



Citizens for Purcellville

www.citizensforpurcellville.org

admin@citizensforpurcellville.org

Dear <Candidate>,

The Citizens for Purcellville coalition was formed by a group of town residents and business owners who are dedicated to seeing our town be the best it can be. As such, we are deeply interested in hearing (and sharing with the community) information about each of the candidates in the upcoming 2026 election for Mayor and Town Council. We are also interested in learning about the issues that you believe that our town faces and strategies that you will take to address them.

To that end, we are sending this survey to each of the registered candidates in the upcoming election. These questions were submitted by town residents and representatives of businesses within the town. While we cannot prevent it, we ask that you do not collaborate with other candidates while responding to this survey.

Responses will be listed on our public website, www.citizensforpurcellville.org. While we are a registered Political Action Committee, we welcome your input in the process of educating local voters on important topics impacting our community.

Please return surveys at your earliest convenience. Typed responses are appreciated, either within the attached document, as a numbered email response, or in a separate document that you generate yourself.

Responses will be added to the Citizens for website as they are received and without editing. Candidates will be listed in the order which they will be listed on the ballot (based on candidacy filing date). Should you not choose to participate by 5pm on Sunday July 26th, we will make note of your non-response after that date and provide voters with publicly accessible biographical information.

Based on the answers provided, we may reach out with additional follow-up questions specific to your answers.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions via email at admin@citizensforpurcellville.org. Surveys may be submitted electronically via email or mailed to

Thank you for your support of citizen engagement in the election process!

Citizens for Purcellville Candidate Survey

Candidate Name (As listed on Ballot): Mitch S. Seipt

Candidate Age: 45

Occupation / Employer (Employer Optional): Middle School Assistant Principal, LCPS

Education: University of Virginia - Bachelors in History, Masters in Secondary Social Studies Education; Shenandoah University - Graduate Certificate in Education Administration

How long have you been a resident of the Town of Purcellville? We moved to Purcellville in April 2016

Please provide a short biography of your experience and qualifications for the office that you seek.

I am entering my 20th year serving as an educator in Loudoun County and my 24th year in education. In LCPS, I have taught 6th and 7th grade United States History, served as a middle school dean, and for the past ten years have had the opportunity to be a middle school assistant principal. My experience as a school administrator has taught me how to be a systems thinker, seeing how each and every program and structure is essential to the overall success of the school for students, families, and staff. I also have extensive experience in conflict resolution and restorative practices, in which I help various parties that are in conflict to find a mutually agreeable path forward. My experience in school administration has also taught me how to collaborate with stakeholders to identify areas of need and to develop and implement solutions that move our school towards achieving its goals.

Outside of my day job, I enjoy serving my community. I have had the chance to coach my children in flag football, soccer, and basketball and I volunteer as one of the drivers of the equipment trailer for the Loudoun Valley Marching Band and the Western Loudoun Indoor Combined Percussion. At our church, I have served as a trustee and deacon, been a member of the A/V team, and have helped out as a Sunday School teacher, Vacation Bible School volunteer, and youth group chaperone.

I see service on town council through a similar lens of servant leadership. If elected, I will work with my fellow council members, my fellow citizens, and the experts on our town staff to find solutions to the challenges that face Purcellville each day. I will listen to all points of view, do my research, and vote with my conscience.

Please describe some of the ways or organizations in which you have been involved within our community outside of elected public service (Please include relevant dates):

Youth Sports Coach

Upper Loudoun Youth Football League - Assistant Coach - 2018-19

Loudoun Soccer - Coach - 2019

Western Loudoun Basketball League - Coach/Assistant Coach - 2019-2026

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church Volunteer

Audio/Visual Team - 2019-Present

Trustee - 2018-2021

Deacon - 2021-2024

Sunday School Teacher - 2024-Present

Youth Group Volunteer/Chaperone

Vacation Bible School Volunteer

LVHS Marching Band/Western Loudoun Indoor Combined Drumline

Equipment Trailer Driver 2023-Present

Loudoun County Board of Elections

Election Officer 2022-25

Technology Officer 2023-24

Assistant Chief 2025

Citizens for Purcellville Question: Describe your personal vision for the town over the next 5-10 years?

Purcellville is such a wonderful place to live and has a unique identity that is lacking in many communities in Northern Virginia. I hope to work with town staff, local businesses, and community leaders to expand the number of opportunities for us to come together as a community.

