



Rise Up West Virginia

www.RiseUpWV.org

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Charleston City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Beth Kerns 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.

By providing “Housing First” an individual is able to become stable and regain their sense of self more quickly. Then the addition of Social Services will allow them to maintain their housing, independence, and become more self-sufficient. This combination will help them to become more productive and self-sustaining.

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.

I believe that open communication can resolve any problem we face. Time is valuable for everyone, therefore I would rather have well attended gatherings in neighborhoods than have multiple meetings with lower attendance.

Neighborhood Meetings are great because they help residents get to know each other better, work together to strengthen their neighborhood, and plan for the future. I will commit to attending Neighborhood Community Meetings as often as I can. In areas that don't hold Neighborhood Meetings I will assist them in getting them started or host Town Hall Meetings. For me being on City Council is not about what I want for Charleston. It is about what the residents think is most important and what they want. Open dialogue and the sharing of information is the only way to accomplish this.

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.

Basically I support the CURA West Side Community Renewal Plan because it would make the West Side viable again for businesses to succeed and residents (young and old) to flourish. However, since it was first written, and subsequently amended, the plan has been randomly implemented and the condition of the houses, buildings, and neighborhood have deteriorated. The plan needs a hard look revision. A priority list needs to be established. And dates for start and completion set. Plan the work, then work the plan.

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?

The CPD eight-point plan to combat racial disparities in policing and arrests is a solid solution. However, it is not a one and done type event. Annual training needs to occur. The plan itself must be revisited, tweaked, and added to as the needs of City, Police Force and residents change.

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?

I know of Pro Kids at Charleston Baptist Temple (East End) and the Bob Burdette Center at Emmanuel Baptist (West Side). I have firsthand knowledge of the Charleston Family Resource Center, formerly known as the East End Family Resource Center. We recently changed our name with the addition of our new West Side Campus. I have served on the Board of Directors for 17 years. We provide FREE out of school care for area youth, certified teachers help with homework, art classes, music & dance, physical fitness activities, after school snack and hot dinner, gardening, cooking, field trips and so much more as needs arise. We are a multi-generational program that includes seniors, Birth to Five programs and area youth K – 12. Our programs all improve the overall quality of life for all participants. Our out of school program allows low income workers the peace of mind that their children are safe and taken care of while they work. This encourages them to stay employed. I would love for our programs to expand and encompass all of Charleston.



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

I have lived in Charleston nearly all of my life. It has been a wonderful place to live, work and raise children. However, we have fallen on hard times for a variety of reasons. If we don't turn things around we are letting future generations down. I want to be a part of the solution and not one who only complains about our problems. It's time to roll up our sleeves and get to work. I hope that you will allow me to serve our community.

ABOUT ME

I attended John Adams Junior High School when it was located in the Garnet Adult Education Center, graduated from George Washington High School, and have an Associate's Degree from University of Charleston

I served on Active Duty with the WV Army National Guard and retired with nearly 25 years of service. My duty assignments included Unit Administrator, Unit Supply Sergeant, and Marketing & Advertising Non-Commissioned Officer.

I have been a small business owner.

I have attended the Charleston Police Department Citizens Police Academy.

My passion is to help our youth and our seniors as both of these groups are the most vulnerable and neglected.

I have volunteered, and often served as an officer, with various non-profit organizations all over Charleston: Charleston Family Resource Center, Optimist Club of Charleston, Shepherd's Center of Charleston, Fraternal Order of Eagles, Keys for Healthy Kids Coalition, West Side Main Street, West Side Farmers Market, Operation Sweet Dreams, WV Military Association, WV Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve, Kanawha County Federation of Democratic Women, Democratic Executive Committee, Clay Center Usher

Fun Fact: I was the 1st Female Newspaper Motor Carrier in Charleston and I did it with a stick shift and clutch.