

**SIERRA CLUB/Solano Group
and Solano Orderly Growth Committee
CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE
2013 City of Vallejo, City Council**

August 18, 2013

Please return this form by email to Orderly Growth & Solano Chapter Political Chair, Jane Bogner, (sierraclubsolanogroup@gmail.com) by Monday August 26, 2013. Interviews will be scheduled shortly after the deadline. [Questions: Joe 415 902-3395]

Your name: *Katy Miessner*

Office sought: *Vallejo City Council*

Your campaign address, phone number, email address and FPPC number:

PO Box 6111, Vallejo, CA 94591

707-642-2100

[*KatyForCouncil@gmail.com*](mailto:KatyForCouncil@gmail.com)

[*www.KatyForCouncil.com*](http://www.KatyForCouncil.com)

FPPC#1356439

Your campaign manager:

Myself/Councilmember Marti Brown, Advisor

Your present political office (if any):

Solano County Fair Board, Participatory Budgeting Vallejo Steering Committee Member (both appointed)

Your past political offices, with dates:

Vallejo Downtown Advisory Group (2004) Appointed

Has the Sierra Club endorsed you in the past?

Yes -Solano County Supervisor 2012

Who else has endorsed you in this race?

Partial List!

Elected and Appointed Officials: Vice Mayor Stephanie Gomes; Council members Bob Sampayan; Marti Brown; Robert McConnell; Former Mayor Tony Intintoli; Former Solano County Supervisor, District One Barbara Kondylis; Planning Commissioner Karimah Karah; Solano County Fair Association Director Richard Martinez; Greater Vallejo Recreational District Chair Dennis Albright; Greater Vallejo Recreational District Vice-Chair and Vallejo Architectural and Landmarks Commissioner Wendell Quigley; Greater Vallejo Recreational District Director and Candidate for Vallejo City Council Liat Meitzenheimer; Greater Vallejo Recreational District Committee Member Karol Heppe; Participatory Budgeting Vallejo Chair Joey Lake; Participatory Budgeting Vallejo Vice-Chair Lynda Daniels; Napa Vallejo College Board Trustee

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Ruscal Cayangyang; Sierra Club/Solano Group Patricia Gatz Former Secretary; Vallejo Design Review Board Chair Adam Chavez; Vallejo Design Review Board Member Kevin Brent Forman; Vallejo Architectural and Landmarks Commissioner Pearl Jones Tranter; Metropolitan Transportation Commission Policy Advisory Council Member Richard Burnett

Do you have the organization and funding needed to win? Please be specific.

I have a very strong team that includes people from other successful, recent campaigns (listed below). The group has expertise in grass roots fundraising and campaigning. While I may have opponents with formidable campaign funding, Vallejo's volunteer-run campaigns have been very successful in the last years.

- *Stephanie Gomes for Vallejo City Council*
- *Marti Brown for Vallejo City Council*
- *Robert McConnell for Vallejo City Council,*
- *Bob Sampayan for Vallejo City Council,*
- *Measure A to remove binding arbitration from the Vallejo City Charter*

I've raised \$18K so far on a fundraising budget of \$35K (which doesn't include special interest \$) and have planned the theme and timing of signs and political mailers.

Are you a Sierra Club or Orderly Growth Committee member? (Membership is not required)

I'm a member of both.

Questionnaire:

Our endorsements are based on your record, accomplishments, answers to this questionnaire and an interview. While many of these issues are complex, please feel free to be as brief as possible--2 or 3 sentences would be ideal. We understand that you may not have a position or sufficient knowledge on some of the more technical questions. You may answer those as "undecided" or "unfamiliar with the issue." There are no litmus test questions, and some of these represent subjects where the Sierra Club or Orderly Growth Committee might not have taken a position. If you are an incumbent, please include your record on these issues as well as other environmental issues where applicable.

1) Are you seeking Sierra Club/Orderly Growth endorsement and if so, why? If no, why not?

I would be honored to have the endorsement of both organizations. As a former member of the Solano Group ExCom (Political Chair), I've worked very hard on issues important to local Sierra Club members, orderly growth members and to me.

The Sierra Club/Solano Group knows that I work diligently on issues; I was one of seven people who successfully settled with the City of Vallejo & Callahan DeSilva on

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our lawsuit filed against the city to reduce the environmental impacts (water related) of the Vallejo Waterfront Plan. I produced five Vallejo City Council/Mayor Candidate Forums, several which the Solano Group was a partner. I led successful ExCom endorsement processes for Barbara Kondylis (2008) and Linda Seifert (2008). I also led the endorsement process for Skip Thomson (2008) and Becky Benton (2010) which, while not successful, I think led to Thomson's win this time and also to overall increased awareness of important Solano County environmental issues.

