

QUESTIONNAIRE

GREEN PARTY OF ALAMEDA COUNTY 2016 ENDORSEMENT DECISION

Please email your responses to: GPAC-VoterGuide@yahoogroups.com

In the subject line, please include "EBRPD Board" and your Ward Number.

If it is not possible for you to email, please mail your responses to:
EBRPD Board Questionnaire
c/o Green Party of Alameda County ,
2022A Blake Street * Berkeley, CA 94704

Please respond by Saturday, August 27, 2016

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1. Motivation -- Why did you choose to run for the Park District Board?

It is my intention to promote community, accessibility and transparency in the management of the parks. Management needs to more closely listen to park users in enacting shared use policies.

2. Program and Priorities -- Elected office provides the opportunity to proactively lead by placing new ideas on the agenda for consideration and development. What are some specific ideas you intend to pursue if elected? What do you believe are the main priorities for the Park District Board?

a) Parks are understaffed and underfunded to adequately perform their duties. Local community groups can take on a more active role in EBRPD management. A first step would be to make it easier for users to provide feedback to Park Supervisors whose performance evaluation can be tied to working with local communities.

b) The Board's priorities "should be" to listen to its constituents.

3. Qualifications -- Please give a brief summary of your background and qualifications for the office of EBRPD Director.

I work as a Federal Bank Regulator for the FDIC and strive to control management risk at large banks so that our deposits are safe. I plan to use my background as a way to bring transparency to EBRPD's operations by transforming its structure and institutional culture.

4. Recreation and Conservation -- What balance do you favor between recreational access/development and protection of wildlife, creeks, and lands?

Parks close to urban areas are invaluable resources to the communities they serve by providing multiuse facilities to frequent users. Sustainability is key in determining preservation versus development in any natural resource. I would promote more community involvement, community-sponsored and funded projects, as well as facilitate feedback. Urban recreational activities can be enhanced, for example, by favoring "surgical" development which could include the creation of community-sponsored sustainable trails with narrow treads. On the other hand, on less-used parks in isolated areas, I would favor less development focused on indispensable accommodations such as trailhead parking, bathrooms, inter-park trail connectors, etc.

5. Vegetation Management

a. What do you think the EBRPD policy regarding the use of pesticides / herbicides on park district property should be and why? How would you propose to modify current park district policies?

i) What we now know as parks, is a land that has been living and thriving without chemical pesticides and herbicides for thousands of years. In general, I favor natural approaches to the control of vegetation and pests. There are instances where the risks posed to health and safety outweigh the benefits of natural approaches and the use of pesticides and herbicides can't be avoided.

ii) I would recommend policies that favor non-chemical sustainable approaches to control unwanted pests and plants first; and where any chemical use is subject to transparent disclosure via the EBRPD Website that include taxpayer feedback where park users can provide comment online via a public forum. Transparency is key to ensuring the public has a voice and can contribute with analysis.

b. What approaches do you support for managing eucalyptus and other non-native or high-fire-risk species on park district property?

The Oakland fires were the result of grass fires and winds which the current existence of the eucalyptus keeps in check; i.e., getting rid of all the trees at once could result in unintended and unforeseen consequences, stumps being the most obvious. I favor planting native redwood saplings to naturally compete with existing eucalyptus trees. Redwood saplings should have a fighting chance by priming their growth areas. Community input is key in controlling unwanted growth and reaching a balanced approach.

6. Grazing Program -- There are concerns that the District's grazing program does not provide the oversight to meet the District's own goals of enhancing botanic and biotic diversity, reduced erosion and improved water quality. What steps would you take to meet these goals? What is the 'optimum level' of grazing compatible with both biotic diversity and recreational uses of the

parks?

I favor grazing as a way to control combustible grass growth as long as water and trail quality is managed appropriately and without compromise.

7. Dog Leash Law - What do you believe the EBRPD's policy should be regarding a leash law for dogs on district lands? Please explain your answer, including the issue of compatibility of off-leash dogs and park wildlife.

Wildlife and park user safety can be best protected with leash laws and by providing more fenced play areas. However, I also favor exploring a training and certification program that will strike a balance between a dog owner's commitment to training, and the safety of wildlife and park users. It sets a hurdle for dog owners to better train dogs so that they can go through a field certification program and act lawfully. Unfortunately, some people break the law regardless. This program would provide law-abiding citizens an opportunity to continue acting responsibly within the law.

8. Altamont Wind Turbines -- EBRPD owns land at Altamont Pass that includes a wind farm. How would you attempt to reduce bird kills at the turbines on the district's land and help solve the larger problem of bird kills by the turbines Altamont?

I have a preference for clean energy and am open to technological developments. In particular, new technology would be conditionally approved until it can certify its claims. We have to incentivize companies to develop environment (including bird) friendly technologies by penalizing companies attempting to introduce equipment deemed unsafe to the natural habitat. Monitoring and documenting bird kills is necessary to better understand interactions between equipment and the environment.

