

Sierra Club

Questionnaire for 2010 City Council Race

Return to William Smith smith324@gmail.com or 2822 Bayview Drive by Friday, August 20th

General Approach

As a Councilmember, we would be working with you to help Alameda develop environmentally, equitably, and economically. As long as economic growth equates to material growth requiring materials from outside of the local area, such as large homes and automobiles and other possessions, there will be a tension between economic development and environmental stewardship. What will you do to promote sustainable and equitable economic development for Alameda and the surrounding region? (Provide details of examples of your commitment to the environment in the general information section below)

As a councilmember in Alameda, I will make decisions on economic development only after I am assured that each project is environmentally responsible. The potential of Alameda Point provides tremendous opportunity and tremendous risk - the opportunity provide housing and business opportunities and improve Alameda's quality of life comes with the risk of reducing Alameda's unique neighborhood character. I believe that Alamedans and others can benefit from the economic development that will come from an effective plan to improve Alameda Point. Unfortunately, there are two environmental issues that must be addressed before any action can be taken to develop Alameda Point. These concerns have not been addressed fully by prior proposals, and as a councilmember it will be my role to ensure that any development that is approved fully mitigates the toxic cleanup and the transportation of future residents.

The City Council has been attempting to determine and constrain the role of the developer. We cannot move forward with the development of Alameda Point unless and until the City Council agrees on a vision and holds the developer accountable for that vision. Negotiations that begin with a specific number of homes or retailers are fruitless unless the City Council, with input and support from Alameda residents, agrees on how the development fits into our existing neighborhoods.

As a councilmember I will promote sustainable and equitable economic development for Alameda and the surrounding region by ensuring that development is accomplished with community input and with support from local agencies such as the Sierra Club, Save the Bay, the Nature Conservancy ____. Our resources in Alameda are precious and the city council – with input and support from the community - must ensure environmentally responsible development not only at Alameda Point, but at the beltline property, the Harbor Bay parcels, the northern waterfront and elsewhere. Alameda has achieved a degree of density that does not sacrificing open space, bike lanes, walkability and public transportation. The future depends on our keeping those priorities while ensuring that we do retain our diversity and our economic base.

Regional Development

1. Do you think it is important that Alameda consider regional issues when developing Alameda Point, such as regional jobs housing balance, housing for those who cannot afford to pay market rate rents, water supply and regional transportation systems? What would you or your major supporters like to see developed at Alameda Point? (Bill Smith)

The City of Alameda's General Plan Housing Element attempts to address the regional responsibilities of the city when it comes to development of new projects. The Housing Element identifies potential sites for new housing and responds to the concerns of development at Alameda Point, while establishing that the City will not independently fund projects for low income residents. According to the Plan, "affordable housing for very low and low income households will rely, to a large degree, on government funding to create below-market-rate units due to the high land and construction costs in ... Alameda"

I am concerned that Alameda is not addressing its responsibility to provide low and moderate rate housing, and in fact the City is behind in its obligation to the Bay Area Association of Cities. The City's Housing Element suggests that "the 25% inclusionary requirement (for less than market rate housing projects) in redevelopment areas .. (may be) .. an impediment to development." Does that mean that the City Council is not in support of inclusionary housing projects? I am not sure because I have not seen a vision statement for Alameda Point that states explicitly that low and moderate income housing is necessary or appropriate.

As I stated in the first response, the City Council must not move forward with the development of Alameda Point unless and until the City Council agrees on a vision and holds the developer accountable for that vision. My vision includes all Alameda residents, not just those who can afford a market rate new home. The Alameda City Council must work closely with ABAG and other regional authorities to ensure that development is not solely for the benefit of Alameda. I would like to see an Alameda Point that is as diverse as the rest of our island – or perhaps more so – with housing for all income levels, and with schools and various public services that do not rely on contributions or donations or tuition.

