

LBA WOODS PARK COALITION

In 20 years, where will our children play?

Date: June 30, 2015

Dear Candidate for City of Olympia Council or Mayor,

Thank you for being willing to serve your community as an elected official. As citizen activists, we appreciate the work that it takes to get elected and do the business of the people.

In order to inform our LBA Woods supporters of your positions on issues relating to the purchase of LBA Woods prior to July 15 when ballots will be mailed out, we request that you make your positions clear to the LBA Woods Park Coalition Leadership Team by answering several questions.

Attached you will find a brief questionnaire about parks issues as they relate to LBA Woods. Please answer each question with as much detail as you feel is needed and return the completed questionnaire *with your signature included*. Please scan and email your responses to contact@savelbawoods.org no later than July 14, 2015.

We may, at our discretion, make your responses available to LBA Woods supporters.

Respectfully,

Debra Jaqua
For the LBA Woods Park Coalition
360-701-6412

LBA Woods Park Coalition Candidate Questionnaire 2015

Please answer the questions below and return completed and signed questionnaire to contact@savelbawoods.org . Feel free to expand the space provided or provide additional sheets.

1. Briefly detail your education experience and work experience.

My life's work has been in public health, the first half as an emergency room, critical care and public health nurse and the second half as an environmental health scientist and epidemiologist. After working as a Registered Nurse for 23 years I returned to graduate school and obtained a Masters in Environmental and Occupational Health, followed by a doctorate focused in epidemiology. In graduate school I conducted research studies linking occupational exposures to diseases in workers. Upon completion of my doctorate, I came to Washington where I worked for fifteen years at the Department of Health in Environmental Public Health as an Environmental Epidemiologist. There I was involved in a variety of environmental issues including pesticide poisonings in farm workers, environmental carcinogens, asthma, air pollution, coal trains, wildfires and climate change.

I volunteered for five years on City of Olympia advisory boards. I was on the Utility Advisory Committee (UAC) for two years. I was appointed to the Planning Commission in 2012 at the time the City was updating its Comprehensive Plan. I drafted policies for the plan including writing policies for urban green space and sea level rise. From the Planning Commission, I was liaison to the Coalition of Neighborhoods Association, the Heritage Commission and the UAC. I am currently on the Urban Forestry Subcommittee.

2. What local environmental issues are of most concern to you? Why?

Economic vitality and a healthy environment *can* co-exist; in fact they are both necessary in order to create a healthy community. I will bring that commitment to the council.

The environmental issues which concern me are as follows: preserving habitat and open spaces, working to slow climate change, preparing to adapt to climate change and sea level rise, protecting the health of Puget Sound/Budd Inlet and its aquatic habitat, and planning for contamination sites downtown.

- **Habitat and open spaces** are needed to maintain the health of humans and plants and animals. Research has shown that people are healthier when they have contact with nature and green spaces. People will need places to recreate especially as our city becomes denser. Trees help mitigate climate change effects by taking up carbon dioxide, absorbing water (helping to prevent flooding), and keeping buildings cool.
- **Climate change** will bring a vast array of negative impacts, a few of these include: sea level rise, increased flooding in the winter and droughts during the summer, heat waves,

more forest fires and increased air pollution. We need to design our community to become as resilient as possible to climate change. Some measures we could take are transitioning to clean energy and non-car modes of transportation, focusing development where good transit is available, and planning for sea level rise.

- **The health of Budd Inlet** and our aquatic habitat in Olympia is deteriorating. A healthy Puget Sound is a high priority for people in Washington and Olympia. Land use and zoning regulations can have a direct impact on the health of our water bodies and the species that depend on them. The city should move quickly on its low-impact development standards and in updating its Critical Areas Ordinance.
- **Olympia has a number of known toxic contamination sites** in downtown. As sea level rises, those sites can mobilize. Long-term planning should be done for these sites. Often money is available from the Department of Ecology and the federal government to assist with clean-up of toxic contamination.

There has been an increasing realization in public health that *place matters*, and how we design our communities has a direct impact on people's health and that goes beyond just physical health. Do our neighborhoods foster social interaction by having places to gather; are there parks, open and green spaces; can people walk and bike safely and easily; do they feel safe in general; are they away from noise and air pollution, do they have a place to live and sleep, are there ongoing mitigation strategies in place that help people adapt to the impacts of climate change? I feel my career in public health, especially my environmental health background will bring a new perspective to council to make our community healthier in many ways.

