

2012 Silverton Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire

Our mission is to educate the voters of Silverton on the choices they have in leadership and encourage awareness of the business issues that impact this election.

Brought To You By:

Silverton Chamber of Commerce

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Name

What motivated you to run for the office of Mayor?

Jim Squires

I am running for Mayor for three primary reasons. The first is that the average citizen has been excluded from the city's decision-making process. As mayor I would be uniquely positioned to promote more citizen involvement. The second reason is that I believe the city should lead in recruiting new businesses, I believe previous administrations have not met that obligation. As mayor I would work fulltime and hard to promote Silverton as a business-friendly environment. The third reason is that I believe the city should partner with the business community. As mayor I would establish a joint city/business task force to create this partnership.

Scott Walker

I am running for Mayor because I believe it the best way to continue my governmental leadership and service to the citizens of Silverton.

Stu Rasmussen

It has become a biennial habit.

Kyle Palmer

With 8 years of experience as a Silverton City Councilor, I have watched as the process of governing our great community has dissolved into a sideshow. We have been without true leadership for the past 4 years and I can provide that by listening, building consensus, and participating in respectful debate. Our current Mayor has never had the support of the council, and rather than continue to look for ways to elect an all new council, we should be looking for a Mayor who does earn the respect of others.

Name	If elected, what specific things will you do in office to promote a positive business climate?
Jim Squires	The task force I just mentioned should establish a list of priorities by which the city can promote business opportunities. These should include, but not be limited to funding, regulations, economic development, and promotion of a friendly business climate.
Scott Walker	I believe that the current method of attracting new non-retail businesses is ineffective. We need to clarify appropriate use concerns and reduce conditional use issues. I will continue to oppose the \$450,000 makeover of one block of Main Street because the money could be better spent on projects that have a more realistic chance of bringing new businesses and jobs to Silverton. I will continue to support the City assumption of tree maintenance in the downtown historic district. I will continue to support the use of parking meter funds to provide mural maintenance activities. I will continue to support the creation of informational kiosks in downtown.
Stu Rasmussen	I will continue to actively support Silverton businesses and I will continue to use the Mayor's 'bully pulpit' to strongly encourage the city of Silverton to give preference to local businesses when purchasing goods and services. You may not be aware of the inner workings of public purchasing - they seem to want to find any excuse to not 'buy local'.
Kyle Palmer	I will continue to support the use of Urban Renewal funds to complete projects that support our local businesses. I will meet with our regional economic partners in an effort to resume the discussion of joint benefits that stopped occurring four years ago. I will embrace the Chamber as our partner in ensuring the success of our local businesses. I will consider ways that we can address SDC funds that may prevent location in Silverton, and I will support the aggressive pursuit of appropriate tenant for our industrial park.

Name

What role to you think business plays in ensuring a positive future for Silverton?

Jim Squires

I believe that businesses are the lifeblood of a community. In fact, I believe Silverton is absolutely remiss in its approach to growing the business community. The city and its leaders, particularly under the last two administrations, have done nothing to promote business. Our industrial park should now be full of small, start-up, or family-owned businesses that would increase our tax base and help homeowners with the burden of water and sewer rates. Rather than leaving this effort to the Chamber of Commerce, the mayor should be the leader in this regard. As mayor I would take this responsibility seriously. The city administration should be working with the Chamber of Commerce in promoting new business opportunities. And I believe that we need new businesses but that they should be the right kind of businesses- those that would fit seamlessly into the culture that Silverton has established over many years.

Scott Walker

Healthy businesses are fundamental to Silverton's future. The availability of local services and the jobs provided by businesses are centerpieces that are critical foundations for successful city. A vibrant downtown is a major plus for attracting new residents.

Stu Rasmussen

You have the equation exactly backwards. The buying public will find what it needs regardless of the Silverton business community. Years ago Silverton was in a relative state of equilibrium with most local residents finding employment in town, and spending their dollars locally. Our job base has eroded and so local business must make a better effort to attract customers in order to thrive. The city can assist with these efforts, but it's not really (IMO) one of government's critical functions. We provide public safety services, clean water, sewage disposal and a transportation infrastructure.

Kyle Palmer

A large role - our community is not just about our businesses, but they play a major role in Silverton's overall health. In my opinion, we are seeing right now the culmination of years of planning. Fewer open store fronts, a sense of energy among businesses in the downtown, and dedicated citizens who are opening businesses in a more welcoming climate than in the past. Most Silvertonians I know prefer to stay in Silverton rather than shop and dine in neighboring communities. We are now seeing the kind of choices that make that more possible, and that will help us keep this business momentum building toward the future.

Name

What are the greatest challenges that we have keeping Silverton businesses' open?

