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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 Olympia Council Member, Position No. 4 General Election Candidates: Max Brown / Clark Gilman**

**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?**

Max Brown:

This was an issue that I worked on as Chair of the Planning Commission. We need to redesign some of our meetings with the express purpose of engagement and interaction. We should host these meetings outside of city hall, in community centers and schools all over the city. We also need to work on issues that people actually care about so that community members have an incentive to show up. Government should be accessible to its citizens, and often we make it very challenging.

Clark Gilman:

Increasing citizen access to Olympia City government has been my priority for the past two years. I have stirred conversations and taken action to bring more voices to City Hall and to bring Olympia's leaders out in to the community. I held a People's Budget Forum, I held coffee

with the Councilperson. I led efforts for Land Use and Environment and General Government Committees to hold meetings in the community.

I have met outside of Council meetings with people whose voices are underrepresented to discuss the best path forward for their proposals. I believe that sharing my experience and understanding of local government with people who haven't felt welcome in City Hall is my obligation as a leader. I believe that bringing diverse voices to City decision making will yield better policies and spending decisions.

We had been challenged by angry public comment across the past year. To my mind, the best path forward is to listen to each person who speaks as if they are the only person in the world. I believe that we set standards as leaders for respectful interaction and hold citizens to the same standard, but we can't enforce respect. We have to earn respect.

**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.**

Max Brown:

I have never been homeless but do know people who have been and who are homeless. It affects me because we have community members who are homeless, and every community member deserves to be taken into consideration when the city makes decisions. It also means that they deserve to have services just like anyone else in our community. I believe a county-wide solution should include an equal share among all of the cities and small towns, not simply putting the majority of the lift on Olympia. This would include housing and treatment options as well as access to rapid-rehousing. There is no one-size fits all solution to homelessness, so we need to think holistically and work to address our community needs strategically.

Clark Gilman:

I never considered myself homeless. As a young adult I had periods of time where I slept in my car and times when I slept in urban green belts. Today, I know and am known by many unhoused people in our community. Knowing utterly impoverished people by name, and believing that camping is a reasonable response to having no money both powerfully affect my decisions to prioritize services for those who are unhoused, unsupported, and un-engaged in our community.

Homelessness is neither a new problem or unique to Olympia, but we can act as a community to create a more humane and equitable society. We have to choose long-term solutions.

Maintaining an economy and a social structure that creates winners and losers- a system that churns out very poor people- that's the community decision we've consistently made to maintain homelessness. Olympia has always had very poor people living in shacks, whether it was timber camps, Chinese immigrant railroad workers, dust bowl refugees, people who we called drunks or hermits, or the inhabitants of downtown Olympia's Little Hollywood shanty town right up to 1950.

I support social work to aid very poor and vulnerable people but I don't believe that good work is in any way related to ending homelessness. That is palliative work, intended to lessen the pain of being very poor with unmet needs. If we intended to end homelessness we would create affordable housing, living wage jobs, and provide access to health care for all residents.

**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?**

Max Brown:

I am a 28-year-old, white, middle-class, straight man. No, I do not believe that I have experienced discrimination as I believe I am a person of privilege and work to be aware of how

my privilege affects others. I do know others who have experienced discrimination based on all of the above stated areas. It helps me to realize that not everyone has the same story or background, but we are all human and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. All of our decisions at the city level have an impact on the community, and we need to take everyone into account when we make those decisions. And, those who have privilege need to be aware of how it affects others and work to help those who do not have the same privilege.

Clark Gilman:

As a union organizer who was laid off at about age 50 I experienced a very challenging re-employment environment. I spent most of my organizing career advocating for poor people and immigrants. I have worked for many years shoulder to shoulder with people of color and immigrants and I regularly experienced blatant racism from both individuals and organizations and I regularly witnessed biased policing.

Today I work with at-risk youth at South Sound High School. Many of my students are people of color, almost all are poor, and many are from immigrant families. I am confronted daily with challenges these students face from school officials, police, employers, and each other.

These experiences greatly affect my decisions on City policies. Here's my litmus test, we will know we are on the road to a fair and equal community when a strong young African American man can stand at Harrison and Division at midnight and not receive wary glances from every passing car and not fear interaction with a passing police car.

**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?**

Max Brown:

After speaking with the Olympia Police Department I was surprised to find out the majority of complaints filed against the OPD were from internal officers calling attention to other officers who were not following policy. The city should explore adding a Human Rights Commission as a part of their advisory board system to run certain issues through, however, I have not seen evidence that citizen Police Oversight Boards produce the kind of results we hope for. As for body cameras, I am torn on this issue. It is costly to purchase the equipment and even more costly to keep up with the public records created by them. In some circumstances, body camera footage can create more questions than they answer. I would like to wait for the technology to advance and the law to become clearer before moving forward with body cameras.