9. Public Participation -- Though EBRPD spends millions of dollars annually on its public relations department it continues to receive criticism for being out-of-touch with supportive grassroots organizations and activists that are occasionally critical of District policies and operations. What policies would you help implement to foster communication and inclusiveness with those that have much to contribute?

That is one of the core reasons for my candidacy. I would break out the current Park Advisory Committee (PAC) structure to the individual park level. I would also empower Park Supervisors to take user comments into consideration. I will support any effort to promote communication between park management and various park user communities.

I did a keyword search on the EBRPD's website for the word "complaint" and I could not find a plain complaint form. Instead my search resulted in many pages of info on how to make a complaint related to ADA, to police about lawbreakers, and even how to complain about the police. I did not, however, find any articles on how to complain or provide feedback about trails, park management, etc. Park Supervisors are not listed on the EBRPD web site, and some could not even be found or identified as such after knowing their names and searching for them. It is as if the EBRPD structure does not want users to complain by making it very difficult to provide

comments. A large Public Relations Department (PRD) and a culture of making decisions in isolation not only equate to not listening to customers—the tax-paying public, but suggests a pre-existing agenda. I am a frequent and avid user of EBRPD parks as a hiker, mountain biker, etc, and I am running to represent the park user.

I do not understand why EBRPD, a governmental public organization, would spend much on a PRD. It should instead focus soliciting and considering customer feedback. If EBRPD installed suggestion boxes in its parks and opened up its Website to user feedback it could save money and make better decisions. Technology is transforming other aspects of our lives. It is time we allow it to influence how we use and manage our recreational and natural resources.

10. Expansion and Development -- Should EBRPD focus its efforts on continuing to expand its land holding to protect open space from future development, or should it focus on just doing a good job of maintaining its current parklands?

The EBRPD needs to forge better relationships with its neighbors, such as ranchers and city dwellers. If EBRPD uses community groups to assist with its maintenance, and becomes more transparent with its finances, it can save money to help make more areas available. In general, I am in favor of protecting and preserving natural habitats and making them available to the public, but such decisions have to be made with support from all constituencies.

11. Balance of Mountain Bikers and Equestrians -- Historically, mountain bikers are neglected and given the short end of the stick in conflicts with equestrians on trails. What will you do to promote mountain biking in the parks so that these users actually feel welcome and are given the maximum amount of trail usage possible?

This is another primary reason why I am running for the District Director office. I have done both. Mountain bikers need trailside education so they know what to do and can be responsible in their interactions. As a biker, I understand that equestrians have the right of way over all trail users, while mountain bikers have to yield to virtually all trail users. To the degree mountain bikers understand the proper etiquette with equestrians, we can start sharing trails (by using trail bells, stopping early, taking the low ground, talking increasingly loud to an approaching the equestrian, waiting for the equestrian to pass or grants us permission to pass, etc.). Equestrians have a 1,000 pound vehicle with a mind of its own, so I am sympathetic. The only way mountain bikers can be expected to be better educated is by placing educational signs at shared trailheads. Trails need to be safe before they are considered for shared use (e.g., a steep downhill with a blind corner and a cliff edge is not a good place for equestrians and mountain bikers to share trails). I support promoting mountain bike user education, and for trails to be developed and properly marked for safe multiuse. I also support the creation of more sustainable mountain bike trails that can be shared, as this is a growing and sustainable sport.

Ultimately, the EBRPD does not have any advanced mountain bike trails, seemingly because they cannot be made multi-use. There are many high school mountain bike teams throughout the East Bay without a place to properly develop or advance their skills. This is unfair to our youth. BMX parks are popping up in localities all over the East Bay, but the EBRPD is moving at a

snail's pace when it comes to supporting the growing sport of mountain biking. Speeding this up is a top priority for me.

12. Endorsements -- Who has endorsed you so far? Who do you expect to endorse you?

I have been disappointed at the practice of individuals and groups who endorse candidates before the full candidate list became known. They deprived themselves of the opportunity to consider other candidates and smacks of political alliances and favoritism. I do not expect any endorsements at this time other than from park users.

13. Campaign Funding -- How much money do you currently have for this race? How much money do you plan to raise? Where will the money come from? Describe sources of financial contributions for your campaign that you would refuse to accept (if any).

I do not expect contributions from any institutions or corporate sponsors at this time. So far, my candidacy has been self-funded and I have not received monies from any outside parties.

14. Anything Else? -- Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?

When I see underfunded pension funds, bankrupt cities and declining pensions, it makes me suspect our democracy is broken. Is it? No one voted for underfunded pension funds or for their city government to spend the city into bankruptcy. EBRPD has lots of spending and little transparency. This is not a park system in touch with its constituents, but rather an almost sovereign government. Democracy is not broken. It just works better when there are checks and balances which are sorely missing in the EBRPD system. We need community involvement and oversight, and to add independent reporting and measurement in the mix. In the short term, I plan to promote community, accessibility and transparency in the EBRPD system. Over the long term, I plan to promote structures and frameworks that ensure EBRPD actions are aligned with user needs, regardless of who is elected to its Board.