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## **General Election 2017 City Council Candidate Questionnaire: A Voter Resource**

Interfaith Works sent out a questionnaire to candidates running in contested primary races for Council seats in the Cities of Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater. The questions reflect issues of current concern to Interfaith Works.

We believe that the candidate's responses are of great interest to our membership and our many community partners. Our objective is to provide a resource to voters to guide them in their election choices.

Candidate responses are published without editing. Interfaith Works does not endorse any candidate.

### **City of Lacey Council Member, Position No. 7 General Election Candidates: Ken Balsley / Carolyn H. Cox**

**1. Please state your plans to increase citizen access to government. For example, how will you include the voices of all of those in our communities – racial and ethnic minorities, the low-income, folks who live in shelters and on the street, youth, our elders and others – in planning for our community's future? What specific plans do you have to reach out to all people so that their concerns and hopes might be heard, and most importantly, be given equal weight when the city council on which you wish to serve makes decisions?**

Ken Balsley:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

Carolyn H. Cox:

Announcing a City Council meeting and calling that good isn't sufficient. If elected, I would meet with representatives of social service agencies, spiritual leaders and others to hear their concerns and offer them an opportunity to address the Council about specific needs. I would consult them on issues coming before the Council. I also would work to remove barriers to attending Council meetings, such as offering free child care at City Hall during meetings.

**2. Have you ever been homeless? Known anyone who is homeless? How does that affect your decisions on services your communities could provide? Also regarding homelessness, please give us your thoughts on what a county-wide solution to homelessness would look like.**

Ken Balsley:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

Carolyn H. Cox:

No, I do not have direct experience with homelessness. I do know a few people who are hanging on by a thread. I have great compassion for people who find themselves homeless for whatever reason. To see real change, our city and county must break through stigma associated with homelessness. We can make a big dent in this by encouraging community members to hire qualified homeless residents and to donate and/or volunteer for social service agencies that help the homeless.

A countywide solution would look a lot like the Thurston Thrives model, which pulls together many social service and other organizations to address whole health from cradle to grave. It will take many hands working together to solve this.

**3. Have you ever experienced discrimination based on your age, race, gender, immigrant status or economic standing? Do you know anyone who has experienced these types of discrimination? If so, how does that affect your decisions on city ordinances and policies in these areas?**

Ken Balsley:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

Carolyn H. Cox:

Yes, I've experienced age and gender discrimination both professionally and in my private life. I have a number of friends who face discrimination every day because of their race, sexual orientation, mental health and religious beliefs. I'm passionate about human rights and will do my utmost to ensure that the city treats all residents with respect and compassion through word and deed.

**4. What specific ideas do you have about law enforcement accountability? Do you support a citizen review board for your city's police department? Why or why not? Do you support the use of body cameras by city police officers? Why or why not?**

Ken Balsley:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

Carolyn H. Cox:

I have great respect for the Lacey Police Department and its leaders. Our police officers put themselves in harm's way to protect us. Police departments have internal review boards that handle discipline. In most cases, that process works. However, just as the U.S. Constitution sets up civilian oversight of the military, I do believe that citizen review boards do help with accountability and public perception. I think the same holds true of body cameras. If used properly, they record police interactions with the public and help document what happened. I think body cameras can actually improve public confidence in our officers and will show that 99 percent of them are good public servants trying their best to do a very challenging job.

**5. Affordable housing is a concern in our communities. The predicted population growth in Thurston County will only increase the cost of housing. Do you think it is the responsibility of cities to ensure that housing is available for people across a range of economic circumstances? If so, what should be included in your city's planning?**

Ken Balsley:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

Carolyn H. Cox:

Most definitely. Cities should use their authority to encourage affordable housing for residents of all income levels. Lacey already offers economic incentives to developers who build housing for low-income citizens. I believe we need more such policies and will work toward them.

**6. In the past year, how many times have you taken public transportation, or traveled in some way other than a single-occupancy vehicle, to work, to city events, or to public meetings? What should cities do to help residents reduce their carbon footprint?**

Ken Balsley:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

Carolyn H. Cox:

Lacey is experiencing a population explosion. Traffic congestion is serious, and getting worse, adding to the buildup of carbon. Public transit service is our most effective tool in addressing carbon reduction, but bus service in Lacey is woefully inadequate. There is virtually no service to northeast Lacey north of I-5, our fastest-growing area. We have to change that.

Personally, I rarely use transit, and for one simple reason: I live exactly 5.16 miles from my office. It takes over an hour to get there one way. I don't feel good about driving alone, but the only way we're going to coax people out of their personal vehicles is to make public transit convenient and affordable. That will require public subsidy.

If elected, I will work toward finding grants and other funding solutions to help Intracity Transit add more routes in Lacey and more frequent service on major routes. I would also work toward a policy of replacing city fleet vehicles with hybrid vehicles. I am gratified by the council's recent decision to invest in a new wind turbine farm that will guarantee that 100 percent of the city's electricity comes from non-polluting sources.

**7. How will your city be affected by climate change/sea level rise? Does your city have a plan to address these effects, and what more can or should your city do to respond?**

Ken Balsley:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

Carolyn H. Cox:

I think we need to work with other governments in Thurston County and surrounding counties on a regional approach to adapting to a changing environment.

Climate change is already affecting Lacey in numerous ways. Consider the violent microburst storm in early May. In addition to more extreme weather events, Lacey can expect to see more vector-borne illnesses, such as West Nile Virus; strains on water supplies; more air pollution as residents turn to air conditioning for relief from summer heat; and other concerns. This will hit lower-income residents disproportionately. We must take that into account in making climate-related decisions.

The city will see indirect effects from sea level rise because Olympia will inevitably have to move to higher ground. This will put more strain on city infrastructure and services.

Lacey does have a carbon reduction plan, and that's a good thing, but I think it needs more teeth.