



East Lansing Mayor Vic Loomis poses in his office at 1331 E. Grand River Ave. looking over blueprints from a recently completed project. Loomis, who has lived in East Lansing since he was a young child, has been on the City Council since 2001.

Local man Loomis runs for re-election

By Kate Jacobson

Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of articles profiling the candidates for the two open City Council seats in the Nov. 3 election.

Vic Loomis is a family man. Despite his busy schedule, he rarely misses a soccer game or a parent-teacher conference for his two young daughters. It's part of the dedication the mayor has to his family, which he said carries over to dedication for the city of East Lansing and its residents. As he runs for re-election to East Lansing City Council, Loomis said he hopes to continue serving his community.

A business man

Raised in East Lansing, Loomis knows the community inside and out. He graduated from East Lansing High School in 1964, and then served in the U.S Army during the Vietnam War. Although he did not fight in the war — he was stationed in Germany — Loomis said serving in the military was a life-changing experience.

After returning to the U.S. and finishing his degree at MSU in 1972, Loomis became a banker, interested in commercial real estate and lending. He gained respect in the banking community and currently is self-employed in real estate development.

Bob Potvin, a longtime friend of Loomis and chair of the Downtown Development Authority, said he met Loomis in college, but knew him better in the 1980s because of his role as a local professional.

Potvin said Loomis' East Lansing roots make him connected to his community and he is active in both local government and community engagement.

"I think that he has just has a sense of responsibility toward his community and his community involvement and it's shown in the things he's done over the years," Potvin said. "He's a good guy. He's just a good guy."

Local politician

Although Loomis said he never would call himself a politician, he has served on various boards and commissions in East Lansing and elsewhere.

Loomis began serving on the council in 2001 after residents approached him to run.

"I see (serving in office) as a high level of community service," Loomis said.

Loomis became mayor in 2007. He said people often ask him what office he plans to run for next, but his interests don't lie beyond the borders of East Lansing.

"I am not running for any other office," he said. "I am a business person with a passion for community service and a passion to serve the community that has treated me so well."

During his tenure on council, Loomis advocated for downtown development projects and a better relationship between students and permanent residents.

Loomis has voted in favor of all four extensions for the City Center II project slated to redevelop the area between the corners of Abbot Road and Grand River and Evergreen avenues. The project has come under scrutiny for its financial woes — including a brief foreclosure — but Loomis has been known to make statements during council meetings asking the project's developer, Strathmore Development Company, to be more aware of its finances.

Loomis said he would not consider a fifth extension for the developer if its summer 2009 taxes were not paid, a move that is required in the city's charter.

"It's been a challenge, but that's an area of the city that needs to be redeveloped," he said.

Loomis also has supported the East Village project to redevelop the area surrounding Cedar Village Apartments, but Interfraternity Council President Alex Fike said Loomis and the council have been open to meeting with the fraternity and property owners about the development. The area planned for East Village would include several fraternity houses.

Another important issue to Loomis is state budget cuts. In a time where money is tight, Loomis said East Lansing will have to begin to enterprise its services and seek help from other communities to maintain a high quality of life and safety.

"Our government — our city — has to grow," he said. "It has to grow economically as well as intellectually and as well as culturally."

Mayor Pro Tem Diane Goddeeris said budget cuts will affect City Council in the coming months. She said Loomis' experience in commercial banking and finance offer a unique niche that compliments the other council members' expertise.

"It affects the services that we provide to students and residents," Goddeeris said. "It is out of our control unless we as a community put pressure on (state government)."

A potential future term

If re-elected, Loomis said he hopes to continue providing services to residents and bridging the gap between MSU and East Lansing.

Erin Carter, MSU's community relations liaison to the city, said a strong relationship between the city and the university is important to foster a livable community for permanent residents and students.

"My hope is that people who decide to be in city politics are involved because they want to serve the community and they want to be a voice for the city constituents," she said.

Students such as business sophomore Matt Ladhoff said they hope city politicians have an interest in the student voice.

"Because we're going to school here and we're a part of the community, I feel like students should be at least able to voice their opinions," Ladhoff said.

Alan Fox, a political consultant with East Lansing-based Practical Political Consulting Inc., said Loomis focuses in on city issues and integrates concerns of many people into his decision making.

Loomis said his bid for council is not to climb the political ladder. In the end, he is a businessman, a local and a dad.

"I feel very fortunate to have grown up in a community like East Lansing that is very family focused and very focused on the neighborhoods and quality of life," he said.

http://statenews.com/index.php/article/2009/10/local_man_loomis_runs_for_reelection