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2007 Questionnaire for Local Candidates

OVERVIEW

The science on climate change is in: Global warming is happening, and the enormity of the problem requires action at every level of government. Comprehensive solutions for climate change exist, but the years of refusal at the federal level have left the U.S. government behind the curve. Because of this, the real innovation on climate change in this country is happening at the local level. It's the mayors, county executives, and town supervisors in New York who can lead the way on climate change.

By “thinking globally and acting locally,” the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV) is calling upon all candidates for local office to put the issue of climate change at heart of their campaign. Our sister organization, the New York League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (NYLCVEF) has compiled a list of actions state and local governments can take to address this important issue with examples of what’s been either done or proposed elsewhere in New York State.

Before responding to the questions on this questionnaire, we recommend you review this document.

PROCESS


After receipt of the questionnaire, you will be invited to participate in a formal interview with our local chapter board. The interview will provide you with an opportunity to present your credentials and vision for combating climate change on the local level, elaborate on your questionnaire responses, and respond to questions.

The completed questionnaire and interview are mandatory for endorsement consideration.

NYLCV will endorse and work to elect candidates who can demonstrate a willingness and capacity to advance a comprehensive climate action agenda for their municipality.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

 Please submit questionnaire responses via email to: politics@nylcv.org

 Questions or extension requests may be directed to:
Joshua Klainberg, Political Director (jklainberg@nylcv.org)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please provide us with the following information:

Candidate Name: *Briggs McAndrews*

District #: *Town of Niskayuna, Supervisor*

PERSONAL INITIATIVES

1. What have been your most significant achievements to date on environmental issues? *I have been committed to conservation since growing up in a rural area of Pennsylvania 45 years ago. My family owns a swimming club using natural resources (lake, spring water) and all bacterial control and plant control and fertilizing is done naturally without chemicals. Native fish are kept in the lake as well. While we have had numerous offers for the property, we have determined to keep it natural and usable by the local populace although we take an annual loss for the operation.*

As superintendent of schools for 10 years in Niskayuna, I moved the district to clean fuel buses (natural gas), encouraged and supported a number of environmental clubs and courses and moved the district to increased energy efficiency through technology and bond issues. As a member of the Board of Directors of the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks, I participated in the planning for their new offices and research library in Niskayuna. Those buildings were built on the green principle and used many reusable and natural materials in the construction. As President of the Niskayuna Community Foundation, I raise monies and are part of the distribution of grants to a number of local educational conservation groups.

In my own life, I began using solar heat in the 70's, have always had homes below 1400 sq ft. for purposes of energy efficiency and protection green space. We have purposely planned our homes with southern exposure for winter heat and use fans most of the time in the summer. My wife and I decided to follow zero population growth when we planned our family. We are long time members of the Sierra Club and the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks and participate in their informational statements to legislators. We purchase energy efficient appliances (e.g., dishwasher uses less than 1.5 gallons), have compact and mid-size cars with the smaller engines (and keep tire pressures accurate), reuse many clothes and provide them to friends in a family rather than always buying new, have reduced our use of plastic (e.g., bags, water and beverage bottles), recycle virtually everything possible. During the season, we buy locally grown products, use natural fencing (hedge roses, stone walls picked from fields).

I believe that in both my professional and personal life, I have done small but important things to protect the environment. Personally planted hundreds of trees on school district properties where I worked, had a policy that any tree removed from district property had to be replaced, got grants to build lake on one district for biology and environmental ed class research, planted at least 100 trees on my own properties, with my son helped plan and build a straw bale house for one of his friends, have used natural ditching rather than steel or poly on lake property.

2. Please outline your environmental priorities, should you be elected.

>Encouraging the town departments to decrease ennerfy efficiency and reduce pollution-setting targets for the departments and town.

> Provide a forum and study to suggest better ways the town and its citizens can become more energy efficient.

Promoting Richard Louv's "Last Child in the Woods" concept in educational programs and town planning, using models from towns already using these concepts.

>Continue to increase the opportunities for environmental education in the school district and town.

> Providing a forum for town decisions on climate protection and budgeting and policy-making that reflect concern.

I HAVE GRANDCHILDREN LIVING IN OUR TOWN AND AM VERY MUCH ARE DRIVEN BY THE MORAL RESPONSIBILITY THAT I AS A TOWN LEADER AND EDUCATOR HAVE TO PROVIDE THEM WITH A QUALITY LIFE AND ENVIRONMENT 30 YEARS FROM NOW!!!

COMMITTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE PRINCIPLES

3. Will you join the Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) campaign by introducing and passing a resolution pledging to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from local government operations and throughout your municipality? ***I will certainly introduce such a resolution and debate its merits and advocate for its passage.***

4. Will you enter your municipality into the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, whereby you would commit to take following three actions:

- Strive to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol targets through actions ranging from anti-sprawl land-use policies to urban forest restoration projects to public information campaigns?
- Urge state government, and the federal government, to enact policies and programs to meet or beat the greenhouse gas emission reduction target suggested for the United States in the Kyoto Protocol -- 7% reduction from 1990 levels by 2012?
- Urge the U.S. Congress to pass the bipartisan greenhouse gas reduction legislation, which would establish a national emission trading system?

I will advocate for Niskayuna taking these actions.

LEADERSHIP

Based on what's been either done or proposed by other local governments in New York State (see the NYLCVEF fact sheet at www.nylcvef.org/localgov), ideas from outside of the state or your own original ideas, please outline your plans to address the following areas:

5. Air Quality: *Reducing emissions from town vehicles and buildings, improving traffic flow to reduce energy use and emissions.*
6. Energy Efficiency: *Provide a forum for citizens to learn about energy efficiency, set targets for energy efficiency in town vehicles and buildings, advocate for increased use of public transportation.*
7. Green Building Development: *Recommend policies that hold developers responsible for using green building principles in building and green space protection in developing and zoning decisions. Use green building principles in any town building projects.*
8. Smart Growth: *Define greater green space requirements for developing, develop cluster or high density plans for less use of transportation and more green space, increase ability of residents to walk/bike throughout the community. Provide incentives for developers that use green building practices.*