3. Olympia is projected to grow by nearly 40% over the next 20 years. What is your vision of Olympia as it relates to parks, open space, and habitat?

Olympia's unique and priceless natural resources must be preserved. I know that the land-use decisions we make today (i.e. acquiring park lands) will affect our neighborhoods and community for years to come. We must acquire the land now before it is gone or too expensive to buy.

I wrote the policy for urban green spaces into the Comprehensive Plan. The goal of this policy is: *"Urban green space is available to the public and located throughout the community and incorporates natural environments into the urban setting, which are easily accessible and viewable so that people can experience nature daily and nearby."* Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan has goals for land preservation and natural environment, as well as, an urban forestry goal with six accompanying objectives. The goals states: *"A healthy and diverse urban forest is protected, expanded, and valued for its contribution to the environment and community."*

I will continue my strong advocacy for parks, and for open and green spaces in all areas, including the acquisition of the LBA Woods properties and bringing all the Comprehensive Plan goals to fruition. As a council member, I will continue to put my skills and experience to work creating a healthy and flourishing Olympia which retains the natural beauty, culture and energy of the city we love.

4. Given that funding is available through the voted utility tax, impact fees, and potential grants, it has been suggested by parks advocates that the City of Olympia buy one or both of the LBA Woods parcels now. Explain your position on that?

The City has the ability to bond against the perpetual voted utility tax and should use that and other appropriate funding sources such as Conservation Futures to lock up parcels that are at risk for development. The Legislature found that Conservation Futures are a useful tool for counties to preserve land of public interest for future generations. During the parks planning meetings and through the City Parks survey, citizens have made it clear that LBA is a parks/open space that they want to preserve.

It is not clear at this time whether buying Bentrige and Trillium (Ashton Woods) using the bonding authority is being considered. If not, it should be. Purchasing open spaces such as the LBA Woods parcels so that they won't be consumed by development should be a top priority with all council members.

5. Parks advocates contend that a Metropolitan Parks District should be submitted to the voters only if the city guarantees that the MPD funds would not be used to supplant existing parks funding. Do you agree with this position?

YES - I agree.

Parks have been underfunded for a long time. During the great recession, this might have been the only choice policy makers had to keep essential services going. However, as we come out of the recession, it is time to get back on track. New funding should be used to augment existing funding in order to purchase land required by the projected population growth before it is lost to development.

Parks and open spaces are important for the health of our citizens now and in the future. A park system that supports the quality of life is a measure worthy of a capital city. The proposed Metropolitan Parks District (MPD) money should be used for ADDITIONAL funding for park needs. If the MPD simply replaces existing funds, the people won't get the parks system they need for their future. The MPD needs to have firm guarantees that both the new funds and existing funds will be used for parks into the future.

6. Do you favor returning the voted utility tax to the priority purpose of acquiring park land as the City stated in the explanatory statement for the 2004 Parks and Sidewalks Initiative?

Yes, absolutely,

Olympia's population is predicted to increase by 20,000 people in the next 20 years. New park lands will be necessary to meet the new population's needs for parks. It is essential to acquire park land now before the land is developed or is too expensive to buy. The City has set a level of service standard or target outcome ratio —the ratio of developed park land per 1,000 residents. We are behind in that ratio for neighborhood and community parks. We need to make sure that this ratio is currently being met and enough land is available for our projected population requirements. Even if we can't develop the land now it should be bought to assure we have enough land for parks. During the period between park acquisition and development, the City implements Interim Use and Management Plans for undeveloped parks to provide opportunities for public enjoyment. Typical improvements include unirrigated play meadows, swings, trails and picnic tables.

A significant portion of the money from the 2% voted utility tax (VUT) targeted for parks and trails has been and continues to be diverted for maintenance of existing parks. The City should get back on track and fund land acquisition for future parks. To do this the 2% VUT, as well as the 1% non-VUT should be restored and used for the land acquisition. The needed levels of operations and maintenance funding for parks should be retained.

A trust issue has arisen because the 2004 voted measure has not been fulfilled. The people voted for a tax and the plan was to acquire new parks land and then develop and maintain those new parks with ongoing tax funds. This has not been happening for a few years now and The City only acquired a fraction of what they should have. The City needs to get back to the original purpose of the VUT and fund the park system we need for the future.

Signature _____

Judy Bardin

Date: _____

7/14/15

Print Name: _____

Judy Bardin