Greg Thornton District 3

1. What motivated you to run for a City Council seat, and what is your vision for serving the public if elected?

I am running for office because I feel our current Council is making poor decisions. I think we should not be annexing areas that are unnecessary and will cause our service levels to decrease. We also need to be very cognizant of our water and ensure we have enough for our current areas. We need to discontinue a luck first mentality towards evacuation when a fire occurs because luck is not a plan. We also need to respect the will of the voter and, when they have made a decision through the ballot, we need to respect that and not try to overrule their vote.

2. Nationally, government has been focused on finding waste and fraud in government through DOGE, the Department of Government Efficiency. Would you be in favor of a similar effort within the City of Colorado Springs? Where do you think efficiencies could be found within city departments?

Yes, I am pretty sure there is some waste in our government. I don't think it is necessary a bloated government, but we may be paying more for some things than we need to. Take, for example, the $2.47 million in ARPA funds spent on getting design plans for the City Auditorium when the money was supposedly earmarked for renovations. As a Parks Board member, I have asked to see what we received for the $2.47 million (it was actually more if you consider other non-ARPA funds), and have yet to see anything concrete. It appears the money was spent in fundraising marketing which came so woefully short of targets that the entity doing the fundraising has left the project.

3. Are there any new taxes, fees, or TABOR retention ballot issues you'd like to see put before voters? Please, explain.

The only tax I would consider raising is the LART (Lodging and Rentals Tax) that visitors and tourists predominantly pay. We are currently around 2% when some cities like New Orleans and Houston are over 15%. Tourists use our roads, hike our trails, visit our parks…many of these activities actually cost nothing. Thus, we should get some revenue to offset the wear and tear they bring upon our city.

4. What does responsible city growth and development look like to you? Do you have any issues with how City Council has handled development, annexation, etc. in the recent past?

I believe the annexations Council has approved and is considering are unnecessary and very costly. We have thousands of empty or dilapidated lots that we can expand with infill. I also believe we are building too many apartments downtown and should be giving citizens a path to ownership through condominiums.

5. Should non-profit entities receive taxpayer funds to provide services to certain sectors of the public? Would you advocate for those non-profits to provide detailed reports to city council on how taxpayer money is spent?

Yes, non-profits should receive some funding because they are usually doing services better and cheaper than the City itself could do them. That being said, yes they should provide reports of how they are spending the money and justify those expenses.

6. In 2024, the current city council members voted in favor of a resolution stating that Colorado Springs is not a sanctuary city. Do you agree or disagree with that vote and why?

Yes, I agree. We are not a city that should not cooperate with the federal government in enforcing immigration law. We need to assist them to root our illegal immigrants, especially those committing crimes.

7. What is your view on the current illegal immigration problem in our city?

We should work with the federal law enforcement agencies and work diligently to ensure illegal immigrants don't think we are a place they can come and commit crimes.

8. Taxpayer funds are used to provide services to homeless people. Do you think this money is well spent (or not) and should more funds be (or not be) committed to homeless programs?

We should do all we can to eradicate homelessness and get the unhoused places to stay so they aren't sleeping on our stoops, sidewalks, and in parks. We can create a "tent city" for them which would be an economical place to stay while they get whatever help they need with job training, abuse, and addiction or mental health conditions. The Esperanza Community in Austin, Texas began as a tent city and now has permanent structures to house people and we can follow their lead.

9. Housing affordability has been a hot topic in recent years. What's your solution to the problem? Should taxpayer funds be used to address this issue?

I don't think taxpayers should pay for housing affordability except to stick with first-time homeowners and those close to eviction. We need to do all we can to stop the move from housed to unhoused because you are two months late with rent and just had too many bills come due.

10. Red light cameras and speed cameras have been approved by city council members. What are your opinions about red light cameras and speed cameras?

I think they are an infringement on our privacy rights and am not in favor of them.

11. Is there anything additional you'd like to share about yourself with voters?

I am one of the few candidates not accepting donations from developers. I believe developers run our elections, and in many ways, run our government. There should be transparency in our government and its' leaders and I will do what is right for the City as a whole, not any special interest groups. I have had a 30+ year career in financial services and will bring that business acumen to City Council. I am the proud father of a son and daughter and want to keep Colorado Springs the big city with the small town feel. I am for some kind of building height restrictions downtown and feel safety of our citizens is of utmost importance. That means we should staff our police department fully, advocate for evacuation modeling so that every citizen has a plan to evacuate should they get the orders to do so, and we need to use our Home Rule status and keep the character of our neighborhoods by having a strict Accessory Dwelling Unit policy, which can differ between different neighborhoods. Thank you for taking the time to read this. I would appreciate your support.