



Rise Up West Virginia

www.RiseUpWV.org

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Charleston City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Jennifer Pharr Ward: At Large

1. "Housing first" is an approach to homelessness that prioritizes providing chronically homeless people with affordable housing and providing them with social services, rather than requiring social services as a precondition to accessing housing or criminalizing homeless populations. It has proven effective in dramatically reducing chronically homeless populations in other cities. Do you support a "housing-first" model for dealing with homelessness in Charleston?

Yes No Don't know

Please explain your position.

I have researched homelessness initiatives offered in other cities. One model of particular interest is offered in San Antonio. To briefly summarize, this plan employs the homeless to assist within the city to spruce up the neighborhoods. A person is reengaged in the neighborhood and feels a sense of pride in their work. Another initiative provides 'small housing' of approximately 250 square feet where the rent is \$250/month. We could develop small parcels of land throughout the city, coupled with reengagement programs such as the aforementioned work opportunities and programs like Health Rights Harm Reduction Program to provide more holistic services to our homeless population.

2. As a city council member, will you commit to hosting town halls in your district to solicit community input on redevelopment plans and other municipal issues?

Yes No Don't know

Please explain your position.

My Great Aunt Vada Smoot McGowan was the oldest living graduate of West Virginia State University, lived to be 103 and was the first person of color to enter the integrated school

system as a teacher in West Virginia. I remember her saying, "Jenny, if you listen to what people say, they will tell you what they want but if you listen intently, you'll find out what they need." Participating in town hall meetings, conducting seminars, and providing focus groups meetings are all important and will be offered.

3. Do you support the CURA Commission following and funding the West Side Community Renewal Plan (2008)?

Yes No Don't know

Please explain your position.

As a licensed real estate agent/property manager located downtown Charleston focused primarily on commercial sales/leasing, community redevelopment (including Westside redevelopment) is key. I have canvassed the Westside with a lifetime Westside property owner and resident, taken note of the numerous abandoned properties (commercial and residential) and have talked to several groups of people about ideas for homeownership seminars, attorneys that will volunteer time or reduce fees to properly transfer inherited property into legal title, facade grants, historic grants, economic development and revitalization. My goal is to bring desired businesses and improved residential property to the Westside by collaborating with current residents and community leaders and partnering with CURA, Charleston Main Streets, City Council and others to redevelop the Westside into a thriving community.



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4. In 2016, the Charleston Police Department committed to an eight-point plan to begin combating racial disparities in policing and arrests [<http://wvmetronews.com/2016/10/04/charleston-police-announce-plan-to-improve-race-relations-community-engagement/>]. What are your specific ideas for building on and expanding this effort?

I do support equal and fair treatment for All Charleston residents. One of the specific areas I'd like to expand upon is advocating state policy changes to address re-entry and recidivism. I have spoken to several citizens who have been convicted, served their time, and many years later are still denied employment due to convictions. I would like to focus efforts to eliminate this stigma so citizens can be productive in the workforce.

5. What services are you aware of in our community that provide activities, recreational facilities and after-school programs for young people? What would you do to support and expand such programs?

Programs such as the Charleston Family Resource Center, the Bob Burdette Center, HSTA, Dino's are not enough for our youth. I would like to develop a multi court facility on the Westside where basketball, volleyball, wrestling and archery could be housed year round. This facility will also provide free WiFi services, community development initiatives, employment opportunities and community service hours to our youth, 'how to seminars' and be a resource to the community. I would like to conduct seminars with youth councils, such as Rise Up, to determine what our area youth would like to have in their community.

6. Please provide anything else you'd like us to know about why you are running for Charleston city council.

I'm Jennifer Pharr born and raised in Kanawha City, graduate of the last class of Charleston High, West Virginia University Alum and proud mother. My passion is growing Charleston and making it a safer, more vibrant community. I've followed that passion in my job, and I see City Council as a natural extension to broaden that effort.

I'm a licensed real estate agent/property manager located downtown, primarily focused on commercial sales and leasing. I understand the strengths and challenges this community has. Block-by-block, I'm working to revitalize Charleston through economic development, to catalyze our city.

I have also seen first-hand the importance of an educated workforce for successful economic development. Within the past 12 months, I have been the leasing agent for 8 ground level spaces downtown, completing full store front occupancy on the corners of Dunbar and Quarrier Streets: pursuing available space to accommodate an East End Grocery Store and striving to provide WiFi access to parts of the Westside and Kanawha City so Charleston's children can complete homework.

Communication, active listening and participation are personal fundamentals. With your vote, I will work to Shape the City into a vibrant destination location for people to Live, Work and Play!