

# The People's Voice, LLC

## Ethics Ballot™

3600 Saint Johns Lane, Suite D, Ellicott City, MD 21042

### ETHICS BALLOT QUESTIONNAIRE

#### County Council Primary 2022

Congratulations on your decision to run for County Council. The People's Voice is a civic/political organization in Howard and Montgomery Counties. We have over 4,000 members in Howard County and sponsor the non-partisan Ethics Ballot. If you would like to seek endorsement please return this Questionnaire to [EthicsBallot@Gmail.com](mailto:EthicsBallot@Gmail.com) by midnight May 18, 2022. Please note that all questionnaires are published on the website, [www.EthicsBallot.com](http://www.EthicsBallot.com). We will be in touch regarding endorsement dates soon after getting the questionnaires back. We pride ourselves in working hard for our endorsed candidates, and look forward to hearing your positions on important County issues. THANK YOU so very much for your time!

#### Be sure to address all aspects of each question.

**Name/District:** Deb Jung, Councilmember, District 4

#### Campaign Address/Phone/Email

Address: Committee to Re-Elect Deb Jung, 10913 Great Oak Way, Columbia, Md. 21044

Phone: 410-869-6020 (Ben Bialek, Chairman)

Email: [ben@votedebjung.com](mailto:ben@votedebjung.com)

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#### Educational History

Duke University, B.A.

University of Maryland School of Law, J.D.

#### Languages Spoken/Other Skills/Relevant Experience

English. I have served as a Howard County Councilmember since December 2018. My prior work experience: associate attorney in a private law firm, General Counsel to the Close-Up Foundation, General Counsel to the Maryland Association of Non-Profit Organizations, and maintained a solo law practice representing nonprofit organizations until I was elected to the County Council. I also served as a member of the Howard County Human Rights Commission and the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Commission. I have lived in Hickory Ridge Village in Columbia for nearly 34 years.

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### **1. Why are you running for this office? Describe how your campaign is viable.**

I am a 34-year resident of District 4 in Columbia (Hickory Ridge) and was first elected to the County Council in 2018. I am running for re-election because I love Howard County and know its history, neighborhoods, and schools. With a record that I am proud of, I feel that there is much unfinished business, particularly given the next Council's approval of the General plan update, implementation of the K-12 Kirwan Commission funding Blueprint, revision of the Climate Change Action Plan, and the need to advance our Affordable Housing goals. I have been a leader in Campaign Finance Reform and am running using the Citizens' Election Fund (CEF) for public financing. I was the first person to qualify for public matching funds and have raised, and continue to raise, small donor people fueled campaign funds. I do not raise money from large donors (over \$250) businesses, PACs, unions, or similar groups. I have raised significant financial resources to get my message out in anticipation of a major push against my candidacy by monied interests. I have been door knocking as much as possible and doing my job as councilmember at the same time. My campaign is well-funded, backed by many volunteers, and we have a veteran campaign support team in place.

Non-Incumbents: What qualifications do you uniquely bring to hold this office? What experience do you have with the County Council? Have you ever testified before the County Council? What positions did you take?

### **2. Have you signed the No Dark Money, No Developer Money pledge or signed up for the Citizen Election Fund? If NOT how do you eliminate the appearance of conflicts?**

I have signed the Pledge and am using the CEF.

### **3. If you are elected, what are your top priorities for 2022? Discuss at least three areas in need of change, under the purview of the County Council, and how you would address them.**

My top priorities are: maximizing funding for HCPSS; sensible land-use and growth management through the General Plan approval process and comprehensive re-zoning; revising the Climate Action Plan; making progress on affordable housing; and ensuring that there is no backsliding on environmental and natural resource protection issues.

### **4. What do you believe are the strengths and weaknesses of the current County Council? How have you demonstrated your ability to work with people who have diverse opinions and party affiliations?**

From a legislative perspective, there are structural weaknesses in the County Charter, particularly in the budget process where the Council cannot set priorities by moving money around between County departments or adding money to their budgets. From a Charter perspective, we have a strong executive Home Rule County unlike, say, Montgomery County, which is a strong council Home Rule County where the County Council can add money to the budget or move monies around during the budget process. I co-sponsored a Charter amendment to change the status quo (much like what was accomplished in Baltimore City and for the General Assembly) but was unable secure the necessary four votes to put it on the ballot. Although I believe the small

size of the Council can be a strength, it can turn into a weakness when there are conflicts among members or when the Executive Branch does not communicate or tries to circumvent the will of a majority of the Council. This past term was somewhat unique – having occurred during the pandemic in a virtual environment for over two years. I was Chair of the Council for the first nine months of the pandemic.

