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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 Olympia Council Member, Position No. 7**

#### **Primary Candidates: Jim Cooper / Daniel (Danny) Marsh / Heather Wood**

**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?**

Jim Cooper:

This remains the largest challenge for Olympia Government. I believe the system is designed to hold us back from really achieving equity and diversity in accessing government, whether as a direct service or to engage in policy conversations. I am committed to continuing to find new ways to engage especially with people of color and people in financial hardship, as I believe these are the largest gaps. Without full council making this a priority I am left to continually asking to reinvent, and working to be invited into conversations with these groups so I can meet them where they are in a safe space. Recently the mayor and I began talking about some sort of new style of community conversations (think town hall meets world café), so hopefully we are getting some traction.

Daniel (Danny) Marsh:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

Heather Wood:

- a. City Council Members have the ability to create citywide efforts and groups. This is clearly the time to create a new culture in Olympia, WA, an effort that could help spark like projects across the states.
- b. First and foremost, house and treat those living on the street. Create advocacy jobs well documenting the needs, and collective ideas of the newly housed. (I have spent time with homeless at Just Housing meetings, and Listened people's ideas and aspirations).
- c. Satellite groups in neighborhoods, and non partisan outreach efforts are essential in finding the voices of the frequently unheard, and those who have lost all hope, as do the disenfranchised. Massive outreach with over site.
- d. The low income (myself included), and each other class, share many hidden rules of their specific strata. Neither set of rules is worse or better than the other, but because they are hidden, the hidden rules can easily offend, isolate and alienate. In studying the great work of Dr. Ruby Payne, I have come to envision a culture where citizens are educated, and dedicated to breaking the chains of their class that prevent us as a whole from receiving the care, love, health and prosperity every living being has innate rights to. Democracy is blocked when citizens do not have access to government, leaving the corporate powers to overrun.
- e. Create jobs around civic involvement.

**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.**

Jim Cooper:

No, I have never been homeless but I have known many who are. I have worked in direct service taking homeless teens (primarily GLBTQ) on wilderness leadership adventures and on city council have continually worked to bring the conversation about homelessness more main stream, and to combat the criminalization policies we have on the books. I have much hope that someday government will lead with compassion, rather than liability. As for regional solutions, that would be the best and while great strides have been made recently and after 30+ years of trying that I believe it is time for an urban solution, and hopeful that the county will continue to make stride towards the positive. Olympia has recently taken a leadership role in this and will continue to pressure our neighbors to join us at the table, it is time we put our money where our mouth is (again) and create the system we need to serve our residents.

Daniel (Danny) Marsh:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

Heather Wood:

Yes, I have been homeless, and yes, I have known folks who have been homeless. I remember in a tech writing class, a young overachieving person had run away from home, but was aspiring to achieve a degree in nanotechnology. She would often sleep at the college as an alternative to the street. The classwork was resume work, and the professor advised not to put her homelessness down anywhere on that paper because people associate that with mental illness, and other poor management skills. At that time in 2010, I was a single mom on welfare living in a homeless subsidised housing unit in Bremerton, working toward my own dream of becoming a physicist. I was a mom who was brought up believing that if I worked hard enough, I could easily pull us up by our bootstraps. How do I convey my utter

disappointment at every turn without sounding grim? I could write of the struggles of raising a daughter in a safe environment, while simultaneously receiving daily systemic thrashing. The last thing on my mind was voting. March, 2017, I and my child were given notice to move. I had deadlines at work, and no other family committed to our housing. We depended on beautiful friends for help moving and storing our household items, but still had no where but a tent to sleep in for 5 weeks. I held onto my small teaching job, and kept my daughter in ORLA. Our section 8 came through with an apartment, and I was able to pay my way onto the ballot. Think of our privilege to have housing, and people who believe in our ability to thrive. I am here to bring access to government to those who don't have it as easy as these two privileged women whose stories I tell. 200 unhoused people could be housed now in vacant apartments for \$300,000.00 for 6 months. Land Value Tax can keep properties and rents stable.

**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?**

Jim Cooper:

I have some experience with discrimination around age, being a young leader but that is nothing comparable to what people of color experience daily or the fear our immigrant community is facing more recently. I am committed to every person in our city having the same experience, and we have a lot of work to do to get there. I will continue to lead with compassion first.

