

# Ward 4 Council Candidate Information Form

## BIXBY CITY COUNCIL



Ray Bowen

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Occupation: Retired Coach/Teacher      Retired Business Owner      Consultant/Account Manager OKES

Community Leadership/Political Experience: Mayor, City of Bixby 4 Years/Board Member Bixby Chamber of Commerce/Board Member MIH Committee/Board Member for the Indian Nations Council of Governments/Board Member for the Tulsa County Criminal Justice Trust Authority/Vice-Chair for the Tulsa County Criminal Justice Trust Authority/INCOG Board Member/Visit Tulsa Advisory Board/Inaugural Bixby Spartan Hall of Fame Inductee 2006/Bixby Citizen of the Year 2006/Progressive Leadership Award City of Bixby 2006/ Progressive Leadership Award City of Bixby 2008/Youth Sports

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**As a Candidate, my top priorities are:** I want to be part of a council that operates as a team with open communication, cooperation, and wisdom. To insure policies are in place to promote quality residential and commercial growth and provide the infrastructure to make it happen. I will be a councilman who is a good liaison between the citizens, business community and the city council.

**I am seeking office because:** I have been involved with the city council not only as ward 4 councilmen but also as Mayor. I would like to see that the 2006 bond projects are finished in the next 4 years especially 151<sup>st</sup> widening that is currently starting and the widening of Riverview to 161<sup>st</sup>. I would like to continue working with our state, county, local elected officials to see that Bixby gets its share of projects and continue promoting Bixby not only in Oklahoma but across the nation in working with the International Conference of Shopping Centers. This will help to insure that we will continue bringing quality commercial retail to Bixby. There have been many projects that have been moving forward that I would like to see finished in the next term of office.

**What specific experience makes you attuned to the needs of our business community?** I have owned and operated a business in Bixby for many years. This experience has made me aware of many problems that small businesses face. I have been a standing board member for the Bixby Chamber of Commerce for 4 years. I have worked hand in hand with many people in the business community with existing businesses but also worked with many new businesses in the last 4 years helping them in any way I can to be successful as they start out. I have enjoyed working with the Bixby Chamber in helping Bixby and our business community, grow and prosper.

The Bixby Chamber has done a great job in promoting businesses and networking the community. My involvement with the many boards that I work with in Tulsa and Tulsa County has made it easier in getting many projects and issues worked out with the cooperation of these elected officials. This experience will continue in the next 4 years.

**What can the City Council do to encourage more businesses to open in Bixby?** Small business is the lifeblood of a community. The city council must have policies that show businesses and developers they are business friendly and remove any roadblocks to their relocation, start up, or expansion. I have worked to make the permitting of businesses and residences an easier process in the last 4 years and I will continue to work to improve this process. Last year we had our first builders, developers, realtors, and bankers conference at the SpritBank Event Center to see how we might help in moving the residential and commercial development forward after the downturn in the economy nationally as well as locally. This conference should get bigger and better in the future in helping these groups be more successful. I helped to start the "Buy Bixby Campaign in 2007 as the manager of Lowe's suggested that we do something to stop the bleeding of losing sales revenue to other community's during the Christmas buying season. This led to the idea we should start our own "Buy Bixby Program." During the last 3 years this has been a very good program for the City of Bixby who funds it and the Bixby Chamber who partners with the City to make it happen. I helped to start a hotel/motel tax in Bixby in 2008 when the Hampton Inn was built. The revenue off of this tax is put into the city's economic development fund to help in bringing more business to Bixby and set up incentives for business growth.

**Bixby is obviously in a growth pattern. How do you feel about the expansion and growth? How would you balance the needs of the City versus the concerns of the community?** Growth is inevitable. We have the land and good access to the existing employment centers. Well-planned growth is our only choice. We must be sure to be responsive to the concerns of our existing businesses and ensure the growth will compliment what is already here. In order to accomplish these goals we must have a City Council that listens to all perspectives and consider all view points before decisions are made. In 2008 the city hired Integra Reality Resources out of Kansas City to be master planning consultants for our community. We also hired Crawford and Associates (who did Branson Landing in Missouri) to look at master planning several large mixed use developments in Bixby. This will help the council planning for growth as we continue to grow in the future. Bixby was named as the 67<sup>th</sup> "best place to live in the United States" by Money Magazine in 2009 and this is another reason that Bixby is the "Best Place in Oklahoma to live and raise a family."

**What do you think that the three greatest challenges or opportunities are for the Bixby community and economy in the next 5-10 years?** 1) Continued Quality Residential and Commercial Growth  
2) Arkansas River Development & Low Water Dam 3) Bridge across the Arkansas River for Access and Public Safety