



Age: 63

Address: 321 South 21st Street, La Crosse, WI 54601

Occupation: Soon-to-be-retired Executive Vice President of Park Bank

Education: Degree in Public Administration

Family:           Wife, Betsey, of 42 years

Four sons       Morgan – Central '96

Malcolm – Central '99

Gordon – Aquinas '03

Douglas – Aquinas '08

Previous Political Experience:

La Crosse City Council       1987 – 2012

La Crosse School Board       1992 – 1993; President

La Crosse County Board of Supervisors       1974 – 1984; Finance Chair

State of Wisconsin Banking Board of Review      2003 – Present

Western Technical College Board      1986 – 1991;

Chairman Search and Screen Committee for College President

1) Does the city of La Crosse need a city administrator, and would you support another effort to create that position?

No and no. Although I am the only one of 11 candidates with a degree in public administration, I was also the only one to openly oppose the City Administrator. I was the only one to have a guest editorial in the La Crosse Tribune opposing the City Administrator, and the only one to be invited to speak opposing the City Administrator versus La Crosse County Administrator Steve O'Malley at the La Crosse Area Development Corporation (LADCO) breakfast (300 attendees). If you are going to be a good mayor, you at least ought to believe in the job.

2) The city has received frequent criticism for being overly generous with financial incentives for developers. What sort of incentives should be available from the city, if any? How does the city best create a hospitable business environment?

I voted against the Kwik Trip TIF. Kwik Trip is a good corporate citizen, it employs many people with good jobs and good benefits, and I have known the Zietlows for many years. But it was the wrong TIF in the wrong place. Unless a TIF is going to have additional benefits outside of the TIF — secondary effects from the development or a ripple effect — it is not something that deserves taxpayer support. It is a difficult decision, but it should be the first test of a TIF.

3) There are growing concerns La Crosse is experiencing a surge in crime, particularly drug-related crimes. How do you plan to deal with the increasing level of criminal activity?

The year of 2012 was horrific. Like many others, through various family members, I was indirectly connected to the victims. In the long run, 2012 will be seen as a tragic and horrific spike and not a trend. Our collective grief makes this very difficult to think about, let alone talk about, but we should not make major changes due to isolated events. Before we look at any changes in staffing levels, the Chief and his staff need to look for ways to reorganize, consolidate and prioritize the duties of the police department and then present a plan to the City.

4) La Crosse's fire department is one of the most expensive in the state per capita to operate. Are you happy with the status quo in the department? What, if any, changes you would like to see in staffing, overtime use, equipment purchases or other expenses for the department?

No one thinks about emergency services until you need them. When your house is on fire or a loved one is suffering a heart attack, no amount of staff is enough. Our fire department's efforts contribute to the best cardiac survival rates in the nation. As part of these efforts, our fire

department furnishes some of the best trained responders in the State and frequently they are onsite before the ambulance to stabilize the situation. This is a “working partnership” with Tri-State Ambulance. Having previously tried increasing revenues through a proposed ambulance service (Mayor Johnsrud) or decreasing expenses through reduced staffing (Mayor Harter), it is time to explore a contribution for some of our expenses from our “working partnership.” We also need to look long range at the staffing levels and equipment needs for our fire department and develop a five-year plan for this vital service.

5) A recent study of La Crosse neighborhoods details the challenges of some of the city's distressed areas. Do you see problems in La Crosse neighborhoods, and if so, how do you propose to remedy those problems?

The City can and should play a major role. We can enforce existing ordinances, not only for various maintenance standards but also for criminal activity. What I have learned is that if you enforce the smallest of ordinances effectively, you can affect 90 percent of the problem. The police call it the “Broken Window Theory” of policing.

Additionally, the City has a Housing Rehabilitation Committee, which I chaired for 20 years. This program helps individual homeowners rehab their own homes through low interest rates, and has improved more than 1,000 owner-occupied homes in our core neighborhoods and caused an increase in the city tax base with very little cost to the taxpayers. This program can and should be expanded.

6) After years of steady increases, city taxpayers have recently experienced a string of little or no increase in the city's tax levy rate. Will you try to continue that trend, and how will you do it?

Property tax stability or even reductions can only occur with budget procedures that create a cooperative effort between department heads. Right now that does not happen. Due to the lack of experience and leadership in the Mayor's Office, department heads have stopped working together and instead now compete with each other for money in the budget. We need to move away from pitting our department heads against each other and toward working together. There are various budgetary models and practices that can be used to accomplish this.

7) In the past year, city department heads have been given the authority to create new fees as they see fit. Should fees supplant and/or add to property taxes collected by the city? Are the fees that have been added in recent years excessive?

Alternative sources such as fees are pretty well-tapped and are no longer a viable source of additional income. Additional fee increases will run the risk of non-compliance. The best way to increase revenue to the City is by increasing the tax base. Maintaining, safeguarding and preserving our neighborhoods are the lowest cost and quickest means to increase the city tax base and thereby increase revenues. When neighborhoods deteriorate the tax revenues that used to come from those neighborhoods disappear and that cost is carried by the rest of the city. It doesn't matter where you live; your taxes are determined by the success or failure of every neighborhood in the City.

8) Recently, the La Crosse City Vision Foundation, with the blessings of the La Crosse police department, has announced a plan to raise nearly a half million dollars to install surveillance cameras in the downtown for use by police. Do you support the plan? why or why not?

The system as proposed does not address the annual maintenance costs, and while small, these costs should be borne by the adjacent businesses. This is a very small price for the substantial increase in security.

We also need to recognize that while Downtown is very important symbolically, and much talked about, there are corridors and pockets of the City that would benefit much more than Downtown from the placement of a video system. This should not be overlooked.

9) Some have complained that the city council often seems to work against the current mayor rather than cooperating with him. How will you get the council to follow your agenda, if they're all opposed to it?

La Crosse has a weak mayor-strong council form of government. The mayor has to earn the respect of the people he works with by demonstrating leadership, knowledge and experience. Our most successful mayors have either had extensive council experience (Mayor Zielke) or legislative experience (Mayor Medinger). The other 10 candidates would all bring skills to the mayor's office, but collectively they combine for two terms on the City Council and one term on the County Board — all spread among three separate candidates. This lack of experience would guarantee the next four years would look a lot like the turmoil of the last eight years. With experience, we can do better.

10) What is the last book you read? What is the last movie you saw?

“Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted” by Justin Martin. Olmsted is considered the father of city parks.