Jim Squires

Because I have spent most of my adult life as a small business owner, I am well aware of the problems faced by business, especially in an economic downturn. We need to make it easier for businesses to have their problems and issues discussed at levels where decisions can be made. We need to open government up to all of our citizens, including business owners. We have had very closed administrations in which a few people have received favorable treatment. That must change.

Scott Walker

Silverton's businesses' challenges are the same as those in other towns. Sell more and spend less.

Stu Rasmussen

Silverton businesses that are operating with the realization that it is 2012 seem to be doing fine, even considering the economic climate. They are open when customers want to shop, have products customers want to buy and offer them at a competitive price. Silverton merchants that are still operating under the 1955 business model are not doing as well. The biggest challenge I see is a lack of a coordinated marketing effort to bring new customers to the local community.

Kyle Palmer

Business owners must begin with a reasonable business plan. The Chamber is the most dependable partner to help make that happen for new business owners. That one thing will make or break a business's first 1-2 years of operation. Additionally, I think there is still a division among downtown merchants who should all be working together for the common good. Critical mass is on the forefront and success breeds more success.

Name

Do you have the financial resources or fundraising plan to fund an effective campaign? and who are your key donors?

Jim Squires	I do have adequate financing but do not plan to reveal the names of donors. That information will be available later to the public via my campaign finance reporting requirements.
Scott Walker	I have a self financed campaign that does not seek funding or endorsements from individuals or organizations.
Stu Rasmussen	I think so. You can see my donors listed on the State of Oregon's Orestar reporting system.
Kyle Palmer	Yes. I have approximately \$1,400 left over from my 2010 campaign, when Dr. Rod Orr and Silver Creek Animal Clinic were my biggest donors. In addition to a list of others. This time, I believe my campaign will be even stronger financially as I am hearing support from folks who were backing another candidate in 2010. Specifically, it's too early to know who and how much will be given in support, but I expect to be able to run an effective campaign with the support I've had so far.

What individuals are currently associated with your campaign?

Jim Squires	At this point, I plan to keep that information confidential. Later campaign records will reveal this information.
Scott Walker	I have a self financed campaign that does not seek funding or endorsements from individuals or organizations.
Stu Rasmussen	The Mayor is intimately involved in my campaign.
Kyle Palmer	"Officially" - just myself. However, my wife, my father, Darin Rybloom, and a host of others have been important components to my campaigns in the past and I expect that group to grow substantially based on the many pledges of support I've received.

Name

What business and community leaders have endorsed you as a candidate?

Jim Squires At this point, I plan to keep that information confidential. Later campaign records will reveal this information.

Scott Walker I have a self financed campaign that does not seek funding or endorsements from individuals or organizations.

Stu Rasmussen The owners of the Palace Theatre would probably do so if asked.

Kyle Palmer I believe I have the support of every City Councilor except the two running against me; former Mayor Ken Hector; former Councilors Scott Sword, Dennis Stoll, Sherry Hoefel, Antonia Jenkins, and Dixon Bledsoe - to name a few - have all voiced their support for my candidacy.

What business or community organizations have endorsed your candidacy?

Jim Squires At this point, I plan to keep that information confidential. Later I will provide that information.

Scott Walker I have a self financed campaign that does not seek funding or endorsements from individuals or organizations.

Stu Rasmussen I have not asked any organization for an endorsement. The final decision is made by the voters of Silverton and I am optimistic they will recognize my aptitude for the position based on my past performance.

Kyle Palmer None officially at this time. Realistically, the filing deadline was just a few days ago, but I expect to have the support (either officially or unofficially) of most business and community organizations in Silverton.

Name	If elected, would you be willing to meet with chamber leadership as needed to discuss specific Chamber of Commerce Member issues?
Jim Squires	I would be happy to meet with Chamber representatives, business owners, and community leaders at any time to discuss my proposed agenda.
Scott Walker	As Mayor I will meet with anyone about concerns they may have relative to Silverton's needs.
Stu Rasmussen	As I have for the last four years as Mayor, I make a special effort to be easily available to any individual or group in the city who wishes to discuss city matters. I take calls at my published home phone number almost every day and I am openly available, approachable and accessible regularly in the downtown core almost 365 days a year. Over the last four years I have probably chatted with a couple of thousand people about Silverton city matters. In that time I can't remember chamber management availing itself of this opportunity for open dialog. To the contrary, I do recall several instance of chamber management actively besmirching my personal character and encouraging Silvertonians to patronize my businesses' out-of-town competitors.
Kyle Palmer	I would not only be willing to, I would consider it an important component of the job. Again, we've had four years of Mayoral disconnect from the Chamber, the Business Group, and any other local and regional business leaders. It's time that we fix that.

