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Sangamon Valley Group of the Sierra Club Springfield Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Joe Rock

Office Sought: Alderman Ward 7

Last year, the city of Springfield reached a historic agreement with the Sierra Club for a clean energy plan to reduce pollution levels, purchase wind power, and increase investments in energy efficiency and conservation programs. Questions 1-3 relate to the agreement.

1) Part of the plan calls for increases in annual spending on energy efficiency and conservation programs. Will you support keeping Springfield's commitment to those efforts by maintaining the spending levels called for in the energy plan?

Yes.

2) Will you support maintaining the City's commitment to purchase at least 120MW of wind power for Springfield, of which 60MW will be paid for by the State of Illinois?

Yes

3) As part of the agreement, CWLP will offer a green power program, where residents and businesses can choose to purchase some or all of their electricity from wind power and other renewable resources at a higher cost. Currently, this program does not require CWLP to acquire additional green power when customers participate in the program. Do you support allowing customers to pay for additional clean energy development (beyond the 120MW requirement) through this green power program?

Yes

4) Would you support using wells in the Sangamon River Valley as a secondary source to meet the city's future water needs, which would be a less expensive and more environmentally friendly alternative to building a second lake?

As a life long resident of Springfield, the issue of a second water source has been with us for over forty years now. Lake Springfield was intended to service 75,000 residents when it was built in 1935 before the advent of washing machines, dishwashers, lawn irrigation, residential swimming pools, etc. Given the situation with the drought three years ago, our need for a second water source is real. My previous statements of support for Hunter Lake are now tempered by the fact that it may in reality be more responsible to explore the drilling of wells in the area. That said, a second water source must in my view be of the highest priority.

5) What actions would you take to enhance the network of bicycle paths in Springfield?

I would work closely with Sen. Durbin to capture Fed. Matching funds to ensure bike paths such as the ones now in place on Koke Mill Rd. I would also work to ensure that closed railroad beds could be transformed for bike and footpath traffic only.

6) What actions would you take to encourage development within Springfield's city center, and discourage sprawl?

Carolyn Oxtoby has developed the template for revitalizing downtown Springfield and she deserves enormous credit for that. Encouraging re-development of our brown space is among my highest priority issues.

7) Many cities, including Normal Illinois, have adopted ordinances that promote sustainability, energy conservation and environmental concerns for buildings. Do you think Springfield should promote green building practices such as providing incentives for developers, or rewriting zoning, storm water management, building, and other ordinances? If yes, what steps should Springfield take to implement these standards?

The development of "Green and Cool" projects is already a reality in other cities in Illinois such as Aurora and Moline. If it can happen there, it can happen here.

8) Do you support the expansion of Springfield bus service into evening hours? Are there any other steps you would take to encourage increased use of public transportation?

My wife and I lived in Chicago for a few years and evening bus service obviously works in a larger city. The appeal for a city on the rise like Springfield to evening bus service is for the nightlife in the downtown area. The immediate benefit here is safety; fewer intoxicated drivers. The steps for increased usage of public transportation are already being taken by oil companies gouging us with their huge profit-taking.

9) Will you support the phasing-in of energy efficient and low pollution vehicles into the city's fleet?

Yes.

10) Please add any comments you may have.

One of the main issues in my campaign is the re-vitalization of MacArthur Blvd. Lowering business signage to a reasonable height by attrition, burying power and communication lines, and increasing much needed green space is both a short and long term goal for my tenure on the city council. Meeting these goals, I believe, is in the best interest of our city residents and city businesses.