As a town council, we've got some work to do to get Purcellville back on the right track. We need to create sustainable budgets that aren't borrowing from one fund to pay another, and we need to do so while catching up on deferred capital improvements to town infrastructure that are vital to public safety and quality of life. My hope is that we can start looking at challenges through a proactive, long-term lens to find lasting solutions to our challenges.

One of our most immediate needs is to recruit and hire a qualified town manager. We desperately need stability in this essential leadership role. It is my hope that we are able to find an excellent candidate in early 2027, and that our new town manager is still in place in 2037!

Finally, I envision a future for Purcellville in which we are only in the news for celebrations! Our town has been making headlines for all the wrong reasons for the past ten years. I hope to be part of a shift back to stability, common sense, and compromise and I want town council meetings to be boring again.

Citizens for Purcellville Question: Looking back at the previous 5-10 years of town history and governance by the town council, if you could change one significant action or decision by town council, what would it be?

If I could change one decision by town council, I would have pushed to keep Rob Lohr on as town manager in 2017. His ouster after 24 years of faithful service led almost immediately to years of turmoil, scandal, and controversy, as well as a revolving door of town managers and a lack of stability in leadership that has had a drastic effect on staff morale and the reputation of our town.

Citizens for Purcellville Question: What do you consider the most important issue for the new Town Council to address at their first meeting in January?

Our first order of business must be the recruitment and hiring of a qualified town manager. We need to find someone for that role that can bring the various town departments together in common purpose and to provide guidance and advice to the mayor and town council.

Resident Question: In 2025, the Town Council took initial actions to defund and disband the town's police department. What is your position regarding the town's police department and will you affirm to voters in your answer to this question that you will not support or empower any future attempts to eliminate the Purcellville Police Department?

I support Chief Lombraña and the Purcellville Police Department. I believe that they play a vital role in the safety and wellbeing of our community. I was horrified when the town council tried to eliminate the department and was one of many that signed up to speak at the meeting in April to get them to change their minds. Our police department isn't going anywhere!

In addition to disagreeing with the council majority's decision to disband the department, I am also fundamentally opposed to the methods used in the attempt. If elected, I promise to operate in the daylight and to keep the citizens informed of upcoming votes and decisions. I firmly believe that the council meeting agenda should be locked at least three days before the meeting and that it is incumbent on us as council members to use available communication tools to make sure that the community is well aware of the business that is going to be conducted at every meeting.

Resident Question: The cost of improvements to aging infrastructure, particularly the town's water system has been a big topic during the current term. Actions by previous town councils in the form of maintenance deferrals, utility rates not rising in conjunction with rising costs, and not following recommendations by staff or independent consultants, has resulted in the prospect of significant financial burden to both the town and to residents. What are your plans to address the issue of infrastructure and utility rates?

We've got a lot of work to do on this front. Town leadership has been kicking the can down the road for far too long, and we are paying the consequences for their lack of vision and

responsibility. The burst pipe and boil water advisory in October 2025 were just the most recent reminder.

Utility rates should never be used as political props. Utility rates should match the cost of operating the utility, which includes capital improvement and maintenance. While I disagreed with the majority's decision to ignore the recommendations of independent consultants for this year's water and sewer rates, I was glad to see them subsequently agree to the framework of a five year plan to get our town back to a place where the utilities are self-sustaining and where the general fund and meals tax fund can be used for their intended purposes, rather than artificially subsidizing utility bills.

If elected, I commit to maintaining that five year plan. I know that it's going to hurt for a while, but we are unfortunately paying for the past decade of mismanagement. I am interested in exploring ways to minimize the impact on residents' utility bills, but not by subsidizing utility rates by shifting funds from other accounts.

If elected, I promise to listen to the recommendations of town staff and independent consultants. It might not always be possible to act on their recommendations, but we need to get back to a place in which expertise is valued and wise counsel is heeded. I'm never going to pretend to be an expert on utility rates, capital improvement, or any of the countless responsibilities under our town's umbrella, but I promise to listen to the experts when asked to make decisions affecting our town's physical and financial wellbeing.

Business Question: The matter of water and sewer rates seems to be a regular topic for the Town. As I understand, current budget policy is to divert funds from the general fund as well as part of the meals tax revenue to subsidize water rates. Do you feel that this is fair and in the best interest of businesses/restaurants in town who already pay proportionally more for water per month than the majority of households?