Name

What activities have you been involved with in support of the Silverton Business Community?

Jim Squires

Various city focus groups concerning economic development, sign and code requirements, I am a founding member of the Mural Society, which has served to attract customers to our area and our businesses. I have frequently met with business owners and have carried their concerns to the city council.

Scott Walker

I spend money in Silverton.

Stu Rasmussen

I (and my business) support and partner with many organizations that promote and encourage economic vitality for Silverton retail businesses. We provide prizes and financial support for many fund-raising activities such as little league, band, PTA, etc. In addition, my primary business (Palace Theatre, Inc.) attracts many shoppers and customers to the Silverton downtown business district 7 days a week (disregarding a 5-month hiatus this year due to the theatre fire). This entertainment 'magnet' brings local and out-of-area customers to the shops, galleries and restaurants pre- and post-show. Also, the On-Screen advertising at the Palace is an affordable and effective method for promoting Silverton businesses. The Palace's weekly email blast to our customers often includes promotional information about other Silverton businesses and events. I also provide Internet advertising on the 'SilvertonSavers.com' web site to local Silverton businesses for free.

Kyle Palmer

Former Chamber Board Member, Treasurer, and Past-President. Longtime business (Silver Creek Animal Clinic) supporters of the Chamber and virtually every Chamber function. Board Member/Treasurer of Homer Davenport Days (2001-2005, 2010-present) and integral in helping connect and maintain ties to the business community through the parade, financial grants, and visitors to Silverton. I was integral in helping approve the completion of a top notch regional athletic complex at Silverton High School which has already driven many visitors to our businesses. Member of the Tourism Promotion Committee to name a few.

Name

What professional experience, business activities or community involvement do you believe best demonstrate your skills as an effective leader, policy maker and your ability to collaborate with partners?

Jim Squires

I was for many years a member of the Salem Chamber of Commerce. I chaired the annual membership drive, was captain of ambassadors, created technology row for sho-biz, sponsored the annual business of the year awards for 3 years straight, and received the Chamber Ruby award for excellence. For many years I was a small business owner. I chaired the Chemeketa Advisory Board which brought the college to Stayton and Sublimity. I was also elected to the Silverton School Board.

Scott Walker

The biggest issue facing the city of Silverton is its need to reduce expenditures. My professional experience as a budget analyst in government will be critical in addressing this problem. As Mayor I will be working with councilors and city officials to insure that reductions will have as minimal impact as possible. My community involvement include Silverton Lions, Silverton Hospital (Care Van Driver), Mission of Hope and the Silverton Garden Club.

Stu Rasmussen

I have been elected to the Silverton City Council 3 times, serving 12 years as councilor, elected Mayor 4 times serving 8 years and a 4-year term on the Silver Falls Library Board - That's 24 years of experience as a public officer, plus I've been in business in Silverton as a self-employed entrepreneur since 1964: 48 years in business as an owner - not an employee. In that time I've worked with many individuals and groups to accomplish shared goals. That's by far the best record of any candidate on the ballot.

Kyle Palmer

I believe my record as a City Councilor speaks loudly. I make the decision I feel is best for Silverton without regard to any personal agenda. I am able to collaborate and influence my fellow officials through respectful discussion and debate. I managed a successful service business in Silverton for 15 years, both financially and in terms of personnel. I chaired the Silver Falls School District Bond Advisory Committee and helped a 15 person citizen panel navigate through 4 years of planning, budgeting, prioritizing, and construction of our new high school. The project came in over \$1 million dollars under budget and included amenities not originally expected. I am thorough and decisive.

Name

Do you support using Urban Renewal Dollars in the form of Grants to support Economic Development? Why?

Jim Squires	No	Using Urban Renewal dollars to promote business can be a useful strategy as long as two criteria are met. 1. All urban Renewal Agency expenditures over 30,000 dollars should be subject to citizen vote in a general election,(remember we are talking about tax dollars, not dollars off some kind of magic money tree.) 2. Urban renewal funds should be distributed via low-interest loans, rather than regarded as free money. Those loans, paid back over time, would increase the amount of growth money available. Thus they would promote business growth both now and in the future.
Scott Walker		Each request has to be judged on its own merits. Although I don't rule grants out, I would prefer no or low interest loans to support economic development projects. No/lows should provide funds for future projects.
Stu Rasmussen		I support using URA money for no- or low-interest loans that will provide ongoing support for Economic Development.
Kyle Palmer	Yes	I have voted to approve three Urban Renewal Grants as a member of that board and feel that the URA grant program is a needed component. I have said all along, however, that only a specific amount of total URA funds should be dedicated to this use as there are other vital needs in the district as well.