- 2) Please describe your public service record on environmental issues, either while holding office, through other experience, or both.
- *I was a steering committee member of Vallejo Community Planned Renewal, the group who fought and won against Bechtel and Shell's Liquefied Natural Gas Plant proposal.*
 - *I was one of seven people who successfully settled with the City of Vallejo/Callahan DeSilva on our lawsuit filed against the city to reduce the environmental impacts (water related) of the Vallejo Waterfront Plan.*
 - *I was the producer of several Candidate Forums which the Solano Group was a partner and I led the process of endorsement for Barbara Kondylis and Linda Seifert. I also led the endorsement process for Skip Thomson and Becky Benton which, while not successful, I think led to Thomson's win this time and also to overall increase of the issues in Solano County.*
 - *I worked to stop or improve various Solano County Fairgrounds plans, the Mills Project, Solano 360.*
- 3) Many municipalities are working towards becoming zero-waste. What programs, if any, would you support to make Vallejo a zero-waste and sustainable county? *The city must expand curbside recycling also expand their yard waste to kitchen and other compostable waste. Recology should partner with the City to expand recycling education into zero waste. The City should adopt a ban on plastic bags.*
- 4) Please describe in detail your position and what you have done or will do to reduce urban and suburban sprawl in Vallejo and Solano County. What must the City do to ensure that sprawl does not happen outside of reasonable urban boundaries?

I worked on Measure T and have actively opposed sprawl in Vallejo (Bordoni Ranch). Vallejo should focus Economic Development efforts towards revitalizing blighted/abandoned buildings, rather than building new structures. The General Plan and corresponding Form Based Codes should address the issue of predatory development. The new Walmart Neighborhood Market – if allowed in Vallejo at all – should not be next to four other grocery stores. The new store addressed blight by revitalizing an existing empty building, but it's likely another nearby store will

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fail because there isn't enough grocery business to support all five, possibly resulting in another blighted store.

- 5) Solano County consistently ranks very low in air quality. What can or should the City do to improve our air quality?

The only way to solve low air-quality is to reduce/remove the factors contributing to it. Many of these factors: refineries in Solano and Contra Costa Counties, the Capitol Corridor (I-80), aggravated by wind currents.

While many solutions must be regional, and would require a coalition of government agencies, I don't believe Vallejo has adopted a wood burning appliance ordinance similar to Solano County's. Vallejo could also do a better job of educating the public of the dangers of wood smoke particulate matter. The city could also discourage idling of cars and buses, especially around schools as recommended by the Solano Asthma Coalition Regionally. There needs to be more emphasis on public transportation (and public transportation must be improved) along with a public interest campaign. Vallejo should join the Solano Asthma Coalition (the VCUSD is a member).

- 6) Solano County has attempted to pass a sales tax increase to create funding to address transportation problems in the county. This measure has been on the ballot several times and has failed on each attempt. Why do you believe it has failed and what would you propose as a solution to Vallejo and Solano County's transportation issues?

The last time it was proposed – in 2006 – the tax didn't even reach a majority vote, let alone the required 2/3 vote. At the time there was a Grand Jury investigation of Solano Transportation Agency, which may have impacted the results along with anti-tax attitudes. Some thought the tax measures were too "highway heavy" (and more highways result in more sprawl requiring more highways). Transportation tax measures must not subsidize sprawl development. A regional effort is needed to stop developments built further out, which never share the true cost.

The ABAG 2040 plan has been created to address regional transportation needs; however, ABAG must assure Vallejoans that Planned Development Areas targeted for Vallejo won't turn into more affordable housing. For instance, PDAs are proposed in our downtown – which is at an astounding 60% affordable housing, according to the 2010 census track – and other adjacent areas hard hit by past poor planning. It does not help that ABAG's director, Ezra Rapport, was Callahan DeSilva's representative when CDS was shopping their deeply flawed Vallejo Waterfront Plan; the plan for which the Vallejo Waterfront Coalition filed a lawsuit.

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- 7) Would you support the creation of a stronger park system for Solano County? Please describe what you propose as a solution. If you support a stronger park system, how would you propose to fund it?

I support the creation of a Regional Park District in Solano County. The best way to fund it is through a parcel tax. These are not easy to pass (requires super-majority) and they must be reapproved by voters every ten years. But a regional park system requires local, stable funding such as a parcel tax, and with this funding, it is much easier to solicit other private / other governmental funding.

The tax ballot measure would require a clear, strong message of the benefits to each city, sound financial plans for spending, important endorsements from all cities and a great campaign message with the communication structure to get it out to voters.

In 2012, The Greater Vallejo Recreational District (mail in parcel tax) and Solano County Libraries (sales tax) were successful in passing tax measures last year. These election campaign strategies are great models to follow.

- 8) What is your view on how or whether the Solano County Fairgrounds should or shouldn't be redeveloped? If you had ultimate control, how would the Fairgrounds property be used?

