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## **Primary 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 Primary Candidates: Ken Balsley / Carolyn H. Cox / Madeline Goodwin / Rick (Ricardo) Nelsen**

**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.

Madeline Goodwin:

As a young, disabled, LGBTQ+ Jewish woman with a black grandmother, a partner who grew up in foster care, a retired veteran stepfather, and a mother who is a domestic violence survivor, I am extremely aware of the challenges faced by a wide range of people whose needs are frequently overlooked. I believe in open government, and in being available to constituents. As an elected official, I would make a point of having open “coffee chats” in various accessible locations, including retirement communities, apartment complexes, community centers, coffee shops, and the library. I think the best way to represent the community is to listen - to hear what each person has to say. They may not all agree, but by understanding all of the perspectives we can do our best to meet the needs of everyone in the community.

It is currently a multi-step process to learn what is on upcoming City Council meeting agendas. I would like to see meeting schedules and the topics up for discussion posted on the city’s Facebook page and website sent via an opt-in email list the weekend before they take place. All members of the community need to know when topics of interest are up for discussion, so they can speak up and be heard. When presentations or requests are made at Council meetings, I will be sure to take them into account; and when decisions are being made, I will give voice to the needs of the community - the WHOLE community.

Rick (Ricardo) Nelsen:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

**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.

Madeline Goodwin:

I have not been homeless, but I have known people who are or were, including friends, my mother, and my partner. Their stories have broadened my awareness of the challenges the homeless face, whether they are young or old, employed or not, unsheltered or couch-hopping. Homelessness impacts all kinds of people for all kinds of reasons. Thus, homelessness prevention includes affordable housing, family-wage jobs, mental health services, accessible health care, and sufficient public transportation. Expanded Intercity Transit services would increase access to resources for all these issues, and is a significant part of my platform.

I support the opening of a warming center in Lacey last winter, and the important work of SideWalk, a nonprofit that offers rapid access to housing. I would like to see access to restrooms and shower stalls which are necessary for sanitation and the search for jobs. The Lacey branch of the Thurston County Food Bank currently under development will provide food for homeless and low-income community members. I also strongly support the new Lacey Veterans Hub, established to aid veterans and their families in issues ranging from jobs to benefits to housing. Phone service and mailing addresses also help homeless and low income families utilize services and access employment. All of these things could be implemented at a county-wide scale. The county is also in a better position to take a homes-first approach - giving people safe, affordable, healthy homes while they access other resources.

Rick (Ricardo) Nelsen:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

**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.

Madeline Goodwin:

As a young, Jewish, differently-abled, LGBTQ+ woman, I have often experienced discrimination. Most of my friends and family also face discrimination on a regular basis. When my family lived in rural Oregon we were actively barred from certain community activities because my mother wouldn't sign a statement of faith. In academia and in the professional world, being young and female means that I have had to learn to balance self-advocacy and diplomacy. Invisible disabilities are an issue for every member of my family.

Discrimination in application review - for jobs, housing, and educational opportunities - is one of the most damaging forms of discrimination. I would like to see a blind review process implemented in Lacey, especially for city hiring. In addition, inclusive outreach for community events is essential. Consistent exposure to diverse groups is essential to limiting discrimination.

One of the most effective ways to overcome certain types of discrimination is through outreach. Humans have a tendency to fear "other." The city council can model inclusion, and work with other groups to educate the public. These efforts, especially in education, may be able to reduce the harm done through lack of information or imagination.

Rick (Ricardo) Nelsen:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

**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.

Madeline Goodwin:

Lacey Police Department has a strong track record of community engagement and internal accountability. Through P2C, School Resource Officers, and many other citizen engagement programs, the Lacey Police Department has made itself part of the community. Current officer training emphasizes deescalation, and many non-lethal options are available to Lacey cops. Training should also include better awareness of mental illness and other invisible disabilities which could impact the police-citizen dynamic. As a result, although crime rates may be higher than ideal, response and resolution are typically swift and satisfactory.

Generally speaking, I believe external accountability is more effective, and so I do support citizen review boards and use of body cameras. Internal accountability strategies are vulnerable to corruption, and body cameras - when used properly and consistently - provide impartial documentation of events. Citizen review boards can be beneficial, but when selecting reviewers, it is important to screen for biases (including biases for or against public safety officers).

Rick (Ricardo) Nelsen:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

**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.

Madeline Goodwin:

Yes, the availability of affordable housing for everyone is part of the responsibility of government: housing is a basic human right.

Lacey has already begun to take steps in the direction of expanding affordable housing, including promoting high-density development, inclusionary zoning, and encouraging diverse housing options through incentives. There are also a number of other policies, including rent stabilization, expedited permitting, and various rental protections, which are viable options to ensure housing options that work for every income level. This will promote diversity, encourage healthy communities, and reduce homelessness levels by expanding options for low-income workers. Additionally, expanded public transportation will make more housing affordable and available for a range of economic circumstances.

Rick (Ricardo) Nelsen:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

**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.

Madeline Goodwin:

Carpooling and public transit are part of my daily life. I live in a household with five adults and one car; my bus pass and bicycle get plenty of use.

Lacey is already a very green city, but we can do more, especially for our low-income community members: expand transit, promote green building for affordable housing, and assist financially with energy efficiency and insulation upgrades. I would like to see Lacey promote green building, particularly for housing, by using planning incentives such as expedited permitting and reduced parking requirements to encourage developers to use sustainable, local materials and environmentally friendly

building techniques. Lacey also pays into Intercity Transit, but Lacey transit routes are infrequent, and northeast Lacey doesn't receive any service; so expanding IT services is another top priority.

Rick (Ricardo) Nelsen:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

**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.

Madeline Goodwin:

Lacey has relatively little coastline compared to Olympia, but still faces challenges from sea level rise and climate change. Part of the anticipated population growth for the Pacific Northwest as a whole is the migration of climate refugees from other places that simply become uninhabitable. Heatwaves will become hotter and more frequent, snowpack and thus summer water supply will decrease, and the local seafood economy will suffer from warming waters and ocean acidification.

The Thurston Regional Planning Council is currently working on a county-wide climate adaptation plan, with Lacey as an active participant. Lacey also recently signed on to Puget Sound Energy's Green Direct program, which will build a wind farm in south Thurston and Lewis counties. Historically, Lacey has been a green city, purchasing green energy credits for all its municipal energy, installing charging stations for electric vehicles at all city buildings, and receiving both the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA and the EPA's Green Power Community designations. However, there are several ways in which Lacey can improve: signing on to the Sierra Club's Coal Free PSE effort to pressure PSE to move to 100% renewable energy by 2025, rather than investing in a new natural gas generator; mandating solar for most or all of its new buildings; and giving preference to higher-density, mixed-use development and urban in-fill rather than developing its green spaces.

Rick (Ricardo) Nelsen:

**This candidate did not submit responses**