

**SIERRA CLUB/Solano Group
CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

2018 City of Vallejo
Council elections

August 16, 2018

Please return this form by email to Solano Chapter Political Chairs Joe Feller and Duane Kromm at Joe56feller@gmail.com or dkkromm@gmail.com. The Solano County Orderly Growth Committee will also be reviewing these questionnaires for possible candidate endorsements. Please return your questionnaires via email by August 30.

Your name: *Katy Miessner*

Office sought: *Vallejo City Councilmember*

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

Miessner for Council 2018, PO Box 6111 Vallejo, CA 94591

www.KatyforCouncil.com;

Katy@KatyforCouncil.com & KatyforCouncil@gmail.com

707-642-2100

FPPC Name and Number: Miessner for City Council 2018; FPPC ID #1402675

Your campaign manager: *Myself, Erik Rzomp and my team*

Your present political office (if any): *Vice Mayor, City of Vallejo*

Your past political offices, with dates:

The following list are the elected, appointed and community volunteer activities I've been engaged in since moving to Vallejo in 2000:

Vallejo City Councilmember elected November 2013, sworn in 2014 – Current

Solano County Fair Association Board (Appointed) 2011-2013

Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee (Appointed) 2012-2013

➤ *Budget Delegate/Facilitator for several PB Initiatives, including the successful new gymnasium flooring for Vallejo's Omega Boys and Girls Club*

Vallejo Heights Neighborhood Association Board of Directors (Volunteer) (Elected) 2004-2013

➤ *VHNA Newsletter designer 2010-2013*

Vallejo Free of Graffiti Anti-Graffiti Team (Volunteer) 2005-2013 (still participate occasionally)

Mira Theatre Guild Treasurer (Volunteer) (Elected) 2010-2011

➤ *Created Mira's fund-accounting financial system using QuickBooks Online; developed box-office and other control procedures; prepared 2010 & 2011 IRS Informational Returns (990).*

Better Vallejo Steering Committee Member (Volunteer) (Appointed) 2009-2013

➤ *Helped draft and distribute the "Pledge for a Better Vallejo" after the unfortunate and homophobic remarks by our former Mayor to the New York Times.*

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Vallejo Independent Bulletin Contributor (Volunteer) 2007-2012

- *Wrote extensive articles on Vallejo City Government, focused on bankruptcy and municipal finance*

Vallejo Waterfront Coalition Co-chair (Volunteer) (Appointed) 2006-2013

- *Settlement with the City of Vallejo and the Waterfront Developer for insufficient water conservation; included increased water conservation, design guidelines for all Waterfront development, partial retention of the wetland on Parcel A.*

Sierra Club/Solano Group Executive Committee (Volunteer) (Elected) 2004-2010

- *Produced five Vallejo City Council Candidates' forums at the Springbrook Masonic Lodge and guided the endorsement process for several local public office candidates.*

Vallejo Downtown Advisory Group Member (Volunteer) (Appointed) 2004

- *Participated in the development of Vallejo's Downtown Specific Plan and Design Guidelines*

Vallejo Community Planned Renewal (VCPR) Board Member (Volunteer)

- *Organized to successfully stop the Liquefied Natural Regassification and Power Plant from locating on South Mare Island*

Vallejo Artists' Guild Treasurer (Volunteer) (Elected) 2001-2002

- *Reinstated the Guild's rescinded non-profit status as of July, 2002 by reconstructing three fiscal years of financial statements for the periods of July, 1999 – June, 2002*

Has the Sierra Club endorsed you in the past?

Yes, twice: in my candidacy for my first term on Council and my campaign for Solano County Supervisor 2012

Who else has endorsed you in this race?

Partial List:

Elected and Appointed Officials

- *Congressman Mike Thompson, United States House of Representatives, California, Fifth District*
- *Monica Brown, Supervisor, Solano County District Two*
- *Bob Sampayan, Mayor, City of Vallejo*
- *Robert McConnell, Esq., Councilmember, City of Vallejo*
- *Stephanie Gomes, former Vice-Mayor, City of Vallejo*
- *Tony Pearsall, former Councilmember, City of Vallejo*
- *Marti Brown, former Councilmember, City of Vallejo*
- *Paula Bauer, Esq., Solano County Planning Commissioner*
- *Brendan Riley, Commissioner, Vallejo Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission*
- *Jimmy Genn, Commissioner, Vallejo Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission*
- *Pearl Jones Tranter, Commissioner, Vallejo Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission*
- *Monica Tipton, Chair, Vallejo Housing and Community Development Commission*
- *Kathleen O'Sullivan, former Vallejo Housing and Community Development Commissioner*
- *Diana Dowling, Member, Economic Vitality Commission*