I am opposed to the practice of diverting funds from the general fund or the meals tax fund to subsidize water and sewer rates. Our town has many other needs and priorities that should be served from those funds and town businesses and restaurants should not be asked to charge a higher meals tax or pay higher taxes and fees to artificially lower utility rates. Our utilities need to get back to a place in which they are self-sustaining or even making a profit that can come back into the general fund.

Resident Question: One of the first split decisions of the current town council regarded the annexation of the property upon which the Valley Commerce Center is now approved to occupy. Can you speak to your opinion about future annexation, if such action may ever be warranted, or what might have been done differently with regards to the VCC project?

While I have not had a chance to do in-depth research on this particular annexation, it is my understanding that the town had the opportunity to annex this property, which would have given town council significant control over zoning and land use. Having declined that opportunity, our

town council has very little influence over how that land will be developed, and we could see significant impacts regarding traffic and water usage that could impact us for decades to come.

Future annexation opportunities need to be very carefully considered. I feel that it is important that we maintain our town's identity and that includes exercising some level of control over what is happening in our immediate surroundings. We need to thoughtfully weigh the costs and benefits of any potential annexation.

Additionally, I want to work with our town council to rebuild and repair our relationship with Loudoun County. Trust has been broken and has resulted in the county moving forward with multiple projects (VCC, 690 interchange, rec center) without partnership from Purcellville. If this relationship had not been fractured, we might have been able to have more input on various land use questions even without annexation.

Business Question: The Town of Purcellville requires businesses to pay a business license tax. This tax amount is directly tied to the annual gross income that a business conducts, as such, larger businesses pay larger taxes to the town. What value or services does the town provide for these fees and what do you believe that the town should be doing to support local businesses or economic development?

Our local businesses are essential to our town's success and are a big part of our town's identity. The taxes that our businesses pay are also a significant part of our budget each year and help pay for our police department, town infrastructure improvement, and other essential services for all of our citizens and businesses.

I believe that the town can do more to support local businesses. I am in favor of devoting staff time to have a liaison between town government and the local business community. While there are already efforts underway by groups such as Purcellville Main Street, I believe that there are additional ways that our town government can help coordinate town-wide events, tools, and other supports that help our businesses thrive. I also would be interested in exploring infrastructure improvements that would revitalize Main Street and 21st Street. Purcellville is the economic hub of Western Loudoun, and it is incumbent upon the town to make sure that we are an attractive option for surrounding communities to come to visit, shop and dine with us.

Business Question: In 2025, the Town Council removed support for the Purcellville Main Street Program. Do you believe that this action was appropriate / in the best interest of the town and why? What is your personal position on Economic Development within the Town of Purcellville?

This was a short-sighted and ill-informed decision by the council majority. The Virginia Main Street Program provided our local businesses with access to an extensive network of resources and grant opportunities at no cost to the town. No meaningful reasons were provided for ending our participation in this valuable program. If elected, one of my first priorities would be to reestablish support for the Virginia Main Street program.

I believe that the Town of Purcellville needs to be a proactive partner with our local businesses and that economic development is essential to the future of our town. I greatly appreciate the efforts of the Purcellville Main Street group to organize community events that support our local businesses and look forward to partnering with them in the future.

Resident Question: What steps will you take to improve working relationships between town council members and/or town council and town staff?

Our town council meetings have become far too adversarial and contentious. Every decision seems to fall along the same 4-3 lines and there is far more confrontation than conversation. If elected, I promise to work with all members of town council to find ways in which we can find solutions that make our town better. We need to lower the temperature and start talking with each other. It might not always be possible to achieve compromise, but I'm always going to be willing to try.

We need to focus substantial efforts on repairing the relationships with our town staff. Our town staff are wonderful public servants who are experts in their fields. We need to honor their service by truly listening to and valuing their recommendations - and not just at Tuesday council meetings! One of the best ways that we can improve relationships with town staff and reestablish trust between town council and staff is to hire a qualified town manager as soon as possible. The constant turnover at our town's most important position has led to uncertainty, a lack of clear priorities, and low staff morale. We need stable leadership from the town manager to get all of the departments moving in the same direction with clear and purposeful objectives.

Resident Question: Do you feel that tourism is important to our town? If so, what steps will you take to grow or encourage tourism within the town limits?

