

Transcription:

Interviewer- Brittany Grimm

Interviewee: Darlene Greene

B: (Introduction), Starting off, how long have you lived in Hillsboro?

DG: We built our home here in 1989 and prior to that I worked in Hillsboro for about five years.

B: And what's been your involvement with the community?

DG: Well, first I got involved with the chamber of commerce, served through the offices of the chamber, including President. I was appointed to City Council and then elected to two full terms after two years, so I served 10 years on City Council. Now, I'm involved with Hillsboro Rotary and St. Matthews Catholic Church.

B: And how do you think Hillsboro has changed since you started your involvement here?

DG: It has grown, tremendously. I believe when I first started working and living here population was around 35,000 and now we're up to over 70,000. And that hasn't happened as much from annexing properties as it has infill with higher density homes, residential and apartments.

B: With your work on the City Council do you think there were a lot of increased problems with the increased population?

DG: Anytime you have more people, you are going to have different problems- I don't know if they're more problems as much as they are different.

B: And as a member of the City Council, how did you deal with crime?

DG: Well, our responsibility on Council was to oversee the administration, we were not exactly involved in solving crime but helped to support law enforcement, through budget, programs, and approving grants that they were given to increase the level of policemen that they had. So ours was more of an oversight and less of a direct involvement.

B: What improvements would you like to see in the way that Hillsboro government deals with crime?

DG: Well, I'm on the budget committee of the city and we just recently approved taking part of the increase in property tax revenue we didn't know we were going to have and using it to hire two additional officers. Budget constraints have kept the police departments 12 positions on hold since 2003 and this fall we (hope to fill two positions) to deal with the increase in population.

B: Are there any major problems in Hillsboro that you don't think are taken seriously enough?

DG: I think that the administration, the law enforcement, the fire, the personnel that we have in the city and the people that are involved are really conscientious of the major problems that we have, and could have if they weren't watched carefully. I'm happy to see the graffiti problem starting to be dealt with (continues with story of Portland cab driver). I just think that as different

things come up that could affect the safety of our community, the people who are involved are very proactive in dealing with it.

B: If you were Mayor right now, what would you change?

DG: I'm pretty satisfied with the way Hillsboro is. I think big steps have been taken in the communications area. I'd like to see more young people get involved (continues with youth at meetings).

B: What do you think is the most pressing problem in Hillsboro right now?

DG: Well, we have traffic problems and I don't think those are going to go away because the streets can handle only as many cars as they are built to handle. I think that adding to our police force will help us to keep a handle on gangs because I have (several grandchildren) and knowing that they'll be safe at school and not influenced unduly by people who are not in their best interests is important to me.

B: Do you think the biggest problems have changed since the eighties and nineties?

DG: Oh, yes. I think the problems don't get bigger or less, I think they just change as technology changes. In 1980, no one had a cell phone. In 1980, there were no computers in people's homes. In the eighties when my children were teenagers, I didn't have to worry about them going on bad websites. I didn't have to worry about who they were talking to because when they were on the phone, they were talking on my own phone. So I think a lot of the technology has changed the way we deal with people (continues with modern tech.)

B: What do you think the City Council's biggest achievement has been in decreasing crime?

DG: I think working closely with the police department, respecting Chief Louie, the community policing program, I like to see the police in our schools becoming friends of the kids rather than someone to be feared and worried about. I think that young people maybe feel more comfortable approaching a police officer when they have a problem, at least the ones who could use help and are not causing the problems. So getting them into the grassroots parts of the community helped; if it didn't reduce crime, it kept the types of crimes that were happening a lot less severe.

B: Officer Hess said that he thought it's not that crime changes, it's that people focus on different types of crimes. Do you think that's true?

DG: I think that could be a true statement. I read a recent article about a very bad gang and was shocked to see mentioned that Hillsboro could have some people who are a part of that very bad gang. That's going to change how we focus on crime because there are different people out there. There's more graffiti out there and more burglaries in homes and we'll have to have more (cops on the street) to keep the bad people out and keep people in jail who do bad things because there are people being let out of jail so doing bad things and being caught at it doesn't have as many consequences as it once did have.

B: As a former president of the Chamber of Commerce, what do you think business can do to decrease crime?

DG: Be vigilant. I think everybody needs to have 360 degree vision because if you're focusing straight ahead and not paying any attention to what's going on around you (expands on being alert).

B: How much of a role do you think that poverty plays in people doing criminal acts?

DG: I don't know that it's as much poverty as it is drugs and other chemical dependencies. I also served on the board at Community Action Organization and was shocked to learn that 1 out of 7 had been living in poverty (explains statistic). I don't think that is the cause of crime going on in our community. I think the cause is drugs or addiction or lack of structure or discipline or people caring about others.

B: Since you were talking about structure and discipline, do you think education has any role in it?

DG: Oh, yes. (talks about grandchildren). I think everyone wants a form of structure to their lives. I think schools provide structure and if it's followed up at home, children will do very well.

B: If you were Chief of Police today, would you change anything?

DG: I can't think of anything I would change. Again, I think that seeing our police that we have and the strength that they bring to our community (jokes about sirens). I don't think a lot of the general public recognizes what happens to an officer in a stressful situation. We went into a simulation (in City Council) for training people to try to understand how an officer has to make a decision on what to do.

B: Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?

DG: (Thinks kids are under-appreciated, schools should show public more good things).