

## East Peoria City Council Candidates' Questionnaire

**Tim Jeffers**

[What does city government in East Peoria do well? What does it do poorly? What would be your priorities?](#)

East Peoria provides the best equipped and trained emergency paramedic services south of I-80. Our police, water and public works departments are second to none. The timely response in clearing our streets after the recent snow storm demonstrates what sets East Peoria apart from others. I am proud to live in East Peoria, and I want others to be aware of the good things that are happening in our city. Public safety would remain my top priority.

[What should role and scope of local government in East Peoria be? Are there services that East Peoria doesn't provide that it should? Conversely, are there services City Hall does provide that it shouldn't? Please explain.](#)

Public safety should be, and I believe currently is, the top priority of our local government. The council should provide an environment that is attractive for development while working with other groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, Fondulac District Library, and the local school districts to promote the overall community. East Peoria effectively provides a full array of services for its citizens, and I don't believe there is any service that is lacking. I believe that our city-owned services are run efficiently and cost-effectively.

**How would you describe your management style? How would you go about making up your mind on a controversial issue? Whose advice would you seek?**

I don't believe in being a micromanager, but I strive to be available and visible in my role as commissioner. The department heads are well-qualified to make day-to-day decisions. It is important for me to be knowledgeable of the daily workings of the department to which I am responsible, providing support and direction as I serve. Many times there is controversy because all the facts are not on the table. I make it a priority to get as much information as possible. The current council has also adopted vision and values statements, so I go back to them to stay focused on our goals. It is important to work with fellow commissioners and city staff to make the best decisions for the city. Decisions are not always about dollars and cents, but family and neighborhood sense. I assume responsibility for those decisions.

**What is your opinion on how the situation with Bass Pro Shops played out using \$45 million in general obligation bonds to net the deal? Do you agree or disagree? Please explain.**

Our council was unanimous on this, and I would vote the same way today. Bass Pro will serve as a premier anchor, bringing over 2 million visitors to our city annually. In the midst of a tough recessionary economy, this project has provided hundreds of jobs during construction and approximately 300 jobs when completed. The city also owns 5 adjacent lots that will bring additional jobs and revenue to this site. This investment in East Peoria is self funded through rent and sales tax revenue and does not take dollars from the General Budget. It is also currently \$1.5 million under budget. Revenue from this investment and others will help keep taxes low and provide funds for city services.

**What is your opinion of how the city is handling its vision for the new downtown development project? Are you pleased with the progress? What would you do different, if anything? What would your economic development priorities be?**

I believe the city is handling new downtown development very well, especially in view of the recessionary times that have come our way. East Peoria received a \$26M grant from the State that will provide for rapid road construction this year. The Library, Holiday Inn Hotel and Restaurant, as well as a new bank office building are slated to break ground this year. Large retailers are taking serious looks as the economy improves. I am pleased with the current plans, which include wide sidewalks, green space, and other attractive features. I also support development in other areas of the city, such as Sunnyland/Summit Drive.

**If you could change one thing about East Peoria what would it be?**

While East Peoria has wonderful neighborhoods, I would like to see a greater sense of a common community. I believe the development of the new downtown will greatly enhance this aspect of life in East Peoria. This will not just be a shopping area or a place of employment, but also a public meeting place, a place of activity, fun and recreation. Quality of life aspects and shared family and community values should not be underestimated.

**What are the biggest challenges/issues you see East Peoria facing in the next four years?**

The budget problems of the State will unfortunately continue to cause the city and all taxing bodies difficulty. Households are also feeling the effects. The temptation to make short-term fixes should be avoided if they take away from long-term goals. The challenge for East Peoria will be to continue improving city services and quality of life for its citizens while maintaining a balanced budget. East Peoria has continued to grow and thrive in spite of the current economy, and I am excited to see what the next four years holds.