

## CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Candidates were asked to submit statements under 500 words. Contact information is included, in case you have a question for any of them.

### Candidate for Mayor

#### John G. Compton



Most of you know me as the Grove's Mayor for the past several years, some much longer. And though unopposed in this year's election (hopefully an indication of approval...), I want to provide some perspective on myself and on the Town for your consideration.

I have played an active role in our community since 1991. Sheila and I hardly imagined we would find such a friendly, sharing and caring small town neighborhood for raising our daughters. And for experiencing and learning the meaning of community spirit and volunteerism. I have served on the Town Council for 5 years (1996-99, 2008-09, 2017-18), and have been Mayor for 11 years (1999-2008, 2018-20). Once I thought I retired from town office - until I was encouraged by residents to return again to the Council (2017), and a year later to serve once more as Mayor.

This year we have been challenged to navigate ourselves and community through the COVID-19 health crisis. With our lives greatly dislocated, we have had to look to ourselves for safety from the disease. But times like these define our Town, and our Grove community found even more ways to help each other however it is needed. Government at all levels is struggling with restrictions on activities and decisions aimed at reducing the threat to all of us. In Washington Grove all of us involved in Town business - the many volunteers, town employees, elected and appointed officials - have adapted to remote meetings. The Town Council and I have closed facilities and scrambled to institute procedures to safely conduct our annual election and the Town Meeting budget process.

We have accomplished some important things this past year, which I will cover in my Mayor's State of the Town report at the Annual Town Meeting. Here I remind you of my views, shared by many of you, on how we nurture and preserve the qualities that define the Grove, and of essential criteria for choosing elected officials.

Our town depends on residents volunteering in small and large ways for the Grove's community organizations and in Town government. We are the Town's essential (unpaid) staff - who by serving on committees - organize community activities; help maintain and improve our facilities, forests and green space; work to preserve our historical character; and advise on the Grove's infrastructure needs. In whatever capacity you choose, you can lend your energy and make the Grove what you want it to be.

Our elected Town Councilors debate the issues, and lead the Town through their decisions. My experience deciding routine and controversial issues leads me to suggest the following are the most important criteria for candidates (which far overshadow their positions on issues):

- A commitment to the time needed to prepare and to attend the meetings.
- A spirit of cooperation and compromise.
- An understanding of the need for consensus and of how decisions are made.
- A willingness to make those decisions.
- Having the energy and initiative to pursue a few issues they strongly feel need attention.

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## TOWN COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Vote for two.



### David Cosson

The Town Council of Washington Grove exists to serve its residents; it should focus on the maintenance and protection of the Town's unique community values and history while continually striving to improve in a manner consistent with those values and history. The members of the Council must be attuned to needs and desires of residents while providing leadership and expertise to advance these goals.

I first discovered the unique character of Washington Grove in the 1980s when my sister, Jane Souzon moved in. I rediscovered the Town in 2016 when looking to move closer to Asbury where my wife is a resident. The Town has provided an exceptional natural and cultural environment and, most importantly, acceptance into a caring community.

My relevant general background includes service as an Army Officer and many years of legal practice representing hundreds of rural telephone and electric companies before regulators, legislators and courts. This experience involved detailed analysis of complex policy questions and working cooperatively with various groups that had opposing views. I learned the importance of listening to all sides and looking for ways to bring people together for workable solutions. My background is also relevant to questions regarding emergency communications and the concerns for upcoming construction of 5G communications services that will involve placing a large number of small cell sites in the Town.

Upon moving to Washington Grove, I quickly became interested in volunteering on town committees and I joined the Emergency Preparedness and Safety Committee (EPSC). Soon after, I was asked to become the EPSC vice Chair. In this role, I have worked closely with the EPSC members, other town committees, and Montgomery County Emergency Management officials on several key projects. My committee work on these projects has included developing the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan that was approved by the Montgomery County and FEMA; preparing the Town's Risk Management and Safety Procedures manual; submitting an RFP for the purchase and installation of the Town Hall generator and writing traffic safety and road crossing improvement recommendations for the Mayor and Town Council. Most recently, I have become involved in multi-committee discussions on stormwater management in our town.

My objective as a member of the Town Council will be to advocate for actions and policies that preserve the unique benefits and history of the Town while leading to improvements consistent with the needs of town residents. For example, the Council should expand its efforts to identify and remedy the serious erosion, flooding and potential health issues resulting from stormwater drainage failures and support the work of the Stormwater Management Committee. The continued volunteer engagement of a broad spectrum of town residents through open government, the Town Committees, and formal and informal communications channels will be paramount in this and other critical town issues. I plan to foster and promote this communication if elected to the Town Council.

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## **Audrey S Maskery**

I have enjoyed working with the Town Council, in particular as Councilor responsible for Forestry and Beautification; for Maintenance; and for Memorials. It has been a pleasure to work with Georgette Cole, Chair for Forestry and Beautification, and Mr. Steve Werts, our Maintenance officer.

I feel strongly in my role as Councilor I should not impose my opinions on the Town but talk to residents and reflect their views in making my Council decisions. It is also critically important to apply our town policies equally so all residents are treated fairly. In my areas of Council responsibility, it would be all too easy to treat one request more favorably than another and it has been my goal never to do this.

In the nine years I have worked for the Town we have planted 165 trees in our parks, and along avenues and roads. Seven years ago, I instituted a tree pruning program which covers one third of the town every year and keeps our residential area safer. I have an excellent working relationship with our Town Maintenance Supervisor, Steve Werts. I have seen his hard work and efficiency produce admirable results while saving the town money. I feel privileged to work with him and hope to continue doing so.

I believe my experience makes me a particularly effective Council member. I hope to continue serving the Town for another three years.

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## **Gray Yachup**

Hello everyone! I'm Grayson Yachup, I live over on Maple Avenue, and have lived in this Town for 21 years. I'm running for Town Councilor because I love this Town and its people, and want to be a part of the group that keep it running smoothly. In addition, I want to have the opportunity to work towards several key items I feel would greatly improve life for the citizens in the Grove.

First, it is important that we ensure the continuation of the Grove spirit of volunteerism. We're a bit of a unique town in this way, and those not steeped in Grove culture may find it intimidating to get involved. I think taking official steps to proactively involve new Town residents would help preserve the unique community we have formed.

Second, I would like to work to share our unique identity and culture with the surrounding community. I am proud to be a Grover, and believe we have trails, activities and events that could serve as a great way to better connect with those around us. New friends, new people to participate in Town events, and new people who appreciate what we are is something worth striving for.

Third, I would like to ensure that Grovers are heard by our Town government. We need voices of every kind represented, from the young, the old, new residents, people who have been here for years, everyone! Many people in town are unfortunately unable or unwilling to navigate the pitfalls of our laws and codes. Ensuring there are methods to become familiar with our system, and the ins-and-outs of participation in it, is key to furthering the interconnectedness we are all so proud of here.

I hope that you will consider voting for me for Town Council, and I hope everyone is doing well during this pandemic. If you have any questions with regards to my thoughts on town issues, or would like to express anything for me to bring to the council if I am elected, please feel free to email or call me at 240-731-3742 or [gyachup@gmail.com](mailto:gyachup@gmail.com). Thanks everyone!