

John Gerstle: Boulder City Council

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John Gerstle

Website: johngerstleforboulder.com

Age: 65

Family: Wife Heidi, son Nicholas, daughter Pia, dog Dasho

How long in Boulder: Resident since birth, with periods away for work, studies

Neighborhood: Silver Lake Orchard

Professional background: Consulting engineer on water, natural resources and environmental management

Political/community experience: Member/chairman, Boulder Planning Board; chairman, Boulder County Planning Commission; member, Boulder County Mosquito Control Advisory Board; candidate, Boulder City Council; former general adviser to Royal Government of Bhutan

Education: Boulder High School; B.A. in chemistry, University of Colorado, M.S.C.E. and postgraduate civil engineering degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Do you believe Boulder should continue its effort to separate from Xcel Energy and form a municipal electric utility?

I believe that Boulder can most effectively consider alternative means of achieving its climate-related goals if we continue with the analysis currently underway. I know, from professional experience in dealing with similar matters, how complicated such decisions are, and how much depends on getting the details right. I therefore support the ballot issues in this election addressing Boulder's muni-related considerations.

I do, however, respect the voice of Boulder's citizens. Previous election results supported the evaluation of municipalization options, which is now underway. If that support changes, and the muni-related ballot issues fail in this election, I will take into account the vote of Boulder residents in decisions regarding Boulder's future muni-related actions.

How do you believe the City Council should proceed with regard to Boulder's pursuit of a citywide broadband network?

It is reasonable to consider combining a citywide broadband network with Boulder's future electric power delivery infrastructure, whether that occurs as continued Xcel service, municipalization or some other arrangement. Due to the importance of establishing a citywide broadband network for private, commercial, industrial, scientific, educational and public purposes, I believe that an expert, systematic and impartial review of Boulder's options should be done to enable proper and informed decisions to be made.

Is there anything that can be done to make Boulder a more affordable place to live?

Boulder should become more active in establishing and conserving existing lower- and middle-income affordable housing with the use of urban land and housing conservancies and other institutions, and by moving ahead with the use of deed-restricted housing arrangements. The funding necessary for such activities could come from increased commercial building development linkage fees, and from fees associated with real estate transactions and development.

Boulder should also review its policies aimed at attracting new employment to the city, which is clearly linked to increased housing demand — resulting in higher housing costs. Improvements to our public transit system (including a communitywide EcoPass and ensuring that EcoPasses are provided to all nonresident Boulder employees by employers) would also help to improve commuting from neighboring towns and county locations, thus diminishing the demand for local housing in Boulder as well as easing the associated traffic loads on our limited street and road facilities.

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