

Alexandria City Council and Mayoral Candidate Forum
Hosted by Tenants and Workers United, Grassroots Alexandria, and NAACP Alexandria
May 18, 2018

1. Many residents in Alexandria are fearful of the federal government in regards to immigration and deportation — as a local elected official what would you do to defend and support immigrants – undocumented and documented - in Alexandria?

Canek Aguirre: Driver's licenses for all

Willie Bailey: Hold agencies accountable. Supports driver's licenses for undocumented citizens

Elizabeth Bennet-Parker: She works with new immigrant women as part of her nonprofit. Wants to provide no cost legal aid and break Sherrif's ICE agreement

John Taylor Chapman: Driver's licenses for all, make legal aid available, as well as accessible city resources (which includes city council members)

Michael Clinkscale: No support for illegal immigrants (deport them)

Kevin Dunne: Doesn't think Alexandria has a responsibility on this matter

Matt Feely: Driver's licenses and legal aid

Dak Hardwick: Driver's licenses (and follow NYC model – improve city ID program)

Amy Jackson: I believe in an inclusive community, make Alexandria a sanctuary city

Del Pepper: I believes in welcoming all as well as voting for politicians who support immigrants

Robert Ray: Open social services to all

Mo Seifeldein: He is an immigrant himself (Sudan). Lawyer, who supported his sister when she immigrated. Need to work on relationship with police dept

Mark Shiffer: Local resources should solve local problems. Thinks we should be a sanctuary city

Allison Silberberg: Driver's licenses, believes HRC and current resources are helping

Paul Smedberg:

Justin Wilson: This is a human rights issue

2. Do you support fully funding and dedicating the 'penny fund' for affordable housing? Please tell us other ideas you have for preserving and creating affordable housing in the City of Alexandria?

Aguirre: Yes, also keep meal tax

Bailey: Yes, basic human need. Also, more developer contributions

Bennet-Parker: Yes, it is a major issue of her campaign. Creative housing options

Chapman: Yes. I have already been fighting for this. Creative house options

Clinkscale: No, money should go towards training people to have skills to make more money themselves

Dunne: No, instead focus on zoning and development

Feely: No, but yes to the base budget funding. Need housing for a diverse community. 4.7 million isn't enough

Hardwick: No, thinks that means there is not limit to funding

Jackson: No to dedicated funding, concerned about the limits to funding

Pepper: Stick to meals tax instead

Ray: Yes to dedicated funding

Seifeldein: Yes to dedicated funding, partner with nonprofits. He is the only candidate to reject funding from developers

Shiffer: Yes to dedicated funding. Wants more business in Alexandria. Money should not be funneled to developers

Silberberg: Supports meals tax instead

Smedberg: No to dedicated funding, should be in base budget only. Look at zoning laws

Wilson: No to dedicated funding. Also need to pass more projects

3. Over the last 3 years, our organizations have collectively been working to build trust between police and community. Alexandria City Police Department is currently collecting data to improve transparency, how will you help ensure that your constituents get clear, comprehensive demographic reports covering all police interactions (including police stops)?

Aguirre: Accountability is key. I led this effort with Grassroots and NAACP starting 3 years ago

Bailey: Yes, info should go to city council members. City staff should help with reports

Bennet-Parker: Yes, also body cameras and racial bias training. Monitor APD and update criminal justice board

Chapman: Yes, part of the original effort as well but we need more. Open data should be available online. Use Human Rights Commission to support more transparency

Clinkscale: Require that raw data be posted online

Dunne: "Data is not political," should be accessible "from the comfort of our homes"

Feely: Yes

Hardwick: Appointed by the police chief, insists on transparency and available data

Jackson: Body cameras (but they cost a lot of money) and hold police accountable

Pepper: Yes, info should be available to everyone

Ray: Police salaries are lower here than in other areas

Seifeldein: Yes and also data should be translated. Police need to reflect the community they serve

Shiffer: Major issue for him. Believes in accountability and transparency for everything.