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- *Genea Brice, City of Poet Laureate (Inaugural); Vice-Chair, City of Vallejo Commission on Culture and the Arts*
- *Paul Boneberg, Chair, City of Vallejo Commission on Culture and the Arts*
- *Elissa Shanks Stewart, Vice-Chair, Vallejo Sister City Commission*
- *Rick Pasternick, Member, Vallejo Sister City Commission*
- *Bob Lockhart, Member, City of Vallejo Marina Advisory Committee*
- *Wanda Madeiros, Vice Chair, City of Vallejo Code Enforcement Appeals Board*
- *Karen Sims, Vice Chair, City of Vallejo Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee*
- *Claire Siverson, Commissioner, Vallejo Human Relations Commission*
- *Julie Stratton, Commissioner, Vallejo McCune Collection Commission*
- *Richard Burnett, Member, Metropolitan Transportation Commission Policy Advisory Council*
- *Miguel Castillo, Secretary, Gente Puente Committee, Common Ground*
- *Wayne Goodman. Grand Juror, Solano County Civil Grand Jury*
- *Stephen Hallett, Esq., District Two Representative for Supervisor Monica Brown*
- *Marianne Kearney-Brown, Vice President, Vallejo City Unified School District*
- *Ruscal Cayangyang, Trustee, Vallejo City Unified School District*
- *Wendell Quigley, Director, Greater Vallejo Recreational District Board*
- *Ron Bowen. Director, Greater Vallejo Recreational District Board*
- *Dennis Albright, former Director, Greater Vallejo Recreational District Board*
- *Karol Heppe, former Director, Greater Vallejo Recreational District Board*
- *Liat Meitzenheimer, former Director, Greater Vallejo Recreational District Board*
- *Isabel Reyes, President, The Eric Reyes Foundation*
- *Mina Diaz, Founder & Director, Diaz and Loera Centro Latino*
- *Eloise Escano Scott, Director, Pista Sa Nasyon 2018 Festival Directors*
- *Ann Jones Smith, Managing Editor/Secretary, Vallejo Lamplighter*
- *Thomas Bilbo, Chairman, Solano Pride Board of Directors*
- *Jane Bogner, Treasurer & Recycling/Volunteer Coordinator, Sierra Club Solano Group*

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

Yes. I have the organization and funding to win. I have been raising money from citizens, friends and family since March – I started early because raising money from the community takes time; ordinary citizens – not wealthy special interests – are supporting me. I have a smaller budget goal because my team is all volunteer (treasurer, campaign consultants/advisors, event producers). Even in this even-year election (more voters to reach) I now have enough money in my bank account for TV commercials and mailers. And I have been doing Facebook “promotions” of my and my supporters’ “blog” videos, which have received almost 100% positive feedback. I asked for and have received important endorsements.

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Are you a Sierra Club member? (Membership is not required)

Yes, and I used to be the Sierra Club/Solano Group's Ex Com Political Chair, in which I managed endorsements and produced candidate forums.

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 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 endorsement and if so, why? If no, why not?

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

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 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 in 2012 and also to overall increased awareness of important Solano County environmental issues. I have also worked hard on City Council issues important to the Sierra Club during my first time on council, as outlined in my responses below.

The work of the Sierra Club is more critical than ever. Climate change is real, global warming is real, our earth is under attack and we must do whatever we can to address this locally.

2) Please describe your public service record on environmental issues, either while holding office, through other experience, or both.

While in office:

- I worked with Grid Alternatives to connect to low-income homeowners in South Vallejo who are eligible for solar panels paid for by GHG funds. While it is can be difficult to earn folks' trust, GRID was able to install solar in a number of homes before the June 30, 2018 deadline.*

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- *I helped write a grant (not successful but we're trying again) for the City of Vallejo to the State of CA, for GHG funds, to plant and maintain native carbon capturing trees in S. Vallejo.*
- *I worked with the Student Conservation Association (who was successful) in finding sites in S. Vallejo for tree planting; on city, school and GVRD property.*
- *I have been the City of Vallejo representative on all five Visions of the Wild festivals, assisting them to find public sites for their events and waiving permit fees.*
- *I am currently attempting to bring Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) to the City of Vallejo. I don't think it can be done this year due to other priorities but our CM has brought CCA to cities he has served before and is interested in bringing it to Vallejo.*
- *I am the Council Liaison to the Beautification Commission and I championed their proposal for the (first annual!) Beautify Vallejo Day (first Saturday after the first day of Spring) similar to Coastal Clean-up*
- *I supported the City's addition of a sworn officer and increasing charges from infractions to misdemeanors, to go after illegal dumpers. Vallejo is at the edge of major waterways and the trash from those who dump illegally goes directly into storm drains.*
- *I am working to connect folks who work with "blue-stained" wood (from dead trees, stressed by drought and killed by fungi carried by bark beetles) that needs to be cleared from landscapes due to its fire-threat, with Factory-OS, the modular home builder newly located to Mare Island*
- *I support 21st century businesses competitive in a global economy and yet bring good jobs, and whose business practices are healthy for our community. Factory OS, Alstom, Mare Island Dry Dock, expansion of CMA, Touro and Solano County Community College, and now the Nimitz Group for N. Mare Island.*
- *I believe I am the only candidate whose small campaign signs are (and have always been) made of paper. There are no options for the large signs besides coroplast corrugated plastic but I refuse to add to plastic waste where I can, and I make sure my large signs are recycled.*

Prior to my election

- *I served on the Sierra Club Solano Group Ex Com as Political Chair*
- *I was one of seven Vallejo Waterfront Coalition members who sued the City of Vallejo on their waterfront plan, based on insufficient water conservation and lack of xeriscape*
- *I assisted the ExCom with the lawsuit against Solano County Supervisors to enforce Measure E and enforcing the capping of intrastate garbage.*
- *I was on the Vallejo Citizens for Planned renewal (VCPR) who fought and stopped the Liquefied Natural Gas Plant on South Mare Island*
- *I worked on other progressive candidates' campaigns, some successful*

3) Many municipalities are working towards becoming zero-waste. What programs, if any, would you support to make your city a zero-waste and sustainable city?

