

Progressive Dane Endorsement Questions for 2021 Madison Common Council Candidates
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1. Why are you running for elected office? What are your priority issues?

Seventeen years ago, I turned away from an academic career to devote my time and energy more fully to my kids and to my community. The burning question that informed my shift in focus was this: ***How are we going to take care of ourselves, one another, and the air, water, and land we depend on in the face of deepening ecological, social, and economic crises?*** After working as a journalist covering state politics from 2011 – 2015 I realized that, unlike state and national government where organized people had little if any voice, local government had not yet been *completely* overrun with big moneyed interests. But it was threatened. Our local communities are where we experience the effects of global economic and political forces and the places where we can most effectively engage in struggle. So in 2015 I ran to defend and expand the democratic space left for us, and to support the development of a worker cooperative development initiative that had been proposed. My priority issues are transparency and public participation in government, racial justice through police reform, people-centered economic development and affordable housing, promotion of land trusts and land banking to remove land from the speculative market, building green infrastructure and a safe transportation system for all, fairness in taxation and workers rights.

2. There will be many new alders on the 2021 Council, possibly ones who are from backgrounds and perspectives of our most marginalized residents. If you are an incumbent, what challenges does that present and how will you respond? If you are not an incumbent, please describe the strategies that you will employ to hit the ground running as an alder.

I'm so excited about the "challenge" of new Alders who come from backgrounds and perspectives of our most marginalized residents! They will bring points of view and experiences directly into city government that are currently lacking. Deep listening is one of my strongest skills that I will use to work with them to find common ground and push shared policy initiatives. I will also make myself available as a mentor to help guide and orient them to the structures and processes of city government.

3. How do you understand the responsibilities of the Common Council, and how do you see the Council's role in relation to the mayor and city staff in general and during a major emergency?

The responsibility of the Common Council is to provide for the general health and welfare of the people of Madison using our collective resources generated mostly by property taxes. The Council's role is to set policy for and provide oversight over government operations. Whether during a major emergency or not, it is the role of the Mayor to ensure that the Council's policies are carried out and it is the role of the staff to actually carry them out. As a member of the Common Council, the Mayor may participate in policy-making, but the Mayor should not make policy by fiat or administrative rule.

4. *What does community control of the police in Madison mean to you? What should the role of the Common Council be so that the Civilian Oversight Board can be successful, and for the intent of the [2019 Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations](#) to be implemented?*

Community control of the police means that policing should be done in line with the direction and interests of the community, especially the communities that are currently over-policed. The Common Council should not directly intervene in the workings of the COB, but there should be ongoing communications between the COB and Council regarding findings of the COB and Independent Monitor, new policy recommendations and initiatives, Chief of Police performance evaluations and community outreach efforts. The Independent Monitor is charged with overseeing the implementation of the Ad Hoc recommendations, and should report regularly to the COB and Council on the progress.

- a. A demand to “Defund the Police” has been made by many members of our community. How do you understand this call and what is your response?*

I understand this as a call to invest in community, and to shift resources away from the Police in order to do it. Police themselves say that they are asked to respond to many calls and situations for which they are not professionally trained - calls involving people experiencing mental health crises and antisocial behavior due to chemical intoxication. As Prof. Revel Sims said in a recent presentation on evictions and gentrification, the over policing of certain neighborhoods in Madison where the majority of residents are poor and black shows that city resources are used to police a housing crisis. Shifting our public investments away from police and toward more decent, affordable housing, common outdoor and indoor social spaces and mental health, youth and other community services can reduce crime in a long-term sustainable way that increased investment in police could never do.

5. *The City’s strategy for increasing affordable housing has relied upon Low Income Housing Tax Credit project developments. This approach is not creating enough units to meet the need. What alternative approaches would you pursue to increase low income housing to meet the need? Describe a model housing project, including location, design, unit sizes, rents, shared spaces, and funding sources.*

Increase investment in the City’s land banking program to “commonize” land and get it off the speculative market. Develop public housing using our own city resources (developer fees are exorbitant and superfluous), or turn the land over to a community land trust to develop permanently affordable housing. The City should purchase Voit Farm on Milwaukee St. and partner with Madison Community Land Trust and community groups working on visions for that area to create a variety of green-built housing options including 1-4 BR multi-family, townhouses, with a mixture of ownership (cooperative, individual, public, non-profit housing provider) and a range of purchase prices or rents that are between 30% and 80% AMI. There should also be a community center w/commercial kitchen and

enough land maintained for food production. Funding sources would be varied - direct City funding for the land and infrastructure, investment from non-profit housing developers, tax credits, foundation funding, individual investments.

6. *Please review the [Progressive Dane City Platform](#) and explain how you would prioritize and implement our platform positions. Is there any proposal you would not support? Are we missing something?*

I support all platform positions. The first position on open and democratic government affects all the rest, so that is a top priority. Community Centered Policing is very important because of the critical role our current model plays in the racial disparities in our community, leading to trauma and loss of life. Housing justice is also at the top of the list because people's health is tightly tied to housing security, and racial disparities in housing are also terrible in Madison. Every other pillar in the platform is important, and we need to be working on them in an integrated way. E.g. land use, transportation, housing and health are all deeply interconnected.

7. *What is the role of the City and the Common council in the pandemic response? What challenges do you anticipate at the local scale with continued pandemic management in 2021 and vaccination rollout?*

The City has a critical role to play in the pandemic response. As representatives of the people of Madison, the Council needs to advocate for and protect the general health of our residents and visitors. That means taking into consideration more than just the needs of business owners or big institutions when public health orders are crafted. The Council should be the voice of the people which determines how we respond to this or any other emergency. In the absence of national or state leadership or robust support programs, we need to be clear about our values and priorities for protecting the most vulnerable amongst us.

Progressive Dane Involvement

8. *What interests you in seeking the endorsement of Progressive Dane? If you get the endorsement are you willing to commit to using it in your campaign materials?*

I would like PD's endorsement because I believe the way we can accomplish our policy objectives as set out in the PD platform is by sharing commitments to develop and advocate for them collectively through the party. I would be honored to have PD endorsement on my campaign materials.

9. *Have you reviewed [Progressive Dane's Accountability Policy](#). Are you comfortable establishing this partnership with Progressive Dane?*

Yes.

10. *If endorsed, will you assign a liaison from your campaign team to the elections committee to help inform our members about how they can support your campaign.*

Yes.

11. *Are you currently a member of Progressive Dane? If yes, for how long? If not, are you willing to be?*

Yes, for at least 6 years.