Silberberg: Yes, also work with nonprofits

Smedberg: "Very fine police force," we're already moving toward transparency with the new police chief

Wilson: Some info is already available online, funds for body cameras, yes to transparency

4. If you could champion only one legislative initiative during the next council session, what would it be?

Aguirre: Build relationships through transparency and quarterly town halls

Bailey: Affordable housing

Bennet-Parker: Modernize zoning and permit processes. Helps housing and small businesses

Chapman: Affordable housing

Clinkscale: Apprenticeship programs to teach trades

Dunne: Smaller budget, lower taxes

Feely: End ICE agreement and redefine relationship between Sheriff Department and ICE

Hardwick: Education – ending deferrals for school renovations and acknowledge capacity issues

Jackson: Pre-K funding for all

Pepper: Affordable housing (education is a close second)

Ray: Citizen impact on local government, citizens should have more say in policy

Seifeldein: Quality of life: education, public safety, and housing

Shiffer: Budget and 10 year plan

Silberberg: Affordable housing for workforce and through ARHA

Smedberg: We need more transit to give people access to jobs

Wilson: Early childhood education for all, public/private partnership

Yes/no questions (each candidate could only hold up a Yes" or "no" sign)

1. The Alexandria Sheriff's Department has an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The practices of ICE do not include proper judicial oversight, Will you commit to encouraging the Sheriff Department to modify the existing IGA to remove ICE on the contract so that our jail no longer hands people over to an agency without judicial oversight?

Yes: Aguirre, Bailey, Bennett-Parker, Chapman, Ray, Seifeldein, Shiffer, Silberberg

No: Clinkscale, Dunne, Feeley, Hardwick, Pepper, Smedberg, Wilson

No response: Jackson

2. Affordable housing is a major crises; if elected, will you support continuation of 1% of the meals tax dedicated to funding affordable housing?

Yes: Aguirre, Bailey, Bennett-Parker, Chapman, Feeley, Pepper, Ray, Seifeldein, Shiffer, Silberberg

No: Clinkscale, Dunne, Hardwick, Jackson, Ray, Smedberg, Wilson

3. Every child deserves equitable services to eliminate disparities and allow all of Alexandria's children to succeed. If elected, would you support increased funding so that every four year old can attend preschool?

Yes: Aguirre, Bailey, Bennett-Parker, Chapman, Feeley, Hardwick, Jackson, Pepper, Ray, Seifeldein, Shiffer, Silberberg, Smedberg, Wilson

No: Clinkscale, Dunne

4. Do you support putting armed school resource officers into ACPS Elementary Schools?

Yes: Feeley

No: Aguirre, Bailey, Bennett-Parker, Chapman, Clinkscale, Dunne, Hardwick, Jackson, Pepper, Ray, Seifeldein, Shiffer, Silberberg, Smedberg, Wilson

5. In 1988, Alexandria became the first municipality in the Commonwealth to add "sexual orientation" as a protected class in the city's nondiscrimination ordinance. Despite this progress, the Alexandria Office of Human Rights is still limited in its ability to investigate cases of discrimination based on "sexual orientation" due to Virginia's Dillon Rule. Currently, the office's protocol is to classify discrimination against LGBTQ Alexandrians as "other forms of discrimination." However, this risk-averse protocol may be leaving some Alexandrians without protection. Further, while Alexandria's nondiscrimination ordinance does include "sexual orientation," it still does not include "gender identity."

a. Do you support adding "gender identity" to the protected classes in Alexandria?

Yes: Aguirre, Bailey, Bennett-Parker, Chapman, Clinkscale, Feeley, Hardwick, Jackson, Pepper, Ray, Seifeldein, Shiffer, Silberberg, Smedberg, Wilson

No: Dunne

b. If elected, would you direct the Office of Human Rights to fully pursue cases of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity?

Yes: Aguirre, Bailey, Bennett-Parker, Chapman, Clinkscale, Feeley, Hardwick, Jackson, Pepper, Ray, Seifeldein, Shiffer, Silberberg, Smedberg, Wilson

No: Dunne

6. Would you support Alexandria, like other cities, in establishing a matching fund to support pending applications for DACA/TPS recipients?

Yes: Aguirre, Bailey, Bennett-Parker, Chapman, Feeley, Hardwick, Jackson, Pepper, Ray, Seifeldein, Shiffer, Silberberg, Smedberg, Wilson

No: Clinkscale, Dunne

7. Do you support the need for ARHA and the City to create a more comprehensive displacement plan for residents as development begins on upcoming projects?

Yes: Aguirre, Bailey, Bennett-Parker, Chapman, Feeley, Hardwick, Jackson, Pepper, Ray, Seifeldein, Shiffer, Silberberg, Smedberg, Wilson

No: Clinkscale, Dunne