The Howard County Council wears a variety of hats for its various functions, including as Zoning Board. Unfortunately, many zoning decisions (including some that were very controversial) carried over from the prior Council requiring numerous evening administrative hearings that had to be handled during the pandemic. The time commitments were substantial in addition to our daytime work. I co-sponsored legislation to allow the Hearing Examiner to handle fact-finding (as is done in Montgomery and Prince George's counties) which passed. Hopefully, this will professionalize and streamline administrative hearings for zoning and development plan approvals in the future.

I believe that I have shown an ability to work across the aisle or with others with diverse opinions and develop consensus to move issues forward where possible. This was demonstrated on the School Surcharge Increase bill, strengthening amendments on environmental legislation, budget deliberations, the Hearing Examiner bill, a bill that made substantive changes to the contents of the Technical Staff Report, and on a variety of land-use decisions.

**5. What are your funding priorities for the County? What changes do you believe should be made compared to past budget decisions?**

Funding HCPSS remains a top priority for me. For County Government and related agencies, I would like to see capital projects that address Climate Change such as retrofitting buildings to increase energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction, vehicle fleet electrification and the development of a County-wide reliable charging station network, preferably on a regional basis. I strongly support capital projects for stormwater management and flood mitigation projects, including in Ellicott City. I also support construction of affordable housing projects county-wide that are well justified programmatically, which are fiscally a good deal for the County – and do not represent a give-away to well-connected developers. For District 4, subject to public input, I would like to see the siting of a library in Fulton and a new community center in the Harper's Choice area.

**6. Do you feel the amount of planned residential growth in the County should be increased or decreased? Explain why and include any changes you believe should occur to APFO.**

The key for any new planned residential growth is that provision be made for adequate public facilities so that we do not have over-development with a lack of school or road capacity or water and sewer infrastructure. Growth must be sustainable and linked to the County fiscal and facility plans. This was a recommendation of the Spending Affordability Committee. We cannot repeat what has happened in the Route 1 corridor. I would support and/or sponsor a reintroduction of Councilmember Walsh's bills to require a re-testing for school capacity at 7 years as opposed to the current 4 year waiting period.

**7. There are four density scenarios in HoCo By Design. Which scenario do you believe is best and why? that is your position on locations for new multiplexes and/or ADU's?**

At the outset, I want to emphasize that I have not been briefed on the details of the various scenarios and other aspects of the planning document and there has yet to be any public hearings on the proposals. My decisions would be made only after robust in-person hearings. That being said, there are two major constraining factors in planning for growth with a 2040 horizon. First, Howard County is very constrained from a fiscal/revenue perspective with a structural revenue deficit projected even in the near-term and additional debt capacity also severely limited. This is unlike other neighboring counties, such as Montgomery, which have greater revenue source flexibility and debt capacity. Second, our existing land-use patterns and the lack of frequent and reliable public transportation (particularly with regard to subway and light rail) make significant high density development problematic in terms of paying for necessary services and infrastructure and with regard to congestion and other quality of life indicators. I strongly believe that new growth must be accompanied by planned adequate public facilities. Further, I agree with the Spending Affordability Committee that the General Plan must be linked to the County's fiscal plan, including long-term facility planning, otherwise we will have overdevelopment and our residents will suffer the negative consequences.

As I currently understand the planned scenarios, I think that Scenario A is the most realistic. There may be elements of Scenario B that could be incorporated, such as targeted efforts at Gateway if the concentrated flight paths over Gateway can be addressed, and in transit-oriented development zones such as near MARC stations. However, there are serious and expensive transportation fixes that will require solutions that are outside of the control of the County. While I strongly support Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in the US 29 corridor, implementation is only just beginning in Montgomery County and the jury is still out on whether it will move the ridership needle significantly. I am opposed to a "strategic" expansion of the Planned Service Area (PSA) expansion west of Maple Lawn to Highland. Multiplexes should be built where there is existing school capacity and other capacity services such as fire and police. ADU's are unlikely to dent the demand for affordable housing but there may be opportunities to streamline approval processes for "no impact" proposals. If there are environmental (including stormwater), parking, setback or other issues of concern to neighbors, these must be reviewed and addressed.

