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Current occupation: Berkeley Dog walker

1. Motivation

Why did you choose to run for this office?

I am running to be the first openly and legally nonbinary public office holder in US history as well as the first genderqueer city council member to represent Berkeley. I am determined to improve the wellbeing of my community and reinvigorate the New Free Speech Movement to mobilize students to reclaim power so our entire community may benefit.

2. Priorities

What do you believe are the major issues facing your district? The City?

Gender Equity - Sexual assaults in Berkeley and around the UC Campus are not being addressed. People of third genders are discriminated against. Sexual assaults for homeless/disabled individuals is increasing and there is a lack of access all around.

People's Park - The only open space in my district in times of emergency is at risk of being built upon for development under the cover of student housing. This will displace the homeless population as well as prevent homeless people from access food resources provided by Food not Bombs.

Houselessness - Rents are at an all time high and prices of living are skyrocketing.

Displacement is occurring for multigenerational families and larger buildings which are more expensive are being built, forcing poor people to suffer in the process.

Food Insecurity - Food waste and improper food use is a huge issue in our community. Many students who can access food do not know how to properly prepare it as well as community members who cannot access food are eating that which is not nutritious or underprepared.

Police Reform - Berkeley just passed Urban Shield for another year with a 5-4 vote. I am against police militarization, demonizing homelessness and vilifying addiction. These are structural and institutional problems that need to be addressed without recidivism.

What are some specific tasks (e.g. specific legislation, policies, et.) you intend to accomplish while in office?

I will support labor union goals and efforts specifically with worker co-ops, raising the minimum wage, establishing a maximum wage, and ensuring that non-binary and trans persons are respected by law. Likewise, I will take seriously STD testing and provide resources for community members, mental health funding, addiction recovery efforts, free menstrual products, rent vouchers, and environmental recognition.

3. Qualifications

Please give a brief summary of your background and qualifications for being a City Council member.

Mark Takano (Riverside Congressional) - Youth Advisory Council - Delegate
Delegate - Kakehashi Program (Japan - US)
Planned Parenthood Action Fund - Coordinator
California Public Interest research Group - Visibility Coordinator
Model United Nations - Political Science Aide - 4 Years experience International Relations directly with the UN
Student Government - Senator/Chief Justice - Riverside City College - Legislative experience
Graduated with AA in communication studies with Distinction Riverside City College

I am a political activist for black lives matter, #metoo and have been a council member of the Green Party of Alameda County, a Founder of Green Party at (UC) Berkeley, and a part of the various Green Party of US national committees. But overall, I am a human being that wants to preserve our species and the survival of our planet.

4. Land Use

What do you think are the most important land use issues facing the city today?

Saving the Oxford Tract as well as People's Park. Open space is vital in urban areas for oxygen consumption, climate change mitigation as well as space free from development for disabled aging and youth populations to organize and play (Rights of the Child). Likewise, housing encampments and additional developmental units should be legal by law including tiny houses as sanctioned public properties.

The City and the University have different missions: what conflicts/challenges do you foresee on land use policy, and how would you address these?

The University is focused on a business model which attracts larger consumerism in order to fund administrative costs. There are underutilized facilities and buildings (like People's Park) around campus such as the unoccupied chancellor's mansion.

What is your position on the building of housing on The People's Park?

Unacceptable. It is clean air, open space, an emergency safe zone, a support system for addicts and homeless persons, a space for events and free speech as well as necessary in order for our future generations to flourish. I am endorsed by the people of People's Park and they don't want any development on that land.

5. Automobiles

What policies should the city take to reduce automobile use and make the city friendlier to pedestrians and other non-automobile transportation?

At this point in time we have bike shares, scooters and even skateboards available for individuals to ride around. Bike lanes should be respected as such including designated streets.

The city needs to develop alternative and reliable methods of public transportation across the city. Likewise, I am in favor of All-Stop lights which allow pedestrians to move diagonally crossing heavy traffic streets. My future plan is to designate telegraph between Bancroft and Durant automobile free.

Should the city promote electric car use, and what policy and infrastructure changes would you support, if any?

I think all efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are important. I would like to see the city partner with a car sharing platform which runs entirely on electric. This could be a potential solution to excessive automobile use as well.

6. Safety and Infrastructure

What are the most important public safety issues facing the residents of Berkeley?

Right-Wing extremists coming to the University. The death of Nia Wilson hangs heavy on people's hearts and minds. ICE agents coming into Berkeley as well as police are continuously militarized. Likewise cars speeding down roads and driving on opposite streets are also harmful.

What kinds of programs are useful for creating a safe environment for all people?

Public Housing programs which tie care-services directly to property management encourage people to seek out housing. Decriminalizing drugs allows us to treat addiction as a health issue, ensuring there are civil responders to intervene in disputes so we do not need to call the police and progressive policies that allow us to encourage health nutrition clean air and the spirit of Berkeley.

What infrastructure should be a high priority for city management?

Roads are becoming dangerously unsafe in Berkeley. Likewise water and waste management is struggling especially at the recycling yard. We need alternative methods for lighting rather than generate light pollution. We can use floor lighting as well as solar power bulbs hanging off of trees. We need holistic and supportive housing options including tiny houses for the winter months. As well as stronger information communication technologies to connect constituents with resources available to them.

7. Affordable housing

What is your position on building market-rate housing versus affordable housing?

I am favor of alternative housing which includes affordable housing. Affordable housing is not affordable for the lowest income bracket and Section 8 housing has a year+ long wait list. We need immediate options instead.

Does building mostly market-rate help or hinder affordability in Berkeley?

Hinder. Generations of people get displaced.

What affirmative steps would you take to increase the availability of new or refurbished affordable housing in Berkeley?

I will endorse co-ownership of housing properties with city governance allowing individuals residing in the residency to profit off of its use while under city governance. Likewise, I will support 3D printing efforts to generate pop-up tiny houses for individuals. Likewise new buildings should be proportional to income brackets for all residents.

Are there any particular demographics that you would target for this housing?

Most at-risk individuals including disabled persons, homeless, LGBTQ, youth, indigenous and black residents and multigenerational families. Likewise, I am preparing for climate refugees and they should be allocated temporary housing within the Berkeley community as well.

Are there any particular neighborhoods that you would target for this housing?

Northside's housing could be utilized to a greater efficiency. Ashby area can utilize tiny houses as well. Likewise, district 8 including Elm Wood could work as well in which I will work with Candidate Alfred Twu on these efforts. Also we need to incorporate the greater Berkeley community in the Berkeley Hills and address the history of racial gentrification.

Do you think Berkeley can/should tackle gentrification? If so, how?

Yes, Berkeley needs to tackle gentrification. The problem is there is no system that calculates which income brackets are entering the city and buying affordable housing first while those of lower economic variables are left without. With a public housing option—we can ensure that participating properties are giving reasonable costs to residents and can give supportive vouchers to those who cannot afford the rent prices while still living in the property. As such we should understand where people come from as well as their unique needs by developing tolerance training for property owners.

Do you support land value capture and should the City ask for a share in the increase in land value that results from upzoning?

I support public ownership of land and giving land back to the Ohlone people. Within the confines of this office and its legality I support Land Value Capture and the city should have a sizable share in private properties as well as a majority share in historic buildings.

Do you support SB 827?

SB 827 gives commercial property owners and developers a windfall increase in density without requiring any community benefit in return and without adequate protections against demolition of existing housing. SB 827 would allow construction of 7 story buildings (55' plus a 35% density bonus) on residential streets in much of South, Central and West Berkeley, with even greater height allowed on commercial corridors (85' plus a 35% density bonus). It would have little impact on the hills.

No. I am in favor of housing alternatives that consider environmental impacts first.

8. Rent Control

How important is it to keep Berkeley's form of strong rent control and eviction protections?

Strong. Unfortunately Berkeley rent control is not enough. This is why I propose a public housing voucher program to offset price variability and over time lower prices in Berkeley for long-term or at risk residents. Likewise, eviction protection is important. I support community ownership of development policies in which property managers could employ equal time for equal work which reduces costs of management between resident and owners.

How important is keeping an elected rent board?

Critical.

Do you support any candidates for the Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board?

If so, which one(s) and why?

I support John Selawsky - John has shown commitment to understanding poverty and the need for long-term housing solutions in Berkeley. Many of the other candidates are "bandwagoning" and have continuously ignored issues raised by various minority communities.

What is your position on the effects of Costa-Hawkins on the affordability of Berkeley units?

Repeal Costa Hawkins. It is racist legislation.

Do you support Proposition 10, the repeal of Costa-Hawkins?

Yes.

9. Homelessness

What do you think can and should be done about "Homelessness" here in Berkeley?

Homelessness is really houselessness. We need to get people into a sheltered area with access to food and sanitary equipment. The people can then focus on relieving themselves of the burden of poverty. No one should be displaced.

What is your position on the Police raids on homeless encampments?

I condemn these raids and the supporters of these raids.

What is your position on the evictions of houseless RV dwellers in the Berkeley marina?

Inhumane. Councilmember Kriss Worthington by not voting in favor of the residents prioritized law over lives. I will not do so. Let them stay.

Do you think the Pathways Project is a good use of city funds?

I think we could have used that funds specifically to help homeless folks be safe during the winter. It will and should be utilized for the time being but it wasn't well thought out.

Have you made an effort to talk to the homeless and listen to their priorities?

Yes. I am always at people's park especially and talk to various community members off shattuck or around Berkeley. There is a lot of theft amongst the homeless community. Safety is a huge factor.

What essential services should be a high priority for the homeless?

Sanitary products. Care for STD/HIV testing. Food deliveries. Cold-weather wear and equipment. Encampments and CBD oil.

What long term city priorities can be made to meet their needs that are independent of regional, state or federal funding?

Tracking the flow of migration for homeless individuals will allow the city to better meet the demands on a seasonal basis. We can utilize tiny houses and store/transfer them so we can meet various needs of different communities while doing no lasting or permanent changes to the infrastructure of the city. Likewise we can begin to section off streets to create more housing units available and transform blocks into cul de sacs.

10. Food Policy

What policies would you support to re-localize our food system?

I am currently working with the UC Berkeley Food Pantry and the Student Food Collective in order to create a network of food allocation. Likewise I am plant based and support non-animal alternatives for food justice including gardening as well as mass producing tofu and soy products. Likewise it is essential that farmers are given equitable pay and work conditions. We should not be transporting foods from out of state due to carbon emissions and low health standards (funding for FDA) overall. Vertical farming is one of my favorites.

Do you support labeling of GMO foods, similar to Vermont's law?

Yes.

11. National Policy Statements

Should the Berkeley City Council take positions on national and international issues?

Yes. We have an international population. It is important that we continue to speak truth to power.

12. Police

The trend in recent years has been for state and local law-enforcement agencies to procure military-grade weapons as well as high-tech surveillance equipment (drones, among others), and to adopt military-style tactics and training. This is generally but not exclusively under the aegis of Urban Shield, UASI, and NCRIC.

I am for disarming the police and I believe non-lethal force as well as banning chemical agents are absolutely vital for a civil society. Drones for policing should be banned. I am against Urban Shield.

Do you agree with the recent Berkeley City Council vote to allow Police to participate in Urban Shield for 2018?

No, I fought very hard against it.

Do you think participation in this training competition should be determined by the City Council, the City Manager, or the Berkeley Police Department?

The citizens of Berkeley through a Police (Review) Commission.

Do you think the Berkeley City Council should sign MOUs (memorandums of understanding) with NCRIC (Northern California Regional Intelligence Center), with ICE (Immigration and Customs) and with UASI (Urban Area Security Initiative)?

Absolutely not.

How should Berkeley balance the right to privacy against police interest in surveillance equipment?

Privacy over surveillance. Any search beyond public record should be initiated through a warrant and court order. Police should not be spying on private residences or public land.

What is your position on the Police Review Commission (PRC) Charter Amendment (item 70 on the July 24 agenda) that the Council is considering for the 2018 ballot?

Fought in favor of it.

Do you favor creating a PRC that is independent of City Manager control?

100%

13. Race

Do you support The Movement for Black Lives Platform?

Yes, I went to the Black August National Convention and spoke with formerly incarcerated persons on resistance methods. We must give reparations to black and indigenous persons of color.

Is there anything that you have personally done to help your understanding of problems with racism and white supremacy in our society?

Yes. I am a black person who has lived through racial segregation. I have read and listened to the works of various black panthers, Stokely Carmichael, Malcolm X, as well as work within the Pan-African movement.

14. Climate Change

What specifically will do you think Berkeley needs to do locally to fight climate change?

Berkeley needs to create a plan to address climate refugees including mass care packages for individuals needing assistance. Likewise we must prepare for flood warnings and ensure our fire-codes are up to date. We need to protect People's Park for air quality and soil filtration.

To make Berkeley a zero carbon city?

I am in favor of reusing plastics for housing and streets rather than fossil fuels. I am for plant-based diets as well as ensuring alternative energies including solar, wind and electric/kinetic. Likewise public transit needs to be bolstered.

15. Berkeley Ballot Measures

What are your positions on the Berkeley Ballot Measures?

\$135M Affordable Housing Bond?

Support

Police Commission Charter Amendment?

Support

Amending the Rent Control Ordinance to Cover Newer Buildings?

Support

16. State Propositions

What are your positions on State Propositions?

Prop 1 Housing bonds?

Support

Prop 2 Bonds for homeless prevention housing?

Support

Prop 3 Water/Environmental bonds?

Support

Prop 4 Bonds for children's hospitals?

Support

Prop 5 Homebuyers transfer tax assessment?

Support

Prop 6 Repeal of fuel tax and vehicle fee increases?

Oppose

Prop 7 Permanent Daylight Savings?

Support

Prop 8 Dialysis Clinic Refunds?

Support

Prop 10 Repeal of Costa Hawkins?

Support

Prop 11 Ambulance workers on call?

Oppose

Prop 12 Bans sale of meat from confined animals?

Support

17. Endorsements

a. Whom do you support for State Assembly District 15?

Jovanka Beckles

b. Are you endorsing anyone else in your own race, considering that we have instant runoff voting? Who has endorsed you?

I have not endorsed members of my own race as of this time.

18. Campaign Financing

Will you obtain public financing for your campaign?

I did not make the deadline but I support public financing in all efforts!

19. Health Care

Do you oppose Sutter Health's plans to close Alta Bates?

Yes - I believe healthcare is a right and needs to be publicly controlled.

If so, do you have any ideas on how to motivate them to keep it open?

Tricare and holistic healthcare options are important. Likewise, services can be outsourced within the Berkeley community to reduce patient influx costs.

Do you support single-payer healthcare in California?

Yes.

20. Anything Else?

I am running to be the first legally nonbinary public office holder and running to relieve the burden of debt for students who do not have the choice. I am an intersectional candidate and I support a green society.

Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?

#VoteGreen2018

21. Have you signed either of the following pledges?

A. For democracy: <https://movetoamend.org/candidate-questionnaire>

Yes

B. For peace: <http://www.peacelegislators.org/pledge-form/>

Yes

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire as best you can.