

Vance Creek Candidate Responses
Spring Election 2013

by David K. Williams

For the first time in a number of years, the election for Vance Creek Town supervisor positions is a bona fide race, with three challengers seeking to unseat three long-serving incumbents.

All six candidates were asked to respond to four questions pertinent to the race and to the township's issues. However, only challengers Matt Norberg, Kendra Quist and Jess Fredericks chose to respond. Town residents will need to seek out on their own the three incumbents, Allen Libby, Mike Stafne and Tim Prusak to see where they stand on the questions and issues noted below.

Norberg is challenging Libby for Town Board chair. Quist is seeking the Supervisor 1 position Stafne now holds, and Fredericks is attempting to claim the Supervisor 2 position held by Prusak. Here are the four questions, and the responses to each by Norberg, Quist and Fredericks:

QUESTION 1: Why are you running for a position on the Vance Creek Town Board?

Norberg: Living in this area my entire life and being a fourth generation farmer I care for everyone in the Vance Creek area and I would like to help preserve what the generations before me have worked very hard for, so my children can be proud of where they grow up. I also believe that I am an open minded person and can help the area thrive.

Quist: I feel that the current board is not in touch with the Vance Creek Citizens. It was time for new candidates to step up and serve their community as the township demographics are changing.

Fredericks: I feel that the current Board has lost sight of the fact that they were elected to represent ALL people of the township.

QUESTION 2: What do you see as the key issues facing the township at this time?

Norberg: Obviously the possibility of Frac Sand mining entering the area is high on the list, but I believe we also need to stay focused on the maintaining and updating of our roads. As well as snow removal and sanding in the winter months and ditch mowing in the summer months. We also need to make sure that the township equipment and property are in the best shape possible. And most importantly the top priority of the township is the people that reside in Vance Creek Township.

Quist: Some of the key issues facing the township are the new industries coming into our area. As these new industries come in, the township needs to consider the impacts to the quality of life of its citizens and how it will be there to help.

Other key issues facing the township are to ensure the continuation of the agriculture industry, the health and preservation of life and the impact new industries will have on the residents and their properties as well as road maintenance.

Fredericks: Keeping roads properly maintained and safe to travel.

- Balancing the need to protect productive agricultural and forest lands with the allowance for other types of responsible land uses.
- Recognizing the individual concerns of the ENTIRE township and moving forward with the best interests of the Town as a whole
- Achieving the necessary improvements to the Town's equipment, infrastructure, and services while minimizing the tax burden to the residents

QUESTION 3: What protections do you believe are necessary for township residents in light of pending frac sand mines in the township?

Norberg: First of all I believe the people of Vance Creek Township should be able to maintain their current lifestyle with protections in place for the possibility of frac sand mines coming into the area. This includes our roads, water, property values and the general safety of all people.

Quist: Now that the board has enacted ordinances, they need to hold to them. When mine companies enter into developers' agreements with the township, they need to adhere to the ordinances and restrictions. We can't afford to have the board give away every protection we got just because the mine companies are flashing around a lot of money. In these agreements, property values need to be protected for neighbors and business owners who live within a two mile area of these mines. It's important that water and air quality as well as home values are protected. An environmental engineering study testing water quality needs to be performed before any mining operations begin. This will give a base line to go off of for future testing and monitoring of the sites. The ways people make a living in our township are changing. Many of these residents' businesses will be impacted by mines coming in and it's important that these ordinances guarantee the mines will not hinder their lives or livelihoods.

Fredericks: Vance Creek is a very diverse township and people have taken residence here for many reasons, be it for agriculture, recreation, or simply to enjoy the peace,

tranquility, and scenic beauty our unique landscape provides. All are important, and all add value to the township. While I am not in favor of changing our predominantly agricultural landscape into an industrialized area, if necessary, non-metallic mining can co-exist, but it MUST be done in a responsible manner. This responsibility is lacking with our current Board. Protections need to be put in place to ensure that the groundwater, surface waters, and air quality are not degraded. The Town's roads are not designed to handle the additional heavy-truck traffic, so financial protections must be enacted to ensure that upgrades and repairs can be made. Haul routes must be designated with the safety of local residents in mind. Mines must have regulated hours and safeguards must be in place to protect the people and property values adjacent to them. The corporations developing the mines are not local and some do not see the value in our landscape, other than for the sand below the surface. Therefore, they must be willing to make concessions to prove that they will act responsibly while they are here, and leave a positive impact on the local area after they are gone.

QUESTION 4: What level of regulation do you believe the township needs to deal with potential development issues such as wind turbines, frac sand mines and cell towers facing rural communities around Vance Creek Township?

Norberg: The town board with the people of the township have the ability to create and adopt ordinances and or laws to protect the citizens of Vance Creek Township. I feel this should be done at the township level. None of us like change but things are constantly changing whether it is how fast our children are growing up, tomorrow's new cell phone that can do everything, today's ways of increasing oil and gas wells' productivity, business people bettering their business, or the new neighbors who moved into the area. So if decisions need to be made to protect the area and the people of Vance Creek we need to keep our neighbors and our future generations best interest as a big part of that decision.

Quist: It's important to the community that new businesses continue to come and develop here. The community has a right though to be protected from any potential damage a new business or industry could bring. With this said, ordinances that establish protections need to be in place prior to the industries being approved. I believe a citizens committee should be set up to find out the concerns of the Vance Creek residents and study potential impacts of any new industry in our area.

Fredericks: I feel that any regulations that deal with future development issues can be derived and enforced at the Town level. Township citizens should have a voice, and they deserve to be heard. It is critically important to look at both sides of the issue and do the necessary research to enact appropriate regulations to protect the best interests of the Town as a whole. Those pushing for a particular development, and

more importantly the Town citizens, must know that the Town regulates the developers, not the other way around.