2. Alameda has an outstanding solid waste recycling program and has worked well with CASA to implement it. What do you think can be done to improve our solid waste recycling program and do you think the City will meet the County's landfill waste reduction goal (Ruth Abbe)

I am very proud of my work on the school board to develop and implement a green waste recycling program at our elementary school sites. With the help of CASA, some very dedicated volunteers and a grant from the Altamont Education Advisory Board, Alameda Unified School District has succeeded in diverting 75% of our green waste at several schools.

As a City Council member I will commit to environmental responsibility and efficiency. The County's Measure D goal of 75% solid waste reduction by 2010 is attainable in Alameda, and I think our city should be a Bay Area leader in recycling/diversion/green waste disposal. The City Council must lead

in outreach to residents that do not understand or accept solid waste recycling. As a City Councilmember I will promote the program and ensure that Alamedans better understand how to recycle. Alameda youth understand environmental issues and they are committed to recycling; my leadership on the Alameda Collaborative for Children Youth and Families gives me the credibility to ensure that Alameda youth support the City's waste reduction programs.

Ideally, the City Council will take an active role in addressing the environmental impact of all activities. If elected I will introduce a requirement that funding recommendations include a discussion of the impact of the proposal on the environment. The City Council should see the environmental impact of each decision in the report from their staff. If a program is under discussion the City Council should receive information not only about the financial impact but also the environmental impact.

3. A number of citizens and civic groups, most notably the League of Women Voters, are concerned about a number of actions taken or proposed very recently either by the City staff alone, or by Council members. Do you share some of these concerns, and whether or not you share them, how do you think they could be best addressed? (Jon Spangler)

Without knowing specifically which actions are of concern I don't feel I can respond to the question. In general I can say that my position is that the Alameda City Government must be transparent and accessible.

In my years on the school board I have promoted accountability and provided information to the residents of Alameda. I am very satisfied with my accessibility, and with the time I have spent to ensure that my decisions reflect the expectations of my constituents. During my tenure on the Board I established a joint City-School Board committee to address issues of mutual interest. This committee reports out on an annual basis to the community.

My NO vote on the recommendation to put a school district parcel tax on the ballot in 2008 was based on the school board's lack of transparency and disclosure. Although I recognized the need for Measure H, and I campaigned for the ballot measure despite my "no" vote, when the school board president allowed the vote to contain an amendment increasing the tax by \$2000, I opposed the resolution because the public had no time for review and comment. I believe that elected officials must always be aware of the *expectations* of their constituents, and must be diligent in providing information and accessibility. In articles and comments I have been cited as an accessible public servant who listens to constituents and reviews all available data before making decisions.

With regard to the actions proposed or taken by the City Council, I am not as concerned about the issue as I am about the debate. In order to ensure accountability the City Council must ensure that information about all issues, except for issues that are considered confidential according to the Brown Act, is available to the public. The City of Oakland has a Sunshine Ordinance, with which I comply with as a city manager. The establishment of a Sunshine ordinance in Alameda could ensure that public information is accessible and available, while providing the criteria for keeping some data

confidential. I believe that adoption of a Sunshine ordinance is critical to transparency for Alameda City Council and City staff.

4. The US Fish and Wildlife Service refused to accept the runway area from the Navy to create a Wildlife Refuge. The Veterans Administration has, however, at least preliminarily, expressed a willingness to accept responsibility for this land, including remediation of the toxics. Do you have a preference as to which federal agency accepts the runway area and an adjacent dump site from the Navy? Do you support the establishment of a National Wildlife Refuge for the runway area and dump site? (Arthur Feinstein)

My priority is to clean up Alameda Point. By taking responsibility for the runways and the adjacent sites, the Veterans Administration has come forward to provide a solution to the toxic cleanup. A Veterans administration health care facility at Alameda Point would provide access to services for thousands of Alameda and nearby veterans. As a member of the Alameda Hospital Community Outreach Committee I am very aware of the lack of services available to Alameda veterans who receive health care through the Veterans Administration. Alameda has a rich military legacy, and the establishment of a veterans facility would be an appropriate use for a portion of Alameda Point.

According to the Department of the Navy, "The proposed action is a Federal-to-Federal agency (Fed-to-Fed) transfer of property from the Navy to the VA at former NAS Alameda to meet the following VA needs: construct outpatient medical facilities, construct a new cemetery and establish Veterans Affairs administrative offices in support of local veterans.

5. Alameda Point Environmental Restoration (Dale Smith)
Alameda Point is a Superfund site and the Navy plans to leave some contaminated materials in place and impose deed restrictions, some in perpetuity, on the land when it is transferred. Based on what you've heard:

- What percentage of the base has been transferred or is ready for transfer?

About 10 – 11% of the Navy property has been transferred to the City.

- What percentage still requires remediation or is in remediation?

Most of the former naval base is in need of remediation. Less than one-quarter of the land has undergone remediation, and another one-fifth (or less) is in the first stages of remediation.

- Are residential standards the same as unrestricted use?

No.

The toxics at Alameda Point pose potential hazards to both people and other living things. Do you think existing cleanup standards are adequate? Do they protect other living things as well as humans? (Dale Smith)

I am very concerned about the cleanup standards at Alameda Point. Specifically, as a member of the School Board I opposed the Measure B initiative because of my concerns about the potential toxicity at the proposed school sites. As a City Councilmember I will use my federal contacts and experience to ensure that the cleanup is adequate, and that the recovery includes more than the top 15 inches of soil.

The contamination of underground plumes is a serious issue. According to the Naval cleanup personnel more than 50% of the toxic sites have either been cleaned up or are in the process of remediation. This is of concern to me and as a City Councilmember I will rely on City staff to ensure that the cleanup is proceeding. That is why I want to establish reporting requirements for all projects to include environmental ramifications.

6. Alameda energy policy (Al Weinrub)

- What would be your plan for dealing with the impact of Oakland Airport being under water in a few decades, as shown in San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission maps (http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/planning/climate_change/maps/16/cbay_east.pdf)?

I am aware of and in agreement with scientific global warming scenarios. As an Alameda City councilmember I will use my years of experience working closely with Oakland City Councilmembers and staff to address any changes at the Oakland Airport. I believe that global warming has a more immediate and local implication though, and that is the impact on the residential development at Alameda Point. Several proposals have suggested that housing could be established on the low lying regions of the parcel; as a City Councilmember I will establish a requirement that all City Council reports and recommendations for action include a discussion of the environmental impact. That would ensure that the Council makes decisions with information about how rising sea levels would affect residents at Alameda Point and elsewhere in our community.

- How would you create major transportation hubs with high-density housing, especially low-income housing?

The transit hub is a developmental opportunity that requires an opportunity for exchange of passengers and cargo. At this time the only opportunity for a transit hub in Alameda is a high speed ferry terminal. I don't believe such a project is feasible because of the limitations on transferring goods by ferry, and the lack of destination alternatives for ferry passengers.

I don't think that Alameda could support a major transportation hub with high-density housing. Alameda is currently one of the densest cities in the East Bay, and we are not addressing our responsibility to provide low income housing to our residents. As a Councilmember I would ensure housing opportunities for low and moderate income Alamedans at Alameda Point, before developing the site for missed use and market rate housing.

- What are the biggest barriers to green job development in low-income communities and how would you overcome these barriers?

The biggest barriers are lack of resources, lack of job training, lack of education and lack of information. In Alameda we have an opportunity to establish a green vision at Alameda Point, and to develop job training and community support programs around that vision. As a City Councilmember I would not move forward with the development of Alameda Point unless and until the City Council agrees on a vision and holds the developer accountable for that vision. Negotiations that begin with a specific number of homes or retailers are fruitless unless the City Council, with input and support from Alameda residents, agrees on how the development fits into our existing neighborhoods.

- What characteristics must a business development project have for you to consider it sustainable economic development that would benefit the local community?

Attention to the environment, commitment to recycling of all materials, and ability to adapt to changing economic and environmental situations.

- What roles will alternative energy sources such as hydropower, geothermal power and solar power play in Alameda's future? What is the City doing and what more could it do to conserve energy?

Alternative energy sources can play a major role in Alameda's future. If I am elected to the City Council I will strive to make Alameda a leader in solar and geothermal power. New public buildings in Oakland and Emeryville and Berkeley are using solar power as the primary source of energy and Alameda is lagging in this critical area.

The development of Alameda Point provides the City with an opportunity to explore alternative energy sources and to become a leader in renewable power. Because of, or in spite of, our municipal utility, the City is not doing enough to develop alternative sources of energy. The City Council must require that all reports and recommendations include an environmental impact statement, and that all contracts and projects take environmental considerations into account.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

a. Please identify pro-environmental actions you have taken either as a private individual and/or public official in your career and any environmental or civic organizations active on environmental or environmental justice matters in which you have been active.

I am a member of the Sierra Club and have participated in various events and activities locally and in other states. I am a member of Save the Bay and am committed to development that does not diminish this vital habitat. I have walked and cleaned up the Appalachian Trail, and am a Yosemite volunteer each spring.

I am a charter member of the Alameda Recycling Coalition and Alameda Schools Go Green groups.

b. Please attach any written environmental campaign material or platform plank.

c. Why should the Sierra Club support your candidacy?

I am the only candidate who has demonstrated experience in environmental accountability. I am the first and only school board member to advocate for and establish green policies in the Alameda Unified School District. Each year since 2009 the District Board of Education has received a report about the environmental activities – including recycling, reuse, and diversion, at each of our school sites. With my support and direction the District applied for and was awarded the Altamont grant to increase green waste recycling at our sites.

One of the primary qualities that I looked for when choosing two leaders for the school district was a commitment to environmental responsibility and efficiency. The City Council will recruit and hire a City Manager in 2011 and if elected to the City Council I will ensure that the candidate has a resume that includes experience in environmental issues, and demonstrated support for environmentally responsible development.

CANDIDATE AND CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

a. Briefly describe the major bases of support you hope to gather for your campaign. What other endorsements have you received so far? From whom else (individuals, groups) will you be seeking endorsements?

I have been endorsed by California State Senator Loni Hancock. I hope to receive the endorsement of the Sierra Club, the Alameda Democratic Central Committee, and the California Green Party. I am also soliciting endorsements from previous supporters including the Alameda County Labor Council, the Alameda City Firefighters (IAFF Local 689), and Alameda teachers (Alameda Education Association)

b. What level of time commitment do you expect to devote to Alameda city business?

My position with the city of Oakland is 20 hours per week and I expect to devote at least 30 hours per week to City Council business.

c. Please provide electronic, telephone, and physical addresses for the campaign.

Address - 3112 Gibbons Drive, Alameda CA 94501
Cell Phone - 510/521-2630
E-Mail - tracy@tracyjensen.com

SIERRA CLUB ENDORSEMENT PLEDGE (REQUIRED FOR INTERVIEW)

A few candidates have misrepresented action short of endorsement in their literature or statements to the press as a Sierra Club endorsement. Others, while not endorsed, have quoted selectively from Sierra Club articles to suggest Club support for them or opposition to their opponent. To protect the validity and credibility of the Sierra Club endorsement, we ask each candidate seeking our endorsement to sign the following pledge:

- (1) I understand that a Sierra Club endorsement requires a two-thirds vote by two or more volunteer leader committees, and that Sierra Club rules prohibit reporting on individual committee votes to prevent misrepresentations of a Sierra Club endorsement prior to completing the full endorsement process.
- (2) I will not misrepresent a Sierra Club endorsement for my campaign or any other campaign or issue.
- (3) I will not quote the Sierra Club, Sierra Club leaders, or Sierra Club publications, nor will I identify supporters of my campaign by their Sierra Club affiliation, without first obtaining written permission by an authorized Sierra Club representative.
- (4) This pledge covers all employees, campaign consultants, and others representing or retained by my campaign, and I will take all necessary actions to insure that others acting on my behalf will not violate this pledge.

Name: Tracy Jensen

Office Sought: City Council of Alameda

Signature: /s/ Tracy Jensen

Date 8/20/2010