

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 by midnight May 18, 2022. Please note that all questionnaires are published on the website, 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.

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Educational History B.Civil Engineering (Georgia Tech, '93)
J.D. (Georgetown, '00)

Languages Spoken/Other Skills/Relevant Experience

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

I'm running for County Council, District 1 to change how local government works. I'm running to show what a seat on the Council looks like when it's not bought and paid for by local land-use interests. I'm running to preserve what legacy we still can leave the next generation: our natural land and waterways, our historic streets and structures.

I know my campaign is viable. In just one week of fundraising, we attained the threshold dollar amount (\$10,000) from the requisite number of resident voters (125) to qualify for matching funds from the inaugural Citizens' Election Fund. I know my campaign is viable by the number of endorsements we've already received: the Howard County Educators' Association, the Ellicott City & Western Howard County Democratic Club, Unite Here Local 7 and Our Revolution Howard County. I hope to add several more by the July 19 primary date, including the People's Voice's.

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, both!

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 three priorities are all different versions of sound local land-use: preserving our historic built and natural environments; building new schools and funding them; and governing in the light.

To address preservation, I will continue to legislate for stronger historic preservation and environmental laws, building upon earlier successes prohibiting “demolition by neglect” in our two historic districts, for example. I will continue to advocate for the County and State purchase of our most ecologically valuable and vulnerable lands, removing them from development potential, like Camp Ilchester and several other properties within the old Ellicott City watershed or that adjoin existing parks.

As a Council member, I have less direct control over where and when we build schools, and how we fund what should be happening inside them. But I will continue to vote against developer giveaways framed as school site purchases—as I did for the Gould Property high school and related DRRA, and more recently for the County’s purchase of a second Turf Valley school site, this time from a Mangione LLC. I will continue to advocate for larger, more constant commitments to fund our schools’ capital and operating needs, in the form of annual budget amendments, as necessary. I will continue to encourage Howard County Public Schools and the Board of Education to exercise their existing and now expanded—due to CB26-2022—entitlement to reserve land and/or developed property for schools’ uses, including Kirwan-mandated pre-kindergarten. And, I will continue to seek opportunities to strengthen the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance as applied to schools particularly: next up, moving the Council’s adoption of the open/closed school chart to as soon after annual school enrollment is certified as possible, *i.e.*, in late fall, early winter (instead of six months later).

An intended Inspector General bill—whether before or after the general election—will be central to my next efforts at improving transparency and accountability of our local government. I am persuaded by constituent requests that the Council legislate a public process for any further naming of County buildings and places. And, following up on the Auditors’ recent investigation into Department of Housing and Community Development policy and practices is likely to lead to corrective legislation.

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?

Both our strength and weakness this first term, in my opinion, was our newness. In certain instances, we collectively were able to take on and achieve significant and meaningful change—the sizable increase in the school surcharge fee assessed, for example, or the Rental Protection and Stability Act—that I think a more

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established and comfortable body would have talked itself out of. In most other instances, though, the fact that we were novices in every aspect of how to individually and collectively serve in that elected capacity remains often painfully evident. We abdicate what little authority we're extended by Charter by constant, unquestioning deference to the Executive, his agencies and the Office of Law. We spend very little time on the merits of what is most important.

Apparent that consensus among a super-majority of Democrats on the Council on even those issues claimed to be most central to that party was not ever assured, I sought reinforcement from other elected officials. I started, for example, actively soliciting (and then always obtaining) Board of Education support for any bills of mine relating to our public schools. In these first three-plus years, I have joined at least three of my colleagues in sponsoring legislation, including the lone Republican. Whenever possible, I seek all four's sponsorship of my own. At least once each year, I testify in support of legislation pending before the General Assembly.

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

Education. Education drives everything else economically, namely the higher property taxes assessed here that then constitute the majority of our County's revenue. We have to establish, commit to and execute a fixed capital building plan that addresses known needs in a reasonable term. We have to stop the annual trauma of threatened operating budget cuts.

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.

We have to undo how we allocate housing now. It's open season as is. There is no "planning."

Where residential growth is encouraged should be dependent upon nearness to, or concurrent provision of, attendant public infrastructure. We cannot continue to sprawl. And until we address the needs of already-existing residential development, I do not see how we can justify adding materially more.

I believe changes to APFO should include a prohibition, not a delay imposed, on building into over-crowded schools. I believe additional categories of life safety (fire, police and emergency department), green space and bike/walk ways and stormwater controls should be made part of APFO.

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

I can't. It's not Scenario A, keep doing what we're doing. That doesn't work.

I don't really see a difference between A and B.

Maybe I'm Scenario C, but only for the transit focus. I don't understand how Columbia Gateway jumped to the head of the queue, in front of other long-neglected needs like redevelopment of Route 1 and Route 40—which I do agree warrant serious, actual consideration.

I don't understand what ADU's have to do with any of it.

And no way, let's please stop extending the PSA line, Scenario D.

The fact is, I don't like the whole and most parts of any of these proffered scenarios. There's nothing in any one of them to do with centering schools and green space and how to get to and from them without a car, meaning there's nothing to do with what certainly I and most of whom I've talked with hoped this effort would at least endeavor to effect. Instead, HoCoByDesign, in its current form, looks like a menu of who gets to keep making more money where.

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

We have to manage both quantity and quality of stormwater generated by new development, redevelopment and existing publicly-owned land, now, or we will all be under water.

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?

It's woefully inadequate. But it's not an accident, nor a result of some recent shift in County policy. For decades through very recently, the Council has approved land-use proposals that exempt whole swaths of the County from participation in meaningful inclusionary zoning. We baked it into the Downtown Columbia Plan in 2013, which required only 5% MIHUs as part of the 2,296 new homes authorized in Phase I. More recently, we did it again in excusing "Westmount" from affordable housing requirements by extending an applicable DRRA to a second term without amendment. We approved purchase of a (second) elementary school site in the midst of and from a developer excused from MIHU requirements through the construction of hundreds and hundreds of units at Turf Valley. And as Zoning Board, we declined to stick to initial affordable housing requirements as part of the Erickson Living approval.

I believe we have to establish and enforce meaningful inclusionary zoning requirements County-wide, so that more affordable housing is provided where and as any new homes are built. I believe we have to eliminate both the option to pay fees in lieu of that provision and the discretion of the Department of Housing and Community Development to otherwise accept "alternative compliance."

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

As currently proposed in this and last year's budget, the so-called Housing Opportunities Trust Fund is no different than the current housing enterprise fund theoretically dedicated to expanding the very same housing opportunities—the one that has \$23 million in unencumbered funds in it at last check that aren't being used for any such purpose at all.

I don't see why private landlords are a realistic or cost-effective solution for an affordable housing problem. They haven't been yet. Rather, I see developing and owning affordable rental housing as the role and responsibility of government, and in the form of European-style "social housing" as championed more locally by advocates in Montgomery County and Washington, D.C. Otherwise, we should be focussed on expanding the numbers of residents who can own their homes, not the landlords they must pay rent to.

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

I don't like it. It seems counter to the purpose of preservation and the publicly funded payouts made to effect that purpose. In the absence of any plan by the current Administration other than receiving and allowing lowest-investment-cost proposals from the private market, I don't see an alternative right now for siting larger-scale solar power generation. The Council attempted to mitigate the harm of that policy choice by requiring certain nods to environmentalism and long-term viability as part of those commercial installations on otherwise "preserved" land, but, still, approving even that particularly conditioned use was not an easy choice.

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