

## **Conner Wright (D-District 3) Responses to Heading Home Candidate Survey for the May 2, 2023 Bloomington Council Primary Election**

### **1. What do you see as the most effective strategies to strengthen housing security in our community, ensuring that everyone has a safe, stable place to live?**

I think the most effective strategies to strengthen housing security are working with the Bloomington Housing Authority to help at-risk individuals remain in their homes, finding creative solutions to developing affordable housing, and reducing the overall unaffordability of housing in Bloomington. Some solutions to developing affordable housing include using city-owned land, such as the land at the new Hopewell development, to allow non-profit developers to create affordable housing at less cost, using the Housing Development fund to provide no-interest loans to help finance fully affordable housing developments, and making the requirements to receive an easement weighted more heavily towards creating affordable housing or paying into the Housing Development Fund. We can reduce the overall unaffordability of housing by building more and diverse kinds of housing to meet the needs of all people. Whether you want to live near College Mall, downtown, near campus, or anywhere else throughout the city, you should be able to afford to live there and have plenty of housing options. As of July 2020, Bloomington had a rental vacancy rate of just under 2% which is a strong indicator that the market for housing is very competitive, contributing to rising rents and we need to take swift action to address that.

### **2. What are your top 3 council legislative priorities to address the scarcity of low-income housing in Bloomington?]**

My top three legislative priorities are: increasing the supply of diverse types of housing, utilizing the Housing Development Fund and tax abatements to reduce the overall cost of developing affordable housing, and facilitating the development of affordable housing on city owned land. Increasing the supply of diverse types of housing will ensure families of all sizes, students, and single people can find the perfect place to live in our community no matter which part of Bloomington they want to live in. It will also help ease our housing affordability crisis by increasing the rental vacancy rate which will cool off the housing market and lower fierce competition for scarce houses. I will work to reduce the cost of affordable housing development by offering no-interest loans from the Housing Development Fund and offering tax abatements that will help at least partially offset the cost of offering affordable housing. I will also work to utilize city-owned land for affordable housing development in spots such as Hopewell. We have a wonderful opportunity to partner with non-profit organizations and more cheaply offer safe,

affordable housing and we cannot let that opportunity slip away.

**3. What actions should the City of Bloomington take to reduce homelessness, and what would you do on council to implement those actions?**

The City of Bloomington should partner with Monroe County officials to improve mental health care resources and substance abuse treatment in addition to providing more workforce development training for homeless individuals through organizations like Centerstone. As a City Council Member, I will work hard outside of regularly scheduled meetings to coordinate mental health care and addiction treatment efforts with the County Councillors and Commissioners providing funding and any city expertise and manpower that we will need to start to make progress on this issue. We should also continue to provide funding and resources for programs and partnerships like the one we have with Centerstone that can provide permanent solutions to homelessness by helping people learn in-demand skills and find stable employment while building the fabric of our community. I also think the city itself can play a part in this by employing and training people who are going through mental health care or addiction treatment or are otherwise trying to recover from homelessness. We have a very generous and compassionate community and we should utilize all of our skill sets to help people find stable employment and housing.