City Pulse 4th Ward candidate questionnaire 2013

JESSICA YORKO

Please limit responses to each answer to 75 words.

1. How would you describe relations between the administration and City Council? What can you do to improve it?

I will continue to behave civilly and respectfully toward the Mayor and my colleagues on Council. I also think we need a policy change so that sitting councilmembers cannot run against the sitting Mayor, because this creates a situation where sitting councilmembers obstruct and degrade the Mayor for their own political gain instead of building a good working relationship. I will explore how we would go about making this change.

2. What can the city do to reduce homelessness in the city?

- Enhance educational and employment opportunities, including adult jobtraining programs that link directly with local employers
- Encourage employers to hire veterans, ex-offenders and others experiencing barriers to employment (and therefore income)
- Improve landlord-tenant relations and homebuyer support programs so that residents can get and keep healthy, safe, stable, affordable housing

3. Have the various municipal unions sacrificed equally in the past four years in terms of concessions? Please be specific.

All municipal unions have sacrificed in the past four years in terms of concessions. Different unions have taken different approaches according to their collective bargaining process. Sacrifices have been made in form of furlough days, changes to healthcare plans, demotions/reassignments (to prevent layoffs), shift changes and, in some cases, mergers/transfers of work units from one part of city government to another.

4. <u>Is there</u> a crime problem in the 4th Ward? If so, how do you define that and what would you do to address it?

Violent crime is down in the 4th Ward and city-wide. I work with police, school administrators and staff, neighbors and others to get kids into mentoring programs, internship and other situations that will deter them from committing crimes. In a recent discussion I initiated with our Mayor, Police Chief, and HRCS Director, the Mayor committed to working with me to develop a detailed city-county-community plan similar to that of San Francisco's.

5. What do you believe is a sustainable growth model for downtown nightlife? Are you satisfied with where it's at now or could more be done to draw visitors downtown?

I support the growth model for downtown that has been developed by Downtown Lansing Inc-- recruiting new businesses, resolving issues that may arise, and including residents, businesses and investors alike in downtown's rebirth. I especially appreciate the variety of family and adult options for entertainment, shopping, dining and cultural experiences and I very, very much appreciate and support the accommodation of different transportation modes and options including new bicycle parking, bike-share and new CATA options.

6. Would you support moving City Council members to a per-diem system of pay, where they would not get paid for missed meetings? Why or why not?

Fine by me. My attendance rate at City Council meetings is 90%. I'm putting in the hours both in and outside of meetings. So, a per-meeting system of pay would not be a problem for me.

7. A recent report in the Detroit Free Press showed that property taxes are higher in Lansing than in Ann Arbor and that Lansing's property taxes are about 67 percent higher than in Grand Rapids. What are city residents getting for all of this taxation? Would you argue that quality of life and services here are superior to GR's and Ann Arbor's?

As a Lansing resident I have greatly appreciated our responsive and accountable police and fire departments; snow removal, trash and recycling services (far better than what we had when I lived in Kalamazoo); our robust Parks and Recreation Programs; our services to the homeless and hungry; and our innovative transportation and land-use planning that allows a variety of modes of transportation, and building rehabs and renovations in both residential and commercial areas.

8. Would you favor requiring companies who receive tax subsidies to hire Lansing workers first? Would you introduce an ordinance to that effect?

I would like to find a way to provide incentives/rewards for companies that invest in job-training and hiring of Lansing residents, and I would introduce an ordinance to that effect.

9. Do you support the legalization of marijuana proposal that will be on the General Election in Lansing in November? Why or why not?

I think the push for legalization due to medical and other uses is growing, particularly because of law enforcement actions and resources that are used dealing with adults in possession of small quantities. However, I am concerned the increase in youth marijuana use in Ingham County, and the (real) lung and brain development impacts for those under 18.