I want an ordinance passed that all fast food packaging products be biodegradable.

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I want curbside recycling to expand to include kitchen and other compostable waste.

Recology should partner with the City to expand recycling education into zero waste. Currently, there is very little information on their website about recycling options in general.

The Beautification Commission (for which I am the liaison) has great programs planned that the Council supports – education in schools, etc. Getting young folks interested in conservation is a key component to a sustainable city.

At a recent “Vallejo SOUP” (grassroots micro-financing event) the winner was a teen and her mom for litter clean-up supplies. The teen was concerned that her mom was littering and convinced her to change her ways and now they want to help keep Vallejo clean.

- 4) What efforts do you support to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in your city? How would you work to improve the jobs/housing balance in your city with a goal to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled for your residents?
- *The biggest contributors in our community to GHG are the many freeways and surrounding refineries. These cause Vallejo to have some of the very few Bay Area census tracts that have been deemed by the State of CA as being disproportionately burdened by, and vulnerable to, multiple sources of pollution.*
 - *I support fence-line and more robust local air monitoring so that we truly understand the impact of particulate matter in our air. There is currently a Citizens Air Monitoring Network providing critical information that the City Council can take advantage of for decision-making.*
 - *Local sources of pollution from industries Vallejo has jurisdiction over – those already here and those which propose to locate here – must be limited and reduced. This is partially addressed in our new “River-Bay City” General Plan.*
 - *Vallejo needs 21st Century businesses competitive in a global market that also provide jobs with good wages, that help keep Vallejo residents working in Vallejo, thereby reducing Vallejo commuters on the freeway. We need to return to being a regional draw in the North Bay, and that must include better public transportation.*
 - *We have an opportunity for more tree planting – we have more precincts in version 3.0 of the State of California’s “CalEnviroScreen” map (this is the tool that identifies census tracts disproportionately burdened by and vulnerable to multiple sources of pollution) which makes us eligible for more GHG reduction funds for tree planting.*
 - *The city could also discourage idling of cars and buses, especially around schools as recommended by the Solano Asthma Coalition.*
 - *There needs to be more emphasis on public transportation (and public transportation must be improved) along with a public interest campaign.*

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- *I am interested in a Smoke Free Multi-Unit Housing program; however, the unintended consequence which we must keep in mind is smoking litter as folks go outside to smoke.*

- 5) Should cities consider wildfire risk when analyzing and approving development proposals?

Yes. We are susceptible in ways people have not considered before. Our location next to I-80 and other freeways makes us susceptible to fires – a year ago, a fire from a car on I-80 burned up the hill and threatened homes in Glen Cove. Sparks from a flat tire wheel well scraping on the pavement started Redding’s Carr Fire. I am concerned of fire danger in some areas of Mare Island. We have an opportunity to address this when we update our development zoning code next year. Building homes in fire-prone areas is a bad idea and it has created some of the problems from lack of fire-prevention, not allowing controlled or small burns to clean the landscape of thick fuel growth because of adjacent residential developments.

- 6) The State of California and Association of Bay Area Governments are working on an update to the Regional Housing Needs Allocation. What are your thoughts on how this process should affect your city and Solano County?

Vallejo needs to be cautious in adding more low-income housing in certain precincts that are already over-saturated. One reason our downtown struggles is that it is surrounded by low-income homes-60% of homes are subsidized – and those residents don’t have buying power.

When our zoning is updated, it should be flexible to create the option for many of our empty or partially empty strip-malls be converted to housing. Our new general plan is already flexible to accommodate this idea of “gray-fill” (the gray being concrete) along our retail corridors, such as Springs Road, Tennessee, etc., that have struggled since the Navy left and with the changing nature of internet retail. This “gray-fill” should also include traffic-calming measures, better access to public transit and support for bikes and pedestrians. The infrastructure is already there. These could include amenities and because these strip mails are on major thoroughfares, and they would naturally be transit oriented.

- 7) Solano County is the only County in the Bay Area which has no countywide parks system. What is your position on developing a countywide parks system?

We need a regional park system which I will support if it includes Mare Island and other Vallejo parks which are a struggle to maintain due to lack of funding.

- 8) Are your city and Solano County doing enough, not enough or too much to support our agricultural economy, please provide some specific examples.

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- *Vallejo isn't an Ag city, but we have an opportunity to adopt an urban-agