

## **Responses from Don Barber**

### **1. How do I define a “Town Center”? Does Lakeland need one and where should it be located?**

Town Centers should be those places that people sense are hubs of activity or destinations to conduct community, governmental and business affairs. Lakeland functionally has three parts; one south of I-40, one north of the Loosahatchie and the third between those two features. If all things are equal, people generally do not transit these “barriers” unless necessary.

Lakeland’s Town Center problem is that it has no transportation legacy. That is, it has no historic stagecoach or railroad depot to be a logical transit location. Even Ellendale and Brunswick have these, yet we do not. Therefore, if we have a Town Center, it needs another context.

My personal belief is that ultimately, Lakeland does need such a structure and it should be based on activities like athletics, social gatherings and conducting official business. These activities take place every day and other, similar daily activities can be added as well. If we could have a limited form in three places that would be ideal, if not, then one would be most appropriate somewhere in the central part of the city.

### **2. Do I favor Memphis/Shelby County government consolidation? Why or why not? How would our city be impacted by consolidation?**

I don’t see the benefit that others may see from consolidation. Most of the savings tend to be mathematical rather than practical. Usually the result of these combinations is concentration of power and an overall reduction of service to those being served by the expiring entity.

If consolidation occurs, Lakeland will be affected. We will face choices about all our services contracted from the county and we may well face even jurisdictional questions to one extent or another until the process of consolidation reaches completion.

### **3. Am I familiar with the revisions to the Land Development Regulations? If so am I for the total revision? If yes why, if not why not?**

Yes, I am very familiar with the new regulations. I am in favor of a total revision and for several reasons. Build out for Lakeland is coming and once done, it cannot reasonably be redone. Our present code has served well for establishing our community, but it has produced a patchwork that reflects more short term planning and less long term strategy.

We need much more than that for the next couple of decades and we also need our own definition of how a full featured community should be structured. It will be as impossible to build a future community that is completely comprised of subdivisions just like the

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ones we have as it would be to insist that our community be uniformly rural as it was years ago.

Change has been coming to Lakeland for quite some time and more yet is in our future. Our only hope to craft that future city, the one most people want to stay in and the one others want to join in is by having a complete, coherent Plan that creates a place to meet the needs of as many as practical, yet retaining as much of the character we have at present.

### **4. Express my preference on the location of New Canada Road.**

My preference for New Canada Road is that it should have the least 'taking' effect possible. I mean the constitutional sense of taking as in eminent domain. It should also have the smallest 'cut and fill' impact that can be achieved.

The road exists because people need it. The future road needs to meet most of our future needs with the smallest impact possible. Given that the Canada Road Advisory Team has been working on this question and represents a good cross section of the community, I believe that team will recommend what is best for all of Lakeland.

### **5. An editorial in the June/July issue of Citywatch addressed city fees versus property tax. Is it time to reassess each property owner's cost in fees as opposed to a property tax? How do I feel about limiting density to lessen the need to expand the infrastructure ... thus reducing the need for higher taxes and fees?**

It may well be time to do a formal assessment and comparison of revenue alternatives. It is my belief that most people intuitively realize that community progress requires progressive resources. What people dislike are excesses and waste. We need to begin any assessment by evaluating cost structure and economy first.

I believe that all of the governments in America are presently realizing the shortcomings of poor revenue planning and those that are faring best are those that have been frugal and those that have balanced their income sources. Lakeland must do the same from time to time to retain and increase its thriving character. It is truly impressive what Lakeland has achieved through sales tax and usage fees, but these alone may not be in the long term interest of the city or its citizens.

Actually, limiting density increases per capita infrastructure costs for every city. This is the essence of all the negative implications of "sprawl". Lakeland has been using what I believe has been a very good method for matching infrastructure costs with growth through build out of our sewer system in areas where we want growth to occur and where we can most quickly capitalize on more intense and early usage. An area for improvement of this will come from the new Land Development Regulations. The more we can do to require stormwater retention then the smaller our pollution 'footprint' and our per capita system cost will be in the future.