Clark Gilman:

I support a citizen review board for the Police Department, but I believe that a Public Safety advisory board with a broader role would be more appropriate. We very seldom have incidents for a citizen review board to review, so it would be challenging to maintain such a group between incidents.

I support the use of body cameras by city police officers for both the officers' and the citizen's benefit. I also see that there are limitations, that we still won't know what was going through each person's mind during an incident, nor will the camera give us a full picture. The biggest obstacle to body cameras at this point is the public records question- what should be available through a public records request, and whose privacy should be protected. Not all people who are stopped by police are criminals or even accused of any wrong-doing. This is a complicated issue, and Olympia is watching closely as other City's find their way to a fair balance between disclosure and privacy.

I believe there is good reason to review our process for soliciting applications, screening and interviewing prospective police officers. Looking hard at our current process and learning more about alternative processes is a high priority for me.

**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?**

Max Brown:

I believe it is important for city government to realize where it can and cannot have impacts. Housing affordability, while not directly within the control of city government, is affected by city government. The city should be working with the private sector to ensure that we are able to house people of all income levels. This means aligning our zoning with city policy and working to right size permit and impact fees to keep housing affordable. The tools available to the city are within reach, we simply need to make housing affordability a priority.

Clark Gilman:

Access to housing and affordability of housing are concerns for the majority of residents in our communities. More residents rent than own their homes. The current market is very profitable for those who control real estate and access to capital. I believe it is the responsibility of the City to ensure that housing is available for people across a range of economic circumstances. I prioritize the interests of our residents. I see Olympia as 50,000 people living in community. I am often opposed by leaders who see Olympia as a collection of income generating properties. I am concerned that my daughter and her husband can find an apartment to rent in Olympia. I'm concerned that my mother and several of her friends who live on Social Security were priced out of the Boardwalk Apartments downtown. I'm concerned that we miss the richness of having our school teachers, state workers, police and firefighters living and participating in the community where they work.

Our City should plan to accommodate the needs of our residents as a greater priority than planning to meet growth forecasts or maximize the value of real estate. A fair shake is all that people are asking for, not free rent. Our City should equally prioritize the needs and interests of residents who rent their home or business with the needs and interests of homeowners and landlords.

**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?**

Max Brown:

Somewhere in the range of 10-20. This is an area that the city has the ability to make a significant impact. Working with Intercity Transit, we should be expanding access to low-cost or free bus passes to low-income individuals making transit more accessible. We also need to work to make our city more compact, aligning our zoning so that more people are living on transit lines which will in turn create more routes and make it easier for people to use public transit or walk to services. Also, we should consider a low-interest rate loan fund to allow citizens to make their homes more energy efficient.

Clark Gilman:

I primarily commute by bicycle and bus. I have made hundreds of trips by foot, bicycle, and bus as a City Council Person. I move around Olympia this way not only because it reduces my environmental impact. I move at human speed because I want to interact with the people around me and move slowly enough to see changes in our environment and community. I walk and ride my bike because it keeps me healthy and gives me time to think.

I worked as a clean energy advocate and have several ideas for how Olympia can help residents reduce their carbon footprint. The first is to look at community-scale actions, such as community solar and wind power generation, planning that emphasizes dense and walkable neighborhoods, and incentivizing neighborhood retail. And I have a carbon reduction dream;

Pendleton Oregon creating a zero-interest revolving loan fund for individuals to put solar panels on their homes. We should follow their lead. Help me make this happen!

**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?**

Max Brown:

Olympia will be significantly impacted by sea-level rise within the next 20 years. Currently, the city is in the process of planning for mitigation, but like most plans, without the money available to implement the plan it is just a piece of paper. The city should consider adding an impact fee to new construction in areas that will be impacted by sea-level rise. Our city's comprehensive plan calls for saving downtown from the impact of sea-level rise so we will need to prepare to pay for the expense and should be having community conversations about what this will look like sooner rather than later.

Clark Gilman:

We are currently planning to address these effects. I disagree with much of the plan currently underway. To me, the interests of the few are trumping the interests of the many as we consider vastly expensive and questionably effective proposals such as a dike across Budd Inlet in an attempt to carry on business as usual while sea levels rise and extreme weather events increase. I don't believe that our best engineering can hold back the power of the Ocean and the River. I don't believe that the process to date has involved enough voices in our community. In my opinion, the City of Olympia should prioritize and incentivize new development on high ground at or above the historic shoreline. I believe it is reasonable to assist in protecting buildings downtown and on the Port Peninsula with the understanding that they are built on low lying ground and will increasingly be inundated by the sea.