**8. What, if any, new storm water management requirements do you believe should be in the General Plan?**

The current Council has a strong record in strengthening stormwater management efforts, including enhanced site design requirements for redevelopment in the Plum Tree Branch and Tiber Branch in and around Ellicott City (CR-123-19). The Council also has approved funding to ensure adequate resources for our NPDES stormwater permit requirements as well as changes to the Watershed Protection Fee credit to facilitate increased usage by commercial property owners of stormwater improvements as recommended by Commercial Stormwater Solutions Work Group (CR 78-2019). As many of the HoCo By Design options envision redevelopment, I believe that the General Plan should incorporate water quantity reduction requirements for such projects for high intensity, short duration storm events in addition to already required water quality

improvements. Consistent with the County's current NPDES program requirements, reduction of impervious cover is a goal that should be incorporated in the General Plan.

**9. What positions do you hold regarding the current levels of low and moderate income housing in the County? What changes to specific policies, that the Council can control, would you sponsor or support?**

Affordable housing is an important need in Howard County and I have voted for four affordable housing projects in the Columbia portion of District 4 since being elected, as well as voted to increase moderate income housing requirements in two zoning districts (Transit Oriented Development and PGCC - Turf Valley ). I believe that future efforts to create low and moderate-income housing should be focused throughout the County and generally should not be located in already overcrowded school catchment areas with high numbers of students living in poverty. This will strain the available school resources needed to serve existing students who are living in poverty or for whom English is a second language. We need to avoid the segregation of our schools by income. I would also like the County Council to focus on programs that create a path to homeownership for low-income residents with an opportunity to create intergenerational wealth - which can bridge the wealth gap and start to address the problem of the "missing middle" in entry level housing. The draft Housing Opportunities Master Plan report identifies shared equity housing programs, including down payment assistance and other subsidies, as a promising approach. This would be cost effective and have the beneficial societal impacts mentioned above.

**10. What is your position on County-funded housing trusts? Should fund usage be public, private, or both and why?**

I support non-reverting special trust funds dedicated to affordable housing although they are not pre-requisites to a successful affordable housing program since funds can always be re-appropriated annually during the budget process. I opposed HB 848 on home rule grounds since this bill was an end-run around the County Council's authority to enact local legislation (as Baltimore City and Prince Georges County have done) for housing finance programs. In a public hearing on the draft Housing Opportunities Master Plan Report, I expressed support for a locally enacted trust fund with criteria for the disbursement of funds, including governance, project selection, caps on individual projects, etc. We have yet to see any criteria or guard rails. I have learned that these projects are often very opaque, involve significant project management fees, and provide opportunities for well-connected developers or related parties to profit handsomely in "sole source" or limited competition proposals. It is in the public interest that these projects receive significant "sunshine" in the approval and implementation process. There must be transparency and accountability.

**11. How do you feel about large-scale commercial uses on Preserved Agricultural Land, such as solar panels, mulching, beyond farm uses?**

I generally believe that large-scale commercial uses on Preserved Agricultural Land should be limited as the landowner has already been compensated to keep the land in agricultural use through payment for the easement. I supported CB 17-2021, with strengthening amendments, which, among other things, dealt with solar collector facilities on land covered by agricultural preservation easements. This involved balancing our need to fight

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climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions (including from County government); develop renewable energy sources; and preserve agricultural land in Howard County. The final bill attempted to ensure that ground-mounted solar collector facilities were a true accessory (secondary) use; limited the size of such

facilities on parcels that are in the agricultural land preservation program; required review by the Agricultural Preservation Review Board; and ensured that ground-mounted solar collectors are installed in ways that are harmonious with the purposes of the easement, such as pollinator habitats, livestock grazing areas, crop production and similar approved methods. The bill passed unanimously, as amended.

By Authority: The People's Voice, Lisa Markovitz Treasurer