

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.

Thanks for this opportunity to participate in the Coalition's questionnaire. My undergraduate studies were in Philosophy and Religion and were essentially a comparative analysis of the diversity of contemporary belief systems and theoretical thinking. Following several years as the Development Director for a non-profit social service agency, I returned to graduate school to study community and regional planning. Much of my career has been devoted to the growth and development of public transit systems, including 13 years with Pierce Transit.

For the past 10+ years I have been with General Administration (now DES) managing the Capitol Campus infrastructure. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Capitol Lake, the construction of Heritage Park, building significant energy conservation and utility improvements, and serving as the State's point of contact with local governments. I may have the best job in the world.

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

I believe climate change is the most pressing environmental issue of this millennium. Climate change is a significant local issue due to the risks of sea-level rise, as well as the potential for instability in our social and economic systems.

Olympia (like many other places) continues to struggle with legacy pollution on a major scale, as well as the unique characteristics of a Downtown built on plastic fill in a seismic zone.

Finally, the urban areas of Thurston County have been constructed on the most fertile and productive soils around. We have paved over and developed our prime agricultural lands for residential and commercial purposes. Our predecessors squandered one of our greatest assets due to ignorance and hubris. We must not continue this practice, our land use policies must preserve agricultural lands, protect endangered species, and direct development to appropriate sites.

- 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?**

These demographic projections bring pause, yet I have no reason to see them as anything but accurate. As we emerge from the Great Recession we are being faced with the need to manage and control growth. This is a unique time of transition, from stagnation to boom. We need to get this right. Controlling sprawl and achieving compact growth is no small task.

The reality that Olympia has lost 30% of its habitat in the past 20 years is a wake-up call, alerting us that our existing policies are not working. We must invest in our natural systems and protect them from degradation and disappearance.

In recent years we have had major challenges moving forward with Olympia's Parks program. Because of fiscal challenges, Olympia has disinvested in parks and public facilities. We have the opportunity now to turn this around and get back on track. I am an ardent supporter of the Metropolitan Parks District proposal because I believe it responds to the values of our community. We must be able to maintain our public parks, open spaces, and habitat and we must add to our inventory to meet the needs of a growing population.

- 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?**

I can support bringing the LBA Woods into public ownership to protect it as an intact woodland. The specific acreage or parcels to be retained may have some flexibility for me. What matters is that we meet our objectives of protecting valuable habitat and open space.

I don't support moving ahead with this acquisition with only the voted utility tax, impact fees, and possible grants. I am far more interested in being successful in establishing a reliable and long-term resource for parks maintenance and acquisition. This is because I see our needs for parks and open space as considerably larger than LBA Woods.


- 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?**

Sure, I can support no-supplant language, but it is more important to me that the MPD pass at the ballot box and the City have the ability to make meaningful investments in Parks maintenance, development, and acquisition. I remain concerned that a focus on the past does not deliver needed momentum for the

future. In my opinion, parks advocates have done a great job of moving the ball forward and bringing the City to the point where we can have a successful ballot. Continued complications with the proposed ordinance are not helpful.

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?

Essentially, yes. However, I'm open to other ways to achieve the same result.

Signature  Date: 7-11-15
Print Name: NATHANIEL JONES

1-11-12

1-11-12