1. In short term, I would like to see more significant relationships built between the city and the neighborhood associations in Springfield. Development is necessary for a city to grow, but it must be done responsibly with the current residents in mind. Long term wise, I would like to see the city take more proactive role in engaging our future workforce and residents.  We need to identify, nurture and create new relationships if we want to retain our talent.

2. There's a great sense of history and pride among Springfieldians.  Many have been born and raised in this area for generations.  But even more, I find people here, at their core, are kind. There may be differences in opinions, politics or background and yet there is an unspoken understanding of helping your neighbor in their time of need when it really matters.  Springfield's strength comes from its people.

In the past 20 years, Springfield has seen a tremendous increase in people relocating from other parts of the country and world for work and school opportunities.  This is evident from the number of new businesses, especially minority owned, and the growth of the international student population within the local universities. This change has contributed to the city's financial growth and has significantly enriched the social and cultural fabric of the community. There is no doubt this trend will continue in the future.  With this in mind, I feel we need to connect better with our growing minority population and create an environment where their concerns can be addressed and heard. Even well-intentioned kindness can be misconstrued as something else if there are no base line relationships established or clear communication channels to interpret that gesture. Diversity is key to our city's future growth and I would like to see the council become a vehicle for encouraging and fostering diversity in Springfield.

3.  *Since I'm not involved nor have been involved in any form of local government positions, I'm approaching this question with a limited knowledge of taxes, sources of revenue etc.*

I see three possible approaches or suggestions for this specific problem.

The first suggestion is a special tax or a tax increase for its citizens through a referendum.  This option obviously would be easier said than done. In my opinion, infrastructure and general deterioration issue of any city is something all citizens should participate in rectifying to some degree.  Many of us benefit from fees/taxes others pay and vice versa. Modern society couldn't function if we only looked out for ourselves.  Another idea is to create a "beautification fee" for those who are seeking to build/renovate. In many cities, new builds require a certain percentage of their budget go towards beautifying the city. For example, public art or establishment of a park.

The second suggestion is much stricter enforcement of violations and collection of fines among current building/land owners who are not in compliance. The fine collection should be an automatic and guaranteed process such as tax liens or paycheck garnishment.

The final suggestion is to encourage the participation of our citizens by volunteering. The university population is one of the most under utilized group in Springfield.  Many clubs and organizations in university settings are affiliated with a national chapter and are required to have some sort of a

volunteer/service portion to their program.  It's also an excellent way for them to be engaged in the city of Springfield and perhaps turn their temporary stay into a permanent one.


4. Since this is a very short term appointment, this answer is a bit skewed.  I would like to have a competent understanding of our city government and more importantly, identify and prioritize what actions need to be taken in order to make our city better for our citizens.