ensure that these properties are not totally lost to development?

Galbreath: I would evaluate each of these properties as the owners present the opportunity to purchase or develop the land. Given the cost of land acquisition, I would make every attempt to achieve a green space ratio on these large properties at greater than the one-acre density residential zoning if possible to preserve as much green space as we are able. This approach requires the city manager's office as well as the commission to work with developers to share the residents' vision for the city with future developers and work to guide future projects on these properties to ensure that they fit within that vision.

Gorman: Each of the available properties would need to be evaluated on its own merits in terms of its future development potential with input from residents directly affected by the prospective developments.

Little: I believe that we should always keep an open door and open mind to the land owners in our city. After all, each resident is included in that group. Where there are particularly large tracts of land still owned by a single family or individual, I believe we should keep an open dialogue and let those people know that we are always willing to discuss options.

Richardson: I've mentioned these above. Some are addressed in the 2020 Plan and I would aggressively pursue them for green space should they come up for sale. I think that we can create a corporate/retail zone that requires a certain amount of green built INTO the area as well. I think that challenging developer's to maintain our pastoral feel in Brentwood is a necessity on-going. I have seen what happens when you don't do that.

Smithson: Opportunities like Smith Park don't come along every day. As a city we would have to look at our financial status as opportunities present themselves. As each piece of property comes before the commission for development, whether 200+ acres or even smaller tracts I will work to make sure we as a city encourage developers to do their fair share to provide green space for that development just as I have in the past. Again, the OSRD & OSRD-IP zoning provides for more green space in a concentrated area. I encourage that type development in the residential areas.

Webb: Brentwood is such a desirable place to be that the value of land here is a double-edged sword. The landowners want, and are entitled to, the highest and best use of their land, making public purchases of land out of reach in some cases. If those properties are to be developed, I would like to see the landowners work with the city to preserve as much of the green space as possible. Allowing more open space enhances any property development. The opportunity for land donations to the city, county or state for preservation is a possibility where I am willing to work with the

property owner. Large tract land owners wanting to preserve their property also have options to place the land in trusts to preserve it and to gain tax advantages.

6. The City has not changed its property tax rate (other than as required by law) for more than 20 years. Would you support a tax increase for the creation of a reserve fund for the sole purpose of the acquisition of green space and park land? Please provide details on your stance.

Galbreath: I am not in favor of increasing taxes for a general fund for green space acquisition. I believe that the referendum to issue a \$50 million bond was the right approach to gauge the residents' interest in incurring debt to create a fund for future land purchases, and it failed, albeit by a very narrow margin. I feel that the residents of Brentwood want the city leadership to be fiscally responsible and keep our taxes low, and if the opportunity arises to acquire a specific tract of land and the options are to raise taxes or issue debt, the residents deserve to make that decision.

Gorman: I personally do not support a tax increase for the "sole purpose of acquisition of green space and park land". If the majority of residents vote to increase taxes for the acquisition of green space and park land through referendum then I would support the will of the majority of the residents.

Little: I believe that we must be extremely frugal with the resources of our citizens. I am of the belief that government's role should be kept to a minimum and should consider parks, libraries and other services that enhance the quality of life only at the direction of the citizens. In Brentwood, we have a population that, time-after-time, has supported such services. While I do not believe the city commission should arbitrarily support a tax increase for quality of life services, I do support our citizens' right to bring about a public vote on such an idea and would work to help insure a high level of voter participation in such a referendum.

Richardson: Before I started running for the Commission I was thinking that preserving property tax rates was one of the biggest things I would strive to achieve. It's been interesting hearing how low a priority that is to some of our residents. It IS however, still a priority to me to maintain a low property tax. I think we can start a fund specifically for acquiring green space, from our corporate and retail growth. In order to be able to achieve the vision outlined in the 2020 Plan, we have to have funds set aside for this purpose.

Smithson: If you're going to have a dedicated tax increase it needs to have the support of the residents and would warrant a referendum. A referendum would indicate whether it has the support of the residents or not.

Webb: I would not raise taxes for the sole purpose of acquisition of park land. However, if we could create a reserve for such a purpose within our current budget structure, I would encourage the city commission to do so. We have reserve funds established for equipment replacement and other long-term capital assets so we could establish a land acquisition account for future land purchases when appropriate land becomes available. Developing a partnership with a group such as Citizens for Brentwood Green Space is a good way to work on gaining more open space without expecting city government to be the only way to acquire and maintain undeveloped land. Brentwood residents

who are passionate about preserving green space have a direct voice through Citizens for Brentwood Green Space in working toward that goal.

About Citizens for Brentwood Green Space, Inc.

The Citizens for Brentwood Green Space, Inc. (CBGS) is a volunteer citizens group organized as a 501(c) (3) nonprofit corporation. Our mission is to preserve open space in the form of parks, trails, historic sites, and flood plains while being sensitive to the rights of landowners and developers. CBGS desires to assure that ongoing development of land resources is accomplished in a way that is beneficial to landowners, to existing citizens of the city, and to future generations of Brentwood residents. For more information please visit www.brentwoodgreenspace.org, our Facebook site “Brentwood Green Space” or follow us on Twitter @BrentwoodGreenS.