

I would like to thank Phil Kramer and the staff of TUF for their past efforts on behalf of Franklin taxpayers and for this opportunity to address the TUF readership regarding my candidacy for 5<sup>th</sup> ward Council seat.

One of the things folks should know about me is I am not a politician. I didn't dream as a kid that I was going to be president or some great political leader. In fact, running for Town Council was probably the last thing in the world I would have thought of even as recently as one year ago.

This journey started when I brought security issues (a shooting) on Hamilton Street to the attention of the Council several years ago, I expected to see them take action. I didn't expect to wait three years while the Hamilton Street area endured additional security concerns.

This is when the seed to become part of the solution was planted in my mind.

I have watched while the Town Council was confronted by the public with other important issues: neighbors distraught over the threat of losing their property to Eminent Domain, others concerned with cars speeding down their streets, and senior citizens concerned about rising taxes pricing them out of their life long homes.

The same people would return time after time and year after year and I realized that the Council was disconnected from the reality that their constituents were facing and that little action was being taken by the Council to resolve their issues. To this day, my area in the fifth ward is still assaulted by gunfire (multiple episodes in the last 3 years), closing businesses, gang activity and "tagging" of areas by gang members.

My training in the Navy refuses to let me stand down when my community is being threatened. My nature and the uncompromising responsibility I have to my wife and daughter demand that I take action to secure their safety and quality of life.

These are the reasons I finally decided to run for office.

Its not that our current Ward representative isn't well intentioned—he is. The problem is that after 4 years of ineffective programs the 5<sup>th</sup> ward is still in dire shape and becoming a dangerous place to live --and we are running out of time.

I don't mean to paint a bleak picture for Franklin, in fact I think the best days of our Town are still in reach. I just feel that we must change the direction our Town is heading and seize the opportunity to make positive changes now.

We need to better support the positive facets of our community. We need to support the local businesses, increase police presence, review how our properties are assessed to insure fairness. We need to support current youth activities and establish additional programs to keep school age children busy and out of harms way.

We need to bring the best minds in our town to bear on the issues we face. I continuously meet brilliant residents with expertise in electronics, sports, computer science, etc. These citizens would love to volunteer their services to help their community if the Council would provide the leadership.

The gang activity concerns are self evident and are symptomatic of all the other problems, but I feel particularly competent in this area because of my interactions with gangs in my youth. I know that young men need a combination of a strong leadership model, positive challenges and a respect for education so that they can feel in control of their future. We need to partner the town with local businesses and create internships for youth. We need to create a friendly relationship between the police and the youth.

The youth in town need to think of our officers as someone they can go to when they are troubled, not someone to run from.

We need to get more value from our Town resources and we need to review each and every program for its efficacy and priority.

This is the kind of leadership I think Franklin has been lacking.

We need a Council that is accessible to the public—a Council that is willing to listen to the needs of residents and is open minded enough to ask for new solutions to unsolved problems. We need people on Council that are part of the population, not above it and we need representation that is truly of, by, and **for** the people.

Whether I win or lose in November, I intend to continue to strive for the betterment of Franklin and will tirelessly petition Council for the safety of my neighborhood. As I stated in the beginning, I am not a career politician but I do consider the welfare of my community my career responsibility.

Whatever your decision may be in November, thank you for your time and consideration and may God Bless America.

Tom Canales  
Candidate for 5<sup>th</sup> Ward Council Seat