

Aspire North 2023 Traverse City Candidate Questionnaire

Full name: Kenneth Mitchell Funk ___

Office running for: City of Traverse City Commissioner ___

Current position/occupation: _____ Firefighter Paramedic

List previous campaigns, elected office(s), boards, commissions, etc.:

2X Applicant for vacant City Commission seat

Why are you running for office?

I care very deeply for the residents which is related to the work that I do as a Firefighter. I want to give a voice to the people that do not have one and listen to the people who feel that their voice is not being heard. I want to be a voice that represents families and the communities that they live in.

Briefly describe your campaign strategy: My goal is to meet with as many residents and neighborhood associations as possible. Putting larger yard signs in major travel corridors around the city. Place doorknob hangers around the city. I would say this is a pretty basic approach.

Why do you think you will win?

I think a younger candidate with a family and a regular job resonates with the community a lot because of that perspective that I provide.

How many votes do you need to win?

___ Historical election result data suggests that if I receive more than 1900 votes I should win one of three seats.

Are REALTORS actively helping with your campaign?

Not currently but I received petition signatures from at least one city resident realtor.

Traverse City goes through an annual budgeting process. What do you think budget priorities should be?

Hard infrastructure is number one. Roads, sidewalks, sewer and water pipes. Second is creating strategies and opportunities that support the development more housing regardless of the type, because we truly need all varieties.

Third would be recruitment and retention of ALL city department employees. The interim city manager stated in his first report to the commission that in 5 years one third of city employees would be eligible for retirement and we are heading for a "cliff."

I would be crazy to not mention green initiatives and work that addresses the climate challenges. I want to move to a place where we stop making it a goal and turn these efforts into "what we do" and these initiatives are just part of our culture.

The shortage of housing inventory is a big topic among our Aspire North membership and the community at large across our area. Does local government have a role to play in this realm? If so, what do you think a local government can reasonably do to address housing supply concerns?

Local government definitely plays a role. Initiatives to address gaps in zoning are being addressed at this time along with proposals that will allow for more housing options. The process definitely isn't perfect and has taken a lot of time. The slow process is frustrating for some residents but its important to get it right the first time and avoid the unintended consequences that accompany new "things."

Land use continues to be a highly debated issue, including those elements centered around planning and zoning. Are there specific policies or zoning restrictions you support or oppose?

I have supported ADU's since the homesharing/STR discussion began. ADU's are a great living option for residents that are low impact to the neighborhoods and allow the flexibility for different living situations.

I want homes for people to live in that will send their kids to local schools and the residents will become members of the community. I support plans and zoning that build upon these ideas.

Should local governments use zoning to prohibit the rental of a residential property on a short-term basis?

Currently STR's aren't allowed in the "R" zoned residential neighborhoods, so they already are prohibited. This is a good thing, between the allowance of STR's in Commercially zoned areas and not allowing them in Residential areas we have to strike a balance between places where people actually live and places where visitors just stay.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) has been described as a regional taxation tool used by the Traverse City DDA to fund infrastructure repairs and improvements required by intense regional use of our downtown core. Do you support renewal of TIF? If not, who would/should ultimately pay for those required costs/repairs?

TIF is very important to this community. Most people enjoy multiple projects that were funded through TIF money on a daily basis and don't even realize it. I would say it is most important because it makes everyone pay their fare share for the benefits they enjoy in the Downtown city area.

This is a position that I have really shifted on over the last 3-4 years. There is huge value to capturing this money and using it for infrastructure development.

How and on what issues would you utilize Aspire North's input?

I would utilize Aspire if I had real estate related questions and issues. I am not an expert in real estate issues but you are. When in doubt, reach out to the experts.