



2021 Brooklyn Borough President Candidate Questionnaire

Completed questionnaires will be public documents available on our website, so put your best foot forward. If we ultimately hold an endorsement vote in your race, we will circulate your questionnaire to our members before the vote.

Contact with questions: Jessica Thurston, NKD's VP of Political Affairs, politics@newkingsdemocrats.com

Name	
How long have you lived in Brooklyn?	All my life!
What civic and political organizations are you involved with in the borough?	NKD and NAACP
What have you accomplished in public life that you are most proud of?	I'm most proud of passing the Right to Know Act which requires police officers to inform individuals they stop that they have a right to refuse a voluntary consent search. Prior to the enactment of this law, many New Yorkers were unaware of their right to refuse a search. This resulted in people being unjustly caught up in the criminal justice system, and since most stops were of young black and brown men, there was also a disproportionate impact on communities of color. As someone who had traumatic interactions with police officers during the stop-and-frisk era, I was incredibly proud to provide a level of empowerment to folks across the City when interacting with law enforcement.
Why do you want New Kings Democrats' endorsement?	So much of my political outlook and values were formed through my involvement with NKD. The club started as a group of reformers and it is that spirit of transparency, inclusion, and direct participation that I always follow in my work. NKD was instrumental in helping me win my election to City Council against an entrenched machine candidate. I believe NKD and I share the same political DNA and that is why I am seeking the club's endorsement.
If elected, what will your top three priorities be while in office?	I want to be a cheerleader for Brooklyn! The past year has been really tough and I want to bring back some of that civic pride. I want to create a comprehensive plan for Brooklyn, so that the land use recommendations coming from the Borough President's office are being done in a consistent fashion, consider the needs of all surrounding communities, and reflect the priorities of Brooklynites. I also want to professionalize and provide further support to Community Boards. CBs should

	<p>reflect the demographics of the communities they represent, they should receive regular trainings in the topic areas they cover, and be given the resources needed to provide real advocacy on behalf of their communities.</p>
<p>What criminal justice reforms would you support and what would you do specifically as the BP to support them?</p>	<p>I want to fully remove police from schools, replace traffic stops with camera enforcement, end police response to mental health crises, and completely eliminate cash bail. I believe much of the resistance to criminal justice reforms comes from a lack of education as to how we became such a heavily policed society. I plan to use my platform as the BP to have conversations in communities around policing and criminal justice reforms, while advocating to our city, state, and federal reps to enact these changes.</p>
<p>What is your plan for building more affordable housing in Brooklyn?</p>	<p>The first thing we need to do is fully leverage city-owned property for affordable housing development and place that land under community stewardship. Then we need to look at how we can grow across the borough, so that no one neighborhood is shouldering the burden for other communities. We also need to work with our partners in the state to develop solutions for bringing more newly constructed housing under government regulation, as we have seen we simply cannot rely on the private market to meet the housing needs of average Brooklynites.</p>
<p>Do you support cancelling rent for tenants and small business owners during the COVID-19 pandemic?</p>	<p>Yes! I would like for the state legislature to develop a voucher program that would serve all tenants who suffered financial hardship as a result of the pandemic.</p>
<p>What would you do to reform the Land Use process to promote racial and social equity in the borough?</p>	<p>Our current land use process is devoid of values, has failed to meet the City's needs, and should be scrapped. The process as it exists now looks at projects in isolation and does not meaningfully address negative impacts. I believe we should develop a comprehensive plan to guide land use decisions in the city. The plan would be developed in partnership with local communities and would require racial impact and equity analyses to help inform the final draft. We have to think holistically about how housing, transportation, resiliency, economic development, etc. work together to make healthy communities. Projects that conform with the plan would have an expedited review process, whereas those that do not would undergo something similar to our current ULURP process.</p>
<p>New Kings Democrats has proposed several rules changes to be considered by the County Committee. Do you support the proposals? If elected, will you advocate for these and other reforms that democratize power within the County Committee?</p>	<p>Yes and yes!</p>

How much money have you raised for this campaign? What are the major sources? How do you plan to avoid conflicts of interest? Will you have an outside nonprofit organization for which you will fundraise while in office?	I've raised \$110,000 with \$450,000 in matching funds, for my campaign to date. These funds have been raised from average New Yorkers, local businesses, labor unions, and my colleagues in government. I am not taking any real estate or police union donations and I do not plan to have an outside nonprofit organization. I plan to avoid conflicts by continuing to raise funds under the matching funds program from my neighbors and supporters through small dollar donations.
Are you accepting campaign contributions from law enforcement unions?	No
Do you support defunding the NYPD? Do you support transferring resources to other services for the borough and, if so, which ones?	Yes. At the moment, there is overwhelming need for resources across the city, but I generally believe these resources should be diverted to education, social services, and housing.
What endorsements have you received from publications, electeds, community leaders, or political organizations?	I've been endorsed by Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, State Senator Julia Salazar, Assembly Member Maritz Davila, District Leaders Kristina Naplatarski and Samy Nemir Olivares, and the Teamsters Union.
Which borough presidents (past or present) do you admire most and why?	Marty Markowitz and Gale Brewer! Gale is just a super BP and is everywhere all the time. She has done a ton of work to reform and professionalize Community Boards, engaged in community processes around big decisions in her borough, and uses her office as a think tank, producing policy papers on critical issues. Marty was an incredible Brooklyn booster and I want to bring some of that back. You'll see me at events all over the borough telling everyone how great the borough is!
If elected, would you resign from all other elected or other jobs? And would you put assets you have in a blind trust?	Yes
What is one fun fact about you?	Before I got involved in politics I wanted to be a chef!

I have reviewed this questionnaire and agree that the responses set forth in this document are accurate:

Candidate Signature:  _____ Date: 10/8/2020

You must sign this questionnaire! When complete, please email your signed and scanned questionnaire as a PDF to politics@newkingsdemocrats.com