Daniel (Danny) Marsh:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

Heather Wood:

I have indeed experience discrimination, mostly for economic status. I am third generation single mom, as far as I know. City ordinances against unhoused people need to be abolished, and reversed in the opposite direction. In my view, ending atrocities is not enough. Reparations are in order to homeless, downtrodden, and colonized people for whom without, the very rich would not have their riches. Unlimited access to internet and telephone is a must. Without access to resources such as these, there is no hope for job search, or education. It is time we stopped marginalizing our populations. Keeping populations from succeeding by withholding necessities of success is a great departure from the values I hold. My experiences with poverty are solely responsible for my volunteering myself to local government. I have made poverty and racism my studies in college and throughout my life. I will not walk another step if those steps are not toward housing those without, and building bridges between the classes.

**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?**

Jim Cooper:

I believe that the City Council is the elected citizen oversight, though understand our citizens demand more. I have proposed bringing back our independent police auditor AND implementing a Human Rights Commission that might do some work around community policing but also help us keep our eye on the ball around larger discrimination, equity and inclusion issues.

I am generally in support of body cameras as an accountability tool, though am not sure we have the correct ability to make the program work well through current state law. Also, it seems like there is a

lot to be learned around privacy that may be hard to overcome. For those reasons, we should be cautious, but ready to act when the time is right, as we are now.

Daniel (Danny) Marsh:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

Heather Wood:

a. Police overhaul is in order. We could stop hiring out of state police with combat training. We could invest in educating our police locally with bachelor's as a requirement of application. Imagine our kids and grandkids wanting to serve on our own neighborhood police department proudly created by our own citizens. Police training could switch from aggressive to non violent. We could change it together within the year. I have been told it is unrealistic to think of a demilitarized police in the state's capital, and perhaps a special branch to deal with emergency situations is in order.

b. Accountability and oversight with body cams and promised prosecution for any overstepping of authority, is crucial in building trusting and secure communities. It is possible certain populations are pitted against each other in the form of systemic poverty, and generational violence. Now is the time for change.

c. Police could easily support protesters have their voices heard, instead of silencing voices. This city belongs to us the people, and our government and law enforcement can reflect our values if we choose to require this of the department.

d. Weapons free police is an option.

e. Because of the rise in population, Olympia's small percentage of non white communities may hopefully rise. Our police must be trained and culled of racist and bigoted members, and educated on positive relational skills that build community and diversity.

**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?**

Jim Cooper:

This is a new line of business for the city and we are committed to this work. There is much work to do to make sure everyone who works in Olympia can live in Olympia, and those that can't afford a safe roof over their head have access to shelter and compassion. We are making great strides in this work and I am hopeful that in the coming year we will have more resources available and policies in place to make these goals a reality.

Daniel (Danny) Marsh:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

Heather Wood:

Yes it is our responsibility, and I will advocate for a Land Value Tax that creates stability and prevents increased housing costs. As I continue earning more money, I continue to give more to my community. I am a proponent of income tax.

**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?**

Jim Cooper:

About a dozen, and not nearly enough. If we are to meet our climate change goals, then there is going to have to be a culture shift away from cars. We are making good strides in other areas, especially in securing renewable energy for all city facilities for a 20-year period, beginning in 2019. I look forward to this conversation as our city works to do its part to stop contributing to climate change. We are committed (unlike some!) to the Paris Accord and Mayors Compact that we signed!

Daniel (Danny) Marsh:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

Heather Wood:

This year no, but my daughter and I have done hundreds of miles on our bikes in Olympia over the past few years. Join with local businesses to give people credits to commute by bike. These credits can be spent at local businesses. Provide employers with incentives to hire telecommuters. I own a local 100% bike powered compost collection service that was more active in years past, but why not encourage with city grants, businesses to develop bike powered certifications?

**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?**

Jim Cooper:

Olympia is in the process of designing that plan in conjunction with the Port of Olympia and LOTT Clean Water Alliance. We are already leaders in the nation in the sea level rise conversation. This plan will address how we will protect public and private infrastructure as we learn to cope with higher levels of sustained water in low lying areas. The implementation of this plan is likely to be quite costly, so we will need to have a community conversation about how to fund it.

Daniel (Danny) Marsh:

**This candidate did not submit responses**

Heather Wood:

My city is currently planning for the rise of sea level, and discussing options to transition along with the, as LOTT and the Port of Olympia state "24 inches by the year 2100" that is expected. I have heard ideas including moving people up to higher ground, and building dykes, but I have not held meetings, nor have I attended gatherings or classes around this issue. I would need to interview local trusted experts, and educate myself on the topic before I delve into problem solving. I can say that I work from a framework of serving people before corporations, and my values are congruent with nature and environment above all else. My trusted advisors are always like minded and true to these same values.