

At-Large City Council Candidate Joseph McColgan

*Question 1*

In an urban setting, open space is a necessity so any opportunity to promote parks and recreation is important to the social aspect of urban living; bringing people together to create a sense of community. As a child growing up in NE Philadelphia, the recreation centers and extensions of Fairmount Park scatter throughout the area gave me and my friends a place to play and explore and on occasion, sit and do nothing but talk. I do believe our parks are underutilized and should be promoted accordingly with different venues or activities throughout the city whether it be a small Friday night concert or an organized sports league throughout the year.

I live in the East Torresdale section of the city, down the street from Glenn Ford Mansion, and see firsthand the potential for places such as this, yet it goes underutilized, under promoted and under kept. It should be promoted more and better kept.

And it is not just about open space and green grass, though this is important. We should have more changing venues within our parks and recreation centers in order to attract people to them on a consistent basis. Whether it be concerts or shows, one act plays, talent nights for kids – even adults – be creative and draw the people to these places.

Anytime one can be outdoors relaxing, enjoying family, friends and neighbors with good camaraderie and great conversation, is good for the body as well as the soul!

*Question 2*

Obviously money is always the challenge. In the grand scheme of things, if we can increase revenues for the city by allowing innovators to create jobs, then we would be in a better position to fully fund the parks. At the end of the day, budgeting is about funding those things that should be fully funded and which should not be funded at all. Budgeting is not about figuring out how much each activity gets, but about determining which activities should be fully strengthened and which should be eliminated entirely. If we fix the process, then maybe we can fully fund things that need to be funded like parks and recreation.

I believe we can/should:

- promote more public–private partnerships offsetting costs;
- utilize the open space as a revenue generator over the course of any given year with fee-driven events;
- all revenues collected by the Department of Parks and Recreation should stay within the department for the benefit of the community;

- fully-fund recreation centers, especially in the summer months keeping our youth active and out of harm's way.