

## 2010 RAVEN SOCIETY CANDIDATE POSITION SURVEY

*Please feel free to attach as many pages as are necessary to include your complete answers.*

1. Name: **Jay Polk**  
Address: **7743 Cedar Creek Road**  
**Townsend, TN 37882**
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2. Website:

3. For which office are you running?

**Blount County commissioner, District 8, Seat B**

4. What is your professional background and current occupation?

**I have a background in drafting and design and currently work as a CAD technician.**

5. Please list high school(s) attended and any higher education with degrees earned, if any.

**Franklin County High School (1990-1992) Stewart County High School (1992-1994) Associates Degree in Computer-Aided Design and Drafting Currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering**

6. List professional, governmental, community service or other relevant organizational affiliations you have maintained within the past 10 years. List approximate dates of service.

**Habitat for Humanity Blount County Libertarian Party**

7. Please comment on how your own background and skills would assist you as an officeholder.

**In my professional experience, it is essential to work well with others and communicate efficiently in order to achieve quality results. I do this, not because I am forced to, but because I want our company to succeed. Projects progress more smoothly when I and my team are given a task and allowed to work to achieve the desired results rather than to be micromanaged at every level. Companies work best when their employees are free to use their own talents to achieve a goal. Government should be no different. Progress in society is hindered by any micromanaging by government bureaucracies. Only by allowing citizens to work together to achieve a desired result can society function**

**efficiently.**

8. The Raven Society Mission Statement is at the top of this page. Do you support this mission? Why or why not? If elected, what will you do in support of this mission?

***Blount County is a beautiful place and I hope and pray that we can maintain its beauty so our children and grandchildren can share in it. The most important thing we can do is promote proper stewardship of the land. To this end, as a County Commissioner, I will work to eliminate any and all governmental regulations and restrictions on private property. The best way for land to be properly maintained and managed is by neighbors working together to determine the best use of their land. Sweeping legislation that restricts all property owners is unfair and unjust. Agreements should be between landowners only, not between landowners and the government. However, any landowner who wishes to donate their land to a conservancy or even the government is free to exercise that choice as they see fit.***

9. What do you see as the three most critical issues facing Blount County? Being as specific as possible, please tell us how you will address each of these issues.

***1. Out of control government spending - I will work to identify, reduce, and/or eliminate unnecessary departments and positions within the county government. Many services currently provided by the government can be done more efficiently and at less cost by the private sector. Citizens are the best judge of what is best for themselves and their family and should be allowed to keep as much of their hard-earned money as possible. 2. Unfair regulation of private land use - One of the most basic human rights is the right to be secure in our persons and property. It is unimaginable in a free society for any governmental entity to regulate this. People should have the power to control their own property and work with their neighbors concerning proper land use. Penalizing responsible landowners due to the bad behavior of a few is bad policy. 3. Corruption in government - For too long we have tolerated corruption in our elected officials and dismissed it as "politics as usual". Because we have been excusing this our situation has gotten worse. Blount County deserves a government that treats all citizens with the same respect and consideration and does not practice favoritism for the politically connected.***

10. Rapid development in Blount County has implications for the County budget, as well as for our air and water quality, scenic heritage and community

character. If elected, what principles would guide your decisions regarding growth and development?

***My guiding principle is that control over society and how it develops should be left to all citizens, not just the few in office. When private citizens wish to develop land or change the use of land, they must work together to achieve their goal. This is the best way to build strong communities. When government wishes to develop land, it overrides the objections of citizens and moves ahead in the name of "the common good". This is the best way to destroy communities. When given the choice, I choose having the people decide what's best for them rather than an elected few.***

11. Do you support the extension of the Pellissippi Parkway (PPE) from Old Knoxville Highway (SR 33) to US 321?

a. **No**

b. Please explain *why* you support or oppose the extension, including any statistics or studies you may know of which support your opinion.

***This is a perfect example of why government should have no control over private property. I don't understand the seeming obsession with building more and more roads, most of which are now interfering with our homes. The PPE would destroy more farmland and homes in the name of convenience. Private property rights outweigh the needs of society. If an individual voluntarily agrees to allow their land and home to be destroyed by another highway, then so be it. However, if any landowner resists, there should be no more discussion on the matter. In the very early planning stages, any citizen who will be affected should be contacted and asked about the situation. Only with 100% agreement among landowners can any work begin.***

12. If the PPE is eventually built, how will you address the development pressures this potential new road will bring, including impacts on Blount County's secondary roads, schools, public services, air and water quality?

