

2nd Ward Alderman Candidate

Art Lemke



My wife Jean and I have lived in St. Charles for 30 years. Our son Andrew is an alumnus of District 303 schools. I am a CPA, licensed in Illinois with an MBA from NIU in DeKalb. During my 45 years of experience as an internal auditor and consultant, I have been able to identify improvement opportunities for firms as large and successful as Wall-Mart, and some as small as a 2-truck home service firm.

My initial involvement in Saint Charles was driven by my interest in historic preservation. I was helpful in preparing our first Historic Preservation Ordinance; in addition I worked with members of my church to restore one of our historic homes. As time permits, I volunteer as a peer reviewer for other internal audit departments. As member of a peer review team, I typically prepare one or more "Opportunities for Improvement" during each engagement.

With voter support, I would agree to serve another term as Alderman for Ward 2. I am proud to say Saint Charles has developed a reputation as a Number One City for Families. Given the current level of mortgage rates, additional families have been able to move here. Nevertheless I don't want us to stand still. Given another term, I will continue to identify and participate in these nonpartisan opportunities to improve our community:

- Opportunity for Balanced Growth -

A consistent goal in developing and revising our Comprehensive Plan has been to retain the balance of land uses. Rezoning non-residential properties to residential densities should continue to be discouraged. Retail and manufacturing shares the burden of school taxes which represent two thirds of the real estate tax burden. When our critical mass of retail is affected, it will permanently reduce our opportunity to benefit from sales tax. As a member of the Council, I voted to encourage the development of additional single family homes given the current mortgage environment.

- Charlestown Redevelopment Encouraged -

During the last eight years, the City of St. Charles has developed a redevelopment agreement with the Krausz Group. That agreement provided that Krausz was able to develop some mall out-parcels. That agreement has lead to the opening of Coopers Hawk and Starbucks. Unfortunately the Krausz group has been unable to negotiate successfully with any residential developers in recent years. With the improving economic environment, there will be an opportunity for the Krausz group to sell off its investment to a more capable developer.

- Pheasant Run Redevelopment In Process -

During the recent months City Council has worked begin a redevelopment of Pheasant Run. The Planning and Development Committee of the current Council unanimously approved a plan to begin development with the eastern portion of the former Pheasant Run property. That proposal will improve our retail sales tax position in the long term. The developer was able to implement signage improvements suggested by myself and other committee members. Meanwhile, the DuPage Airport Authority has acquired the property between their hangars and the hotel building. It is clear that the property adjacent to their hangars will provide an opportunity for industrial uses. The improved occupancy for Mainstreet Commons provides an opportunity for additional retail uses east of Portillo's.

- Opportunity for Police Station relocation and site redevelopment -

I was one of the Ward 2 Council representatives that successfully advocated for relocating the police station in a central location rather than north of Red Gate Road. The old structurally deficient facility may not be reusable as an office in the short term, but the city may use the land for additional street level parking. We have found that downtown redevelopment opportunities have been very well accepted as illustrated by the number of establishments near the downtown plaza. Given that plaza, our businesses have successfully provided outdoor dining opportunities in response to the pandemic last summer.

- Financial risks related to the Pandemic -

The financial position of the city has given us the opportunity to hold the city portion of property taxes at the same or lower rate during the last decade. We also manage our utilities to provide service at rates comparable to neighboring communities to the south. Prudent investment in facilities has given us the opportunity to comply with regulations while minimizing disruptions. In spite of financial risks, the city has retained a tenured group of employees, and consistent with that, citizen surveys in the past year have rated city services well above average.