

QUESTIONNAIRE

GREEN PARTY OF ALAMEDA COUNTY 2014 ENDORSEMENT DECISION

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1. Motivation -- Why did you choose to run for Mayor? I strongly believe that Alameda is at a crossroads and cannot continue along the path of the last four years. I have raised four children in Alameda. I am the voice of reason on Alameda's school board, putting children first, serving my 6th year on the Alameda School Board. Too many City leaders' decisions are driven by special interests, ignoring citizens' best interests. Thousands of new homes have been approved without addressing infrastructure and transportation needs. I am proactive. I recognize the demands that the thousands of new homes will have on our community, our schools, traffic, etc. I have dedicated the last 15 years of my life to serving the needs of children and their families here in Alameda in multiple leadership capacities. Those skills, along with collaborating with all residents, including senior citizens, and support organizations (local, State, and Federal), will be critically necessary to address the influx of new residents and families. I am uniquely qualified to anticipate, respond to, and engage the public in addressing their needs. I am a Cal Grad, Sociology major, and an attorney, practiced business litigation and have also done years of pro bono work. I completed my Masters in Governance, from the California School Board Association. I am also a former Co-Chair of the Alameda Collaborative for Children, Youth, and their Families (35+ service organizations), and former President of the Alameda PTA Council (two years), overseeing all the PTAs in Alameda. I also served as a Substitute Teacher for many years, teaching in nearly every school in AUSD.

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 Mayor? As mayor, I will chart a new course for Alameda, putting Alamedans first. I will work to ensure Alameda does its best to serve all residents: protect parklands and reasonable development (avoiding traffic gridlock and overcrowded schools); promote local business; attract new jobs; support schools; manage the City's budget; and, ensure fiscal transparency. I welcome public input, as demonstrated in my last six years as a Board Member of the Alameda Unified School District. I do my utmost to encourage public participation in meetings, as well as addressing the public's concerns via personal meetings, phone calls and emails. I am very accessible to community members. With the City's current focus on new housing development, resulting in thousands of new homes in Alameda, Alamedans, rightfully, are concerned about traffic gridlock, insufficient parking, overcrowding of our schools, and overextending our infrastructure. It is important to shift the focus from housing development to maintaining and improving our quality of life and increasing jobs in the City of Alameda. Traffic will be reduced with more Alamedans working within Alameda, and those commuting to Alameda for work will be counter to the flow of commuter traffic off the island. I have been a leader in grassroots campaigns to limit housing development and protect Alameda's parks and open space. I am a "Friend of Crown Beach" and a "Neighbor of Harbor Bay." I am also active in our local business community, participating regularly in Chamber of Commerce, WABA, and GABA meetings, critical to job expansion in Alameda.

3. Finances -- It's known that the city is heavily in debt and many projects have been put on hold (deferred maintenance like pot-holes). What plan would you propose to ease the city out of red-ink and into black ink? Given the very dire economic straits that Alameda is in (like many cities) how would you handle the pension issue for the police and fire fighters? Data from the city budget shows that 70% is for public safety workers leaving only 30% of the general fund budget for everything else. How would you address this issue? Unfortunately, this situation only worsens the longer it's not addressed. This is a serious problem for Alamedans. It's actually one of the reasons I'm running for Mayor. I believe the best way to address this situation is to first fully share it with the public. The multi-year budget shows a deficit. Rather than suggesting to the public, as I've heard at City Council meetings, that those that have concerns about the City's long term fiscal health are wrong, there needs to be genuine discussion about this serious problem. All options have to be explored and vetted by the community, everything has to be on the table.

4. Alameda Point -- Now that portions of the Point are clean and available for developing how would you proceed? How do you stand on the issue of open space and adaptive re-use for the Point? How would you plan for the increased traffic both on the island and the impact on Oakland Chinatown? Where do you stand on a housing unit cap for the point? My priorities at the Point are restoration of wetlands/parklands, along with commercial/industrial including adaptive reuse of existing buildings, and lastly residential, which would require careful planning to ensure that the public's health is protected. I'm concerned that Alameda Point will be over-developed with buildings. Alamedans have an incredible opportunity to protect open space at the Point, and improve public access to open space in this region. It's my understanding that EBRPD is interested in creating a regional park at the Point, which I strongly support. I welcome the opportunity to expand our region's parkland, including potentially adopting a Visitor's Center at the Point, similar to Crab Cove at Crown Beach, for the benefit of the public as well as for preservation of wildlife habitat. Many, rightfully, are concerned about traffic gridlock and insufficient parking. This is a serious concern. We can and must try to encourage transportation alternatives, such as greater use of public transportation, carpooling, biking, etc. We must also collaborate with City of Oakland officials. However, the best solution is to limit housing at the Point and, I support a housing unit cap at the Point.

