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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 Tumwater Tumwater City Council Position 6 General Election Candidates: Debbie Sullivan / Brian Tomlinson

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?

Debbie Sullivan:

As a councilmember, I have always supported citizen's access to government services and they are welcome to present any issues or concerns. We work in partnership with many organizations and non-profits to increase services whenever possible. As a representative for Tumwater, I continue to work with partners to make sure access to services are achieved. I am currently co-chair of the Community Action Council of Lewis, Mason, Thurston which provides services to the population that your question refers to.

Brian Tomlinson:

E-Government. E-government is the use of technology, particularly the Internet, as a means to deliver city government services and to facilitate the interaction of the public with city government entities. In many local communities, e-government access now stands as the primary means of getting local government information and interacting with the city staff. This would include everything from visiting the City of Tumwater website to emailing Tumwater

officials to applying for local community benefits. And citizens are always welcome at City Council meetings to speak out and address their questions and concerns to city officials and staff. E-Government is the voice of the people in the 21st century.

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.

Debbie Sullivan:

First, I was near homeless as a single mother trying to make ends meet and I have a former co-worker is currently homeless so I am aware of the stress that this causes. I have been involved in trying to find solutions through my work while at the Department of Commerce and the Tumwater Council is spending time on how best to identify and provide resources for our citizens. Homeless is not just a community issue, it is a state & national issue. I believe that we need to also focus on mental health services to be part of our long term strategy.

Brian Tomlinson:

I have been homeless, but fortunately not for long, thanks to community services that were available to me. At 19 years old I hitchhiked from the east coast to the west coast and arrived in Los Angeles penniless, jobless, and homeless. I checked in to the Midnight Mission in downtown Los Angeles for a week before I found employment, and was able to secure housing with the help of community services.

In September 2015, the City of Albuquerque found a van in the city's motor pool, wrapped it in the "There's a Better Way" graphics, and launched the "There's a Better Way" innovative program. With an initial budget of \$50,000, the city's Solid Waste Department was able to drive to areas frequented by homeless folks and offer them day labor, such as landscape beautification and garbage removal. Pay for the work is \$9 an hour. After their work day is complete, passengers are transported back to be connected with emergency shelter to house them overnight as needed. In fiscal year 2017, the City has budgeted \$181,000 for the program's continued success. "There's a Better Way" is working in their community, and it can work in our community as well.

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?

Debbie Sullivan:

As a woman who came of age in the 70's I have experienced discrimination in work and other areas. Discrimination of all types is a very important topic to me and is the reason I am very proud to now be working for the Washington State Office of Minority & Women's Business Enterprises which provides the ability for business owned by these groups to compete in our society.

Brian Tomlinson:

I have not personally experienced discrimination. Growing up in the 1960's especially, I witnessed much racial discrimination, and later in the 1970s and 1980s, sexual discrimination. I will uphold the law. The law is clear:

[Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#): This federal law prohibits discrimination in terms and conditions of employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, sex, and religion. [Age Discrimination in Employment Act \(ADEA\)](#): This federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of age for workers over the age of 40. [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#): This

federal law prohibits discrimination against certain disabled individuals and requires employers to make "reasonable accommodations" to allow access to buildings and functionality in the workplace

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?

Debbie Sullivan:

I believe that the Tumwater Police Department is one of the better agencies and I am in full support of every office having resources and training to deal with issues such as mental health and drug use. We hold a Citizens Police Academy each year which provides an amazing opportunity for citizens and law enforcement to share knowledge and understanding. I would not be opposed to a citizens review board if the structure is developed that would be a positive support to the community. I like the idea of body cameras but am concerned about the privacy of citizens so this needs more time or court rulings.

Brian Tomlinson:

Holding individual police officers accountable for their conduct is an essential element of policing. It is directly and indirectly related to achieving the basic goals of policing: reducing crime and disorder, enhancing the quality of neighborhood life, and providing fair, respectful and equal treatment for all people.

I am in favor of a citizen complaint review board. A review board will look closely at police business, whenever there is controversy. A citizen review board is the next step in law enforcement transparency. I do believe this is a step in involving the community more inside the police department.

Body cameras can have a positive impact. In San Diego, complaints about officers fell 40.5 percent and use of "personal body" force by officers dropped by 46.5 percent after officers adopted body cameras, according to a 2015 report from the city's police department.

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?

Debbie Sullivan:

We spend a significant amount of time on council on this topic. We have made zoning changes for cottage housing, mobile/manufactured park zoning, possible tax credits for low income or affordable housing options. My goal is to have all income levels equal throughout our community and doing my best to make sure that lower income housing is not segregated to only specific areas.

Brian Tomlinson:

When affordable housing does not exist, and for growing numbers it does not, then we may feel some moral responsibility to help create it. A community and city government can take steps to stimulate affordable housing, or to mandate or require a certain number of affordable housing units. Without affordable housing, our communities may become more uniform. We may lose the opportunity to interact with people who may be in different economic or cultural circumstances, to learn from them and to enjoy their company.

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?

Debbie Sullivan:

I am currently Chair of InterCity Transit so public transportation is very important. I take public transportation when my schedule or location permits. I was also the Commute Trip Reduction Coordinator for the Washington State Department of Commerce and encouraged/managed commuting options for employees.

Brian Tomlinson:

I've used public transportation probably a dozen times in the past year. I am so committed to protecting the environment that I'd be in favor of appointing a police department part-time environmental crimes officer.

To meet our carbon footprint reduction goals we could allocate a percentage of our annual budget toward green ventures and establish energy efficiency projects. Some of the most significant gains may be made in the city's recycling program, expanding that, and making it larger than it is today. More recycling bins and building a city vehicle fleet comprised of alternative energy vehicles will go a long way in accomplishing our goals. These practices will not only reduce the city's carbon footprint but may result in bigger and better PSE rebates.

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?

Debbie Sullivan:

This has been a topic in my employment and on the council. I worked for the WSU Extension Energy Program and the Washington State Department of Commerce Energy Division for over six years so every aspect of this topic is important to me. The City of Tumwater and the Council takes this very serious and have taken every opportunity to do what we can as a city. This includes making all government facilities as energy efficient as possible and have spent thousands of dollars on energy efficient lighting. We also made an agreement with PSE for the purchase of wind power when the new wind farm south of Bucoda comes online. There is always more to be done and will take action when we can.

Brian Tomlinson:

A resolution regarding the community greenhouse gas inventory was completed by the Thurston Climate Action Team along with strategies for reducing greenhouse gases. Climate change and sea level rise is a critical concern for Tumwater residents and greenhouse gases resulting from community activities that contribute to the negative immediate and long-term effects of climate change. The Thurston Climate Action Team has completed a comprehensive greenhouse gas emissions inventory for Thurston County which includes the emissions occurring within the boundaries of the City of Tumwater. Effective strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions within the City of Tumwater will rely on strong collaboration with other municipalities within Thurston County. The City of Tumwater accepts the greenhouse gas inventory completed by Thurston Climate Action Team and wishes to collaborate with other municipalities within Thurston County to develop and implement policies and actions for reducing its community greenhouse gas emissions, to most effectively address climate change/sea level rise.