If I had ultimate control, I'd like to see the Sports Field idea implemented. With the fairgrounds under county control (the Fairgrounds board is advisory only) it's important to pressure the county to ensure that Vallejo isn't burdened with undo risks, costs and environmental impacts. There are opportunities in the future to address these issues, and Vallejo did a good job to force the County to take the bonding financial risk. I was happy to see the regional water board take issue with the watershed impacts and hopefully will force the County to address these impacts as the plan moves forward.

It's tragic that the County spent (borrowed!) upwards of \$4 million on fairgrounds redevelopment. The fairgrounds facilities suffer from years of deferred maintenance, those funds would have been better spent repairing the current facilities. There is pressure on the fairgrounds, and the need for the revenue, to provide additional parking for Six Flags/Vallejo.

- 9) How would you address blight around the Sonoma Corridor, including long standing vacant lots?

I'm assuming "Sonoma Corridor" refers to Highway 29. A wonderful community developed plan was created last year and Vallejo needs to pressure our state reps to see this plan executed.

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Councilmember Robert McConnell has a fence/landscaping ordinance that would require a certain amount of landscaping on commercial developments and bans chain-link fences. I'd support its implementation. I'd also like to see a Sign Ordinance passed, and sign proposals would go to the Design Review Board. The Redwood/Sonoma Blvd parcel (still owned by Walmart as I understand) is a hideous blight. I want the chain link fence removed and code enforcement to cite them for the trash collecting along the fence and on the property. This also applies to other vacant buildings.

10) Do you support the development of a new general plan?

YES YES YES YES!!!!!!! Vallejo's current general plan was drafted in 1983. The only planning work the city does is driven by law (i.e., housing element) or by developer interest. Since the general plan is so outdated, Vallejo has created more than 20 different specific plans, often these contradict each other.

As we look around town, we can see that planning "happened to" Vallejo. That combined with the contraction resulting from the Navy's departure has created blocks and blocks of blight. While we don't have the funds to fix them all right away, the city should focus on important Vallejo districts, where improvement would reduce crime and/or increase economic development, using a scalpel instead of a machete (machete: Vallejo's typical redevelopment ideas; scalpel: the beautiful job done to renovate the Temple Art Lofts, now on the National Register of Historic Places).

Just as important for Vallejo is the adoption of "form-based codes" useful in addressing urban sprawl and deterioration of historic neighborhoods, two planning issues that plague Vallejo.

11) What would you propose to keep Lake Chabot clean? Do you support the city demanding reimbursement from the county for the water that is used from the Lake for the fairgrounds?

The city can't afford to subsidize the fairgrounds water. This is county property; how is it that only Vallejo foots the bill for the water? Just as Vallejo now requires Blue Rock Springs Golf Course to pay for its water, Vallejo should be reimbursed and other cities/unincorporated areas of the county should help foot the bill. The city of Vallejo should also demand that Six Flags be responsible for the cost of cleaning up the hazardous trash they dump in Lake Chabot and force them to create a long term plan for keeping the lake free of Six Flags pollution.

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12) What do you propose to end the illegal dumping that occurs throughout the city including our parks and sites like Lynch Canyon?

There is no one solution but a variety of processes would be best:

- *Vallejo city government cannot solve this by itself. Vallejo must enlist individual citizens. The City already has the tools: the city participates in “see-click-fix” where individual citizens can capture illegal dumping with photos: license plates, descriptions of perpetrators. Video cameras generally aren’t enough on their own; just a capture of a license plate isn’t evidence enough. That’s why the See-Click-Fix works; it has a witness attached. It’s been used successfully in Oakland.*
- *Vallejo’s recently adopted Neighborhood Law Program can be used to prosecute these crimes and stiff fines should be assessed to cover the cost burden to the city.*
- *Vallejo has many public jurisdictions: Cal Trans, whomever owns the rail right-of-way, etc, need to be held accountable for illegal dumping on their property.*
- *The City should partner with other jurisdictions to encourage our state legislators, to pass another version of the failed SB1118, mattress disposal legislation.*
- *While not directly related to dumping (but directly related to blight), an issue that plagues Vallejo is the proliferation of foreclosed/abandoned homes that attract squatters and dumping. I’ve been actively working with the Mortgage Resolution Partners (MRP), advisors to Richmond, CA, on the program of using the city’s power of eminent domain to seize underwater mortgages and reduce the principle for homeowners, keeping folks IN their homes. I’ve already hosted two meetings in Vallejo and introduced MRP to the Mayor and councilmembers.*

Solano County would also need to adopt the See-Click-Fix and Neighborhood Law types of program (or partner with Vallejo) for areas under their jurisdiction, such as Lynch Canyon: District One and Two County Supervisors Erin Hannigan & Linda Seifert – both endorsed by the Sierra Club – may be willing to address this.