5. Transportation and Growth -- Since Alameda is an island - 4 draw-bridges and a tube - it is widely believed that any further development must carry with it a concrete, realistic proposal for increasing access to the island. Where do you stand on this issue? What ideas would you put forth to address the future development in Alameda? I strongly agree with this. This is one of the reasons I'm running for Mayor. As discussed earlier, with the City's current focus on new housing development, resulting in thousands of new homes in Alameda, Alamedans, rightfully, are concerned about traffic gridlock, insufficient parking, overcrowding of our schools, and overextending our infrastructure. It is important to shift the focus from housing development to maintaining and improving our quality of life and increasing jobs in the City of Alameda. Traffic will be reduced with more Alamedans working within Alameda, and those commuting to Alameda for work will be counter to the flow of commuter traffic off the island. As described in #1 above, I have been a leader in grassroots campaigns to limit housing development and protect Alameda's parks and open space. I am also active in our local business community, participating regularly in Chamber of Commerce, WABA, and GABA meetings, critical to job expansion in Alameda.

Considering Alameda is an island with limited access, do you support a limit to the number of future housing units and what solutions would you suggest to mitigate the increased traffic? Many, rightfully, are concerned about traffic gridlock and insufficient parking. This is a serious concern. We can and must try to encourage transportation alternatives, such as greater use of public transportation, carpooling, biking, etc. We must also collaborate with City of Oakland officials. However, the best solution is to limit housing at the Point and, I support a housing unit cap at the Point.

6. Crab Cove -- Where did you stand on the Crab Cove issue? Did you support the petition campaign to rezone it open space? I have been closely following this issue, am personally a "Friend of Crown Beach," and have had one of their lawn signs in front of my house for many months. <http://friendsofcrownbeach.com/become-a-friend/> I joined others and collected signatures for the open space initiative in front of Trader Joe's for hours to support the community's effort to have the McKay Avenue property zoned "open space." I am concerned about the City's adoption of the "Companion Measure," and whether the City will do its utmost to protect the property as "open space" from the GSA and ultimately housing development. I am hopeful that the Mayor and Council Members will actively protect the property, however, the history of this property, suggests we'll have to wait and see what happens next. I would like to see City leaders, working closely with East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) and the State Attorney General, have a united strategy to protect the property from the GSA and its eminent domain action and the developer. I'm concerned that the City's ultimately unsuccessful attempt to include the "stay or suspend" language in the companion measure may have inadvertently encouraged the developer to bring litigation to challenge the rezoning, rather than signaling an intent that the City will do its utmost to protect the property as open space. Also, as an AUSD Board Member, I introduced a resolution to demonstrate that AUSD students and families would benefit from an expanded Crab Cove Visitor Center. Unfortunately, none of the other Board members supported this motion. I welcome the opportunity to expand our region's parkland, not only including expanding the Crab Cove Visitor Center, but also potentially adopting a Visitor Center at Alameda Point, similar to Crab Cove at Crown Beach, for the benefit of the public as well as for preservation of wildlife habitat. This is another issue where continued advocacy by the public is necessary to encourage Council to protect the property from housing development.

7. City Manager -- It has been reported (in the local press) that Alameda's city manager displays arrogant and abusive behavior at city council meetings. If you believe this to be the case, how would you deal with this issue? This, unfortunately, is a serious problem. It is important that the community and members of the public always feel welcome to express their opinions and that City employees and elected officials are professional and courteous. The City Manager serves at the pleasure of City Council. This issue is the responsibility of City Council. I recognize the concerns and, if elected Mayor, am confident that this issue will be satisfactorily addressed.

8. Accountability -- How do you propose making yourself accountable and accessible to the citizens of Alameda? I'm in my 6th year on the Alameda Unified School Board, and prior to that served two years as Alameda PTA Council President, overseeing all the PTAs in Alameda as a volunteer. I am very accessible to community members and regularly meet community members personally and/or on the telephone. My mayoral campaign email is Trish@TrishforMayor.com. I'm regularly thanked by constituents for responding to their concerns, and told that I'm the only Board member that did.

