

NAME: Lee Thompson
PARTY: Democratic
SEEKING: Gwinnett Commission Chair

1. Why are you seeking your office?

I am running for the Gwinnett County Commission Chair because I have the knowledge and experience to serve in this position and because I am passionate about the future of Gwinnett County. I grew up in Gwinnett County, and for almost forty years, I have been an attorney representing local governments. I believe that Gwinnett County is about to experience dramatic changes. I want to use my experience and expertise in local government to help Gwinnett County pursue creative, bold new accomplishments.

2. What do you expect to accomplish if elected?

I would expect to help Gwinnett County create and implement a transportation plan that provides guaranteed long-term funding, a link to MARTA rail lines, and efficient inter-county public transportation routes. I would expect to make the zoning process more transparent and make sure that every zoning decision considers the effects on the transportation system and the environment. I would expect to use the resources of the County to work with our educational institutions and private businesses to create high-quality jobs and more opportunities for small businesses and minority owned businesses.

3. What distinguishes your candidacy?

The distinguishing feature of my candidacy is my extensive experience in local government. As a local government attorney, I have represented the cities of Sugar Hill, Duluth, Grayson, and Lawrenceville, and the Gwinnett County Board of Education. I have handled thousands of zoning cases, litigated over local taxation issues, worked on water and sewer projects, and have been involved in the issuance of hundreds of millions of dollars in bonds for development of public improvements and redevelopment projects. My understanding of local government is unique among the candidates.

4. Pick any one issue. Expand on how you will address it.

Gwinnett County Commissioners spend a majority of their time dealing with zoning and land use issues. Every zoning decision has an effect on transportation, our school system, and our environment. Land use decisions control how and where the County develops affordable housing, and how declining areas are redeveloped. Each

zoning decision should involve careful consideration of its overall long-term effect on the County, and residents should know who is benefitting from a zoning decision. My expertise in this area will allow me to help the County design a zoning process that is both comprehensive and transparent.

5. Suggest ways to jump-start the economy after COVID-19.

The County must make certain that it has the administrative structure in place to administer all federal and state funds available to help its small businesses and residents. The need will be great, and no funds should go unused. The County should also use its Housing Authority, Development Authority and Urban Redevelopment Agency to finance projects that will help create new jobs, affordable housing and stimulate economic development. Sales tax revenue for SPLOST projects will decline. The County will have to consider creative financing methods to keep on track the projects that will pump money into the local economy.

6. Please give a 100 word summary on your background.

A lifelong resident of Gwinnett County, I attended Mercer University and the University of Georgia Law School. I have been an attorney for almost forty years, a certified mediator for thirty years, and have been an active member of the Democratic Party since college. I also served in the Georgia General Assembly representing the Lawrenceville area. My wife, Connie, and I live in Lawrenceville and are elders in the First Christian Church of Lawrenceville. Our daughter, Rebecca, who attended Gwinnett County public schools, will graduate from college this year.