***It is crucial that the citizens of Blount County prepare themselves for whatever changes the extension may bring about. They are the ones who will feel any negative impact from this project. It is important that they inform themselves and weigh the pros and cons instead of relying solely on government projections. The government usually has nothing to lose when it comes to the destruction of private property. It is usually seen by them as a boost in revenue rather than an infringement on private property rights. The extension may likely encourage more, possibly irresponsible, development of rural areas and have some unintended***

**consequences (i.e. more traffic in neighborhoods). Any violator of existing pollution laws should be prosecuted just as they would be today.**

13. Which, if any, of the proposals presented by the Growth Management Advisory Committee (GMAC) would you recommend using to raise funds to purchase and preserve green space in the rural parts of the county?

**Once again it seems there is too much emphasis placed on how the government should preserve land rather than trusting Blount Countians to preserve their own land. Blount County belongs to, and should be fully regulated by, private citizens. It does not belong, nor should it be regulated by, the government. Each citizen has their own idea of how to preserve and use their personal property. As long as their use does not infringe on the rights of others to do the same, there should be no government involvement in this process. As I have stated before, any central planning is insufficient. Only landowners have a vested interest in preserving and using their own land. Any and all land use matters should be left to landowners. They should be free to either donate or sell their land, or to keep it for themselves and pass it on to their children and grandchildren.**

14. If elected, please describe how you would incorporate the Five Guiding Policies of the county's Policies Plan into your own decision-making process.

**1. The rural, small town and natural character of the county should be preserved. - As much as I love the small town nature of Blount County, how it moves into the future is not my decision. I will do what I can with my own land to preserve and develop it as I see fit, but how I decide to use my land should have no bearing on how others use theirs. Blount Countians, not the government, are responsible for the growth and development of their own private property. 2. Land use and development should be managed and regulated in order to preserve the quality of our growing county. - For any government official to believe they know what's best for each citizen is short-sighted and selfish. Who determines the kind of quality that citizen's should enjoy? It is not the responsibility of 21 commissioners, or even a separate planning commission, to determine the level of quality for an entire county. To one person a plot of land may be best used by building rental property on it; to another, that land would best be left as a pasture. If the government steps in and favors one citizen's opinion over another, they would be practicing selective representation. This is unacceptable. Matters of land use should be completely left up to landowners. 3. The guiding policy in any government actions in relation to the use and development of land should be to limit regulations to specific public health, safety, and welfare objectives balanced with responsible freedom in the use of land.**

**- In any land use issue, the only time government should interfere is when a citizen's rights are being violated. And even then, government involvement should be a last resort for citizens. People need to assume responsibility for their own land and work with their neighbors to resolve any issues that arise. This will not only build a stronger community by opening dialogue between neighbors, it will ensure that the landowners will stick to the agreement forged between them. 4. County roads should be improved and maintained to a level consistent with present development and expected future development. - More focus should be placed on maintaining existing roads instead of building new ones. Along these same lines, I also believe that developers should be somewhat responsible for any wear on existing roads as well as any new roads that are required to access the development, possibly through a user fee paid by the developer. This may also encourage developers to use land already adjacent to existing highways without the need to use rural lands. 5. Growth and development should be balanced with provision of adequate public support infrastructure. - It is unfair to penalize all Blount Countians with higher taxes and fees just because a few others wish to develop their land in such a way as to increase use of public infrastructure. This is a main reason all development should be the decision of Blount Countians and not the government. As the government regulates any growth, they turn around and expect everyone to pay for it, whether or not they are involved or even agree with it.**

15. What is your vision for Blount County in 20 years?

**I would like nothing more than for Blount County to remain as beautiful and rural as it is today. However, to limit Blount County's future to my vision is inappropriate. The best way for our county to grow in a healthy manner is to allow the flexibility brought about only through citizen involvement and cooperation. Top-down legislation is restrictive and does not permit efficiency and innovation needed to address concerns that arise as our county grows. The ultimate goal is to provide a Blount County that is completely free from government regulation, free from property taxes, and a county in which neighbors work together to form their own land use regulations.**