9. Endorsements -- Who has endorsed you so far? Who do you expect to endorse you? I am in the process of obtaining formal endorsements. I was endorsed by "Save our City! Alameda" <http://www.saveourcityalameda.org>. Many Alamedans, from various backgrounds, are endorsing me. Please see my website for specific endorsements. www.TrishforMayor.com

10. 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 am in the process of getting my website up. I have made a personal loan to my campaign of \$2,000 and will probably add more to cover expenses in the short term. This is my third campaign. In my prior two campaigns for School Board, I had minimal expenses of just over \$1,000, for the lawn signs. In those campaigns, the Alameda Unified School District covers the costs for ballot statement. Here, the City's estimate for the cost of the ballot statement to be published is approximately \$1,800. Thus, at a minimum, my expenses will be closer to \$3,000. However, I've been meeting with civic leaders and community members and they have suggested that we will raise from private donations closer to \$30,000. I am comfortable with a grassroots campaign. I do not plan to accept donations from any individual or organization who currently does, or with whom we anticipate will, have a contract with the City of Alameda.

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

As a School Board member, I rejected City leaders' multi-million dollar land "swap" with AUSD, done secretly without appraisals to maximize developer profits over our children's future. I was the only elected official (City and School Board) urging postponement of the land "swap" deal to allow the community to vet the transaction and to permit appraisals of all the parcels in the transaction, so as to avoid a possible loss to AUSD of millions of dollars and irreplaceable real estate.

Prior to being on the School Board, I served as Alameda PTA Council President. During that time, California was offering garden grants to schools. The School District was not interested in pursuing these grants. However, parents, including myself, who regularly raise money for our public schools a dollar at a time, were very interested because these grants were each thousands of dollars. I found someone at each school (i.e., a parent, principal, teacher, classified staff member) who was interested so that we ultimately obtained a garden grant for every school, and then reached out to Ploughshares (local nursery) who worked with our garden grant leaders to build and maintain our school gardens.

I'm a supporter of "Harbor Bay Neighbors," the grassroots campaign opposing replacing Harbor Bay Club with homes.

Recently, I submitted a letter to support the City of Alameda's grant proposal to the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program, through the State of California, to design and construct the first phase of the Jean Sweeney Open Space Park, and also urged others to write similar letters.

I also collected signatures to protect our golf course from housing development.

I signed the ballot argument against SunCal.

In 2012, the Green Party of Alameda County endorsed me in my re-election campaign for School Board. Thank you! I was overwhelmingly re-elected, receiving the highest number of votes. I was one of three incumbents running for re-election. Another incumbent was unseated and the other came in third, barely winning re-election. I was one of two Board members that voted against leasing the private office space for District Offices, unfortunately, the majority supported it.

The following blurbs are from your 2012 voter guide. Please note that I've also included the blurb regarding the Auditor and the Treasurer because I opposed the proposed City sales tax measure, in agreement with the Green Party.

“Alameda School Board

Vote for 3 of these 4: Barbara Kahn, Jon Murphy, Kurt Peterson, and Trish Spencer

The issue driving this school board race is an action the board recently took: leasing private office space in a business park for the district superintendent and district personnel at a cost of nearly half a million dollars. This has not been received well by the Alameda community. Folks are not convinced this was the best solution during these difficult financial times; a greater effort should have been made to utilize surplus space in existing school buildings or perhaps surplus city space. The school board failed to involve the community in the discussion and failed to make a convincing case for the move. Presently there are four candidates who are running on a commitment to solve the need for alternative district office space in a more prudent way: they are Jon Murphy, Kurt Peterson, Barbara Kahn, and the incumbent Trish Spencer. Please choose three of these four, as the candidates whom you will be voting for.

Auditor

Kevin Kearney, with reservations

Treasurer

Kevin Kennedy, with reservations

Alameda City auditor Kevin Kearney and Alameda City Treasurer Kevin Kennedy are running unopposed so there is no contest in either of these races. While both of these candidates have been outspoken in the past concerning the city's unfunded liabilities and deferred maintenance budget they were unfortunately caught up in a misguided campaign in June supporting a proposed city sales tax increase of 1/2 percent for 30 years, which fortunately failed to muster the 2/3 vote required for passage. They have been notably absent from recent city council meetings. However, because they are unopposed, this election will undoubtedly go their way. Nevertheless, we hope they will enter into the public discussion of our city's finances once more.”

I would be honored to receive your endorsement. Thank you for this opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,

Trish Spencer
City of Alameda Mayoral Candidate, 2014