

An Open Letter by Doug Foust, Candidate for Worthington City Council, 7.18.15  
<http://dougfoust.com/index.php/why-i-am-running/keep-worthington-beautiful/>

## KEEP WORTHINGTON BEAUTIFUL

During the months of June and July, a group of concerned citizens developed a Ballot Initiative for the Fall election. The Keep Worthington Beautiful campaign (KWB) focuses on giving citizens a fair opportunity to call for a referendum in the event a majority feel the City has acted irresponsibly in rezoning a piece of property; it could be UMCH, or another site down the road. If successful, KWB will change the City Charter. As it stands, citizens have 23 days to gather (based on current voting patterns) approximately 650 valid signatures, or probably 1,000 overall to be safe, in order to call for a referendum. It's a high hurdle in a short amount of time. KWB as submitted seeks to make it 60 days, to give citizens a fair chance to be heard rather than the City rushing something through against our will.

Because they don't want to be told what to do, current city leadership will fight the KWB. They'll claim it is anti-business, anti-development. They'll cite anecdotal evidence to make their point. But the truth is that adding a little time on to allow for a fair process won't dissuade the great majority of developers. The extra window of time KWB represents in the overall timeline of a large development is inconsequential. Whether 60 days is the optimal window is a point of discussion, but the current timeframe is unusually short by most standards.

KWB came about concurrent with my initially considering whether to run for City Council. I took the opportunity to go door-to-door and ask people what they thought.... about UMCH, about KWB, about how they felt the City was doing in general and whether the City's leaders "had their backs". As a KWB petitioner, I can tell you what I learned: I was able to secure more than 95 signatures after talking to just 100 people. To me, that says something.

There is a reason why the Keep Worthington Beautiful campaign to change the City charter on zoning referendums had so little difficulty getting the necessary signatures. The matter of sloppy development and losing our way is so obvious, so profound as to have motivated people to find their voice. They are looking for any opportunity to turn the course of recent history and regain a firm footing in our proven, historic strengths while turning our eyes toward a more reasonable vision of our future. So when they are asked to support something that might turn things around, they don't hesitate.

One additional comment on KWB: Those who say that the KWB initiative is anti-business may also suggest that based on my involvement that I too must be anti-business. Nothing could be further from the truth. What I am is pro-citizen. The people want, need, and deserve a means to impact the process beyond simply "being heard".