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Sangamon Valley Group of the Sierra Club Springfield Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Sam Cahnman

Office Sought: Alderman Ward 5

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. Energy conservation should be looked at as another source of energy. It is much cheaper to acquire energy through conservation than by building new power plants.

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?

Yes. Fixing leaky water mains & conservation would be other environmentally friendly ways to meet any expanding water needs.

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

Add bikeways to existing main thoroughfares. When new main roads are built, include a lane for bicycle traffic. Apply for grants to build bike trails on abandoned railroad right-of-ways. On the County Board I voted for a resolution to begin the process of building the Sangamon Valley Bike Trail on a north-south railroad right of way on the west side of the county. This was to be funded primarily with federal funds through the Illinois Department of Transportation.

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

Create financial incentives for to encourage developers to build in the older parts of the city, like Ward 5. There are numerous abandoned buildings in my ward that should either be fixed up or torn down & new structures built. Also developers who want to add new areas to the west side of the city, could be required to pay 100 per cent of the cost of new infrastructure for the new area.

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?

Yes. Take Normal's ordinance, improve upon it & pass it.

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?

Yes. On the County Board, I co-authored with the County Board Chairman a sense of the County Board letter, signed by 28 of the 29 Board Members, to the Springfield Mass District Transit District, urging the adoption of night bus service. The County Board Chairman & the Board appoint the SMTD trustees.

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

Yes, especially if it saves money over the long run by saving fuel.

10) Please add any comments you may have.

Springfield took a big step toward a clean environment by deciding to build a new power plant that reduced toxic emissions by a far greater level than required by law. I had a letter to the editor on this published in the State Journal-Register. Although this may cost a little more in up front, it will reap tremendous benefits by lowering health care costs and improving the quality of life, as well as increasing the quantity of it (by allowing people to live longer). We need to build on this in the future City Council decisions.