# A Better Plan for Munster

Jonathan PETERSEN
FOR
MUNSTER TOWN COUNCIL - WARD 5

## – 1 –

### Lower Taxes

Since we cannot annex new land to the Town, we must maximize tax revenue from new construction and development. I favor commercial development which pays the largest portion of taxes and imposes fewer burdens on municipal services. As a center of healthcare in Northwest Indiana, Munster is a magnet for healthcare professionals which fuels a demand for medical office space. By contrast, I am not in favor of new high-density housing that pays less in taxes and which places the greatest burdens on both municipal and school services.

## – 2 –

### Better Planning

The Town routinely seeks grant money from both the State and Federal governments to fund operations and development. Recently, town officials sought and obtained grant money that will reduce Ridge Road from four lanes to two before adequately studying the idea or obtaining community input. I oppose this “put the cart before the horse” method of pursuing grants. Instead, I favor hiring a dedicated official who will seeks grants that meet long term planning objectives instead of chasing the money first and planning later.

## – 3 –

### Community Safety

It has been said that government’s first duty and highest obligation is public safety. I have a plan for community safety that focuses on quality-of-life issues that are often overlooked. I favor more Police and giving them the resources and support that they need to keep Munster safe.

## – 4 –

### Improve School Safety

Homeland security grants are available to religious schools and non-profit institutions, but the application process is cumbersome and challenging. Munster town government should assist our institutions that educate the next generation by helping these organizations to get the security tools they need.

## – 5 –

### Eliminate Waste Every Year

We are too slow to identify programs that are not working or have outlived their usefulness. I support a policy that requires Town Administration annually to list by department the things we do from best to worst and target the bottom 3-5% for elimination or merger. With this policy, we will eliminate duplication and set achievable goals for waste reduction.

## – 6 –

### Create True Transparency

I believe that we can make our websites, social media and public forums more accessible. For example, if town contracts were readily available, we could empower citizens to shine light on inside deals and call attention to missed deadlines. I have a plan to review and revisit how we communicate with the community.

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# *A Better Plan for Munster*

## – 7 –

### Boards and Commissions

Munster Boards and Commissions impact daily life from the types of businesses we bring to our community, the quality of our parks, the standards of new construction, and the safety of our neighborhoods, just to name a few. Munster should take the lead in finding and keeping qualified members with experience and expertise for our boards and commissions.

## – 8 –

### Homeowner Associations

Many subdivisions in Munster have homeowner associations (HOAs) that provide basic services or set subdivision standards. Munster should create an internet clearing house for governing documents and information so that our neighbors can connect with their HOA, find the officers and managers of their association and improve their overall understanding of the role of their HOA.

## – 9 –

### Municipal Code of Ethics

It is a privilege to serve in our community as a government official. Although Munster does possess a Code of Ethics, it has not stayed current with the needs of our community nor is it effectively transmitted to Town of Munster personnel.* Correspondingly, I support a review and update to our code of ethics and I further support having all members of town government provide written acknowledgement of their compliance.

**See Munster, Indiana Code §§ 2-70 through 2-76*

## – 10 –

### Annual Festival of Ideas

Munster should host an annual festival of ideas that focuses on the challenges of our middle class community. Since we already have a network of leaders in education, healthcare and business, we can tap into this knowledge base to meet our upcoming challenges and improve the quality of our community.

## – 11 –

### Support Culture and the Arts

As many know, Munster is home to the culturally important Center for the Visual and Performing Arts, but did you know that Munster has many other cultural organizations such as the Munster Historical Society, Munster Garden Club and other groups? Historically, support for cultural organizations has been either an afterthought for some or considered an annoyance by others. Yet, these organizations improve our quality of life and deserve support. I plan to increase support for these valuable organizations..

## – 12 –

### Listen to You

In the last 12 years I have observed many aspects of Munster town government and I have concluded that elected officials can do better at listening. I believe that town service is a privilege and that town officials should make themselves available regularly to hear the good ideas of our friends and neighbors. As your representative, I welcome your input, thoughts and suggestions.

**Election Day is May 2**

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## – 13 –

### More for Seniors

Just as we focus on the education and safety of our youth, I believe we should also consider the social and educational needs of our senior citizens. As your councilman, I support tasking the Munster Special Advisory Board with developing ideas and programs for opportunities and experiences of our senior community.

## – 14 –

### Calumet Avenue Underpass

Although Munster completed the 45th Avenue underpass, the town master plan also contemplated an underpass at the railroad tracks on Calumet Avenue to alleviate the congestion that has been a perpetual problem for our community. Instead of completing both projects, we have been advised that state money would only pay for one of these projects. I believe we should continue to seek ways to complete this long term project and I plan to investigate alternate mechanisms for funding.

*Elect*

★★★

*Jonathan*

**PETERSEN**

FOR

**MUNSTER TOWN COUNCIL - WARD 5**

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Paid for by the Committee to Elect Jonathan Petersen