Purcellville's impact and reputation go far beyond town limits. Our town is the economic hub of Western Loudoun, and we need to ensure that our town government is providing the support necessary for our businesses to be successful. Whether it is residents of Round Hill or Hamilton coming in for a grocery run or the residents of Lincoln or Lovettsville coming in for a night out, we have some of the best restaurants, businesses, and opportunities in our area - and we need to prepare accordingly. If elected, I would like to explore ways in which we can improve traffic flow on Main Street. I fear that residents of neighboring towns may avoid coming to Purcellville at certain times of day - and I can't blame them! Any of us that have tried to navigate Main Street in the afternoons know how frustrating it can be. I would also be interested in exploring additional options for parking and pedestrian traffic around 21st Street, as well as ways to help provide signage and advertising for downtown businesses.

Resident Question: "Slow growth" is a phrase often used in campaign literature. Define the term, provide examples of "slow growth" or where we have NOT seen "slow growth", and explain what initiatives you will establish to achieve it.

"Slow growth" is a phrase that says a lot without saying anything at all. If the past two years are an indicator of "slow growth" under the mayor's leadership, I suppose that "slow growth" means

pulling support for the Virginia Main Street program and voting to disband the Purcellville Police Department. I'm not a big fan of reducing an entire governing philosophy to a bumper sticker phrase - life is more complex and complicated than that.

I fully understand that Purcellville has changed dramatically in the past 30 years. The development of Hirst Farm, Locust Grove, Old Dominion Valley, and Mayfair (among many others!) has certainly changed the character of our town. The decisions on each development and annexation were made by the members of town council at that time, and I believe that each council felt that they were acting in the best interest of the town at the time. We can't go back in time, and we have a responsibility to the residents and businesses of Purcellville to support our town through thoughtful and informed decision making. I believe there are plenty of opportunities for smart, managed growth through enhancements and expansions already being proposed by local business owners. I also believe that we have a responsibility to provide proactive maintenance of the assets and capital resources already under the town's purview.

Resident Question: "Transparency" is another phrase used in this election's campaign literature. Define the term, provide examples of "transparency" or examples of actions where we have NOT seen "transparency", and explain what initiatives you will establish to achieve it.

I believe that our elected officials must operate with honesty, integrity, and transparency, whether in their comments from the dais, in discussions with fellow members of council, in conversations with town staff and in communication with citizens. Transparency to me means that our elected officials must communicate the same message regardless of location or audience because they should be communicating what they believe is best for our town. Beliefs should be firmly held and should not waver or change depending on circumstance.

We have unfortunately seen a lack of transparency from the current majority, starting from the first "emergency" meeting of their tenure, in which they fired Town Manager Bremseth and voted to hire Kwasi Fraser as an interim town manager. It was clear that the majority had discussions amongst themselves prior to this meeting that did not include the other members of council. Similarly, when the current majority decided to hire Mr. Fraser as town manager, they did so without consultation with the other members of council and seemingly without considering the 81 applicants for the position.

We have also seen a lack of transparency in conducting the business of the town. There have been numerous instances in which the council meeting agenda was amended the day of (or only hours before!) the scheduled meeting. This lack of transparency led to chaos, including the last minute attempt to disband the police department and the last minute budget amendment to cut \$200,000 from the IT budget.

Elected officials need to be upfront, honest and transparent with each other, with staff, and with citizens. If elected, I will commit to maintaining the required three day window for council meeting agendas (except in case of emergency). I will also work to develop ways to communicate the outcomes of town business to citizens and local businesses both in advance

of meetings and after decisions have been made. Our town is in a better place when everyone knows what's going on and where everyone stands.

Resident Question: Data centers and high voltage transmission lines are a hot topic in Loudoun County right now. Please provide any commentary you may have on the issue.

Data centers are not an option for Purcellville. We don't have the space, we don't have the water, and we don't have the infrastructure to support this type of development. I believe that the communities of Western Loudoun can stand firm in opposition to data centers, which would eliminate any need for any discussion about high voltage transmission lines.

That being said, we can only exercise control over what happens in town limits. As we saw with the VCC expansion, our broken relationship with Loudoun County limited our ability to have input on the parameters of this development. I look forward to rebuilding this partnership so that, if and when data center developers start looking to the west, we can work with the county to keep data centers out of Western Loudoun.

Please feel free to add any additional comments or discussion you would like to include: