

## **Greater Greater Washington**

### **Candidate Questionnaire**

#### **Arlington County Council Special Election**

##### **Libby Garvey**

1) What are your thoughts on the practicality and cost of the Columbia Pike streetcar? Is this project a good use of funds? As I continue to gather information about the streetcar, I've heard from people I respect on both sides of the issue. While I can see many benefits from a streetcar, the question for me and many people is, are those benefits worth the cost. Arlington needs a clear cost benefit analysis for the streetcar so we can make an informed decision as a board and a community. I do think it is important for the County Board to be clear about costs and benefits compared with other kinds of transit in that corridor in such a way that most people in Arlington understand the issue.

2) To what extent is retaining and building new affordable housing Arlington a priority of yours? If a priority, what tools should Arlington use to encourage affordable housing? This is one of my top priorities. If we are to preserve Arlington as a diverse and vibrant community, we need to have people from all income levels living and working here. This is an increasingly large and difficult challenge in a community like Arlington. Tools include supporting organizations like APAH and local churches like Macedonia Baptist that help provide affordable housing as well as negotiating with developers to provide affordable housing in return for increased density. As housing stock committed to affordable housing ages out, we need to renew the commitments and look for more opportunities to work with the owners of these buildings so they can get sufficient income to maintain affordable rates. This could include financing help with tax incentives or tax credits and loans. As a member of the County Board I will be looking for other creative ways to meet this important need.

3) What is your opinion of the Crystal City Sector Plan and its impact on the economic development of Crystal City? With the departure of many tenants with the BRAC process, long term investment planning is important for Crystal City. Crystal City is an important part of Arlington's economic engine and this plan comes at a time when many of the original Crystal City buildings are ready for renovation and the economy of the area needs re-energizing. That said, it is important to protect adjacent neighborhoods as well as the current residents of Crystal City from adverse changes as much as possible. In the opinion of many residents who tried to influence the process, the Crystal City plan did not do this. Residents of Crystal City value the underground networks for their convenience and protection from the weather. They value the small open spaces that provide relief from many tall buildings. These amenities will be lost. I've

heard from several the sense that excellence in planning, emphasis of transit use and preserving the amenities valued by residence were not included in the plan. Only two residents were on the task force and many residents who tried to participate and work on the plan as citizens, finally quit the process in frustration and anger. This is very unfortunate.

In any process, current residents need to see compensating benefits for change, so redevelopment should try to secure as many public services and amenities as possible and work with the residents to find compromises as much as possible. Besides working more with the residents to preserve the amenities they value, I wish the sector plan had included providing a school. Our school population is growing rapidly and I believe we need to reevaluate the assumption that not many children live in high rises.

4) What can or ought to be done about the capacity crisis in the ACPS system? The county has begun to work with the school system to identify possible county sites for school buildings. This is an important step. The county is also becoming more familiar with the structured and strategic work the schools are doing to plan to meet the need to house more students. The more the County and School Board can work together on this and other issues, the better we will serve the citizens of Arlington. More cooperative joint planning of capital programs would be a good step in this direction. As we move forward and work with developers around the county, the County Board should consider including funding school construction as part of the proffer system of gaining financial resources for Arlington as it develops. More children in our schools is a direct result of development growth.

5) What do you see as the most pressing issue facing Arlington County today? I think the most pressing issue is the need for more intentional and transparent systems for planning and improvement to manage growth: an overall strategic plan with clear goals, measurable data points and monitoring systems to see if we are progressing towards our goals and working as efficiently as possible. This planning should involve citizens. The overall goal should be to preserve what is most important to us about Arlington and ensure that our core services are properly supported as we grow and develop.

6) Of your past experience in Arlington County's civic life, what is your greatest strength as a candidate for the County Council? I have been leading positive change as a member of the School Board for 15 years. I have worked with 11 different board members and hired two chief executives. Our schools are now nationally recognized. Our capital program is well run and we have built or rebuilt almost all our schools on time and on budget for more than a decade. I have approved 15 budgets, the most recent is almost a half a billion dollars. I have helped put in place monitoring systems to ensure constant improvement in both the quality of the services we deliver

and their efficiency. With this long experience and strong record, I also bring a fresh perspective to the County Board.

7) How should growth be managed in the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor? Should there be a greater emphasis on sustainability, affordability, traffic calming measures? I believe the County Board has an emphasis on these things, but could be working better with the people living in that area so that they feel included in growth decisions. I have heard of civic associations working hard to negotiate amenities with developers only to find the terms are changed later in the process. We should be keeping track of such changes and make sure negotiated solutions are not changed without informing the people involved in the original negotiations. We have some significant affordable housing in that corridor and need to extend the commitment of those buildings to affordable housing as much as possible.

8) What are your thoughts on the recent approval for the development of a 4.7-acre Boeing HQ at Crystal City? Will it bring the kind of growth you believe Arlington needs? The project helped us anchor a major corporation here. Boeing has a track record of making contributions to the community and it is good that they are now invested in our community. This also accelerates the positive transformation of the property next to Long Bridge Park and eliminates the uncertainty of what would happen with that space. A downside is that the design of the building is not as welcoming as it might be with corporate security requirements. I have also heard concerns about how the decision was made. It is important that large decisions like this be made as transparently as possible. Finally, Boeing will bring highly educated employees that will continue to grow our knowledge-based economy. I believe that knowledge-based economy is crucial to our future success. Our core services are also crucial to that success. I am told Boeing chose to locate here for both the excellent location and for the top quality of our public schools.

9) What, if any, do you think would be the impact of potential defense spending cuts on Arlington County's regional economy? How can these potential negative effects be mitigated? We have already seen Moody's place Arlington on a negative watch because of the uncertainties associated with potential cuts. Because of our desirable location and the quality of our services, Arlington will continue to be a place people want to live and locate their businesses. Strategic planning to ensure we maintain our quality of life and connect well with the region will help Arlington keep a strong and vibrant economy. As noted in question #8, we have a very strong knowledge based economy related to defense and security work and supported by our excellent schools. Many of our strong assets do not change with defense spending cuts, but we need to be strategic in how we preserve those assets.

10) What, if anything, would you most like to improve about Arlington County? See my answer

to #5. One of the most pressing issues is the need for more intentional and transparent systems for planning and improvement: an overall strategic plan with clear goals, measurable data points and monitoring systems to see if we are progressing towards our goals and working as efficiently as possible. This planning should involve citizens. The overall goal should be to preserve what is most important to us about Arlington and ensure that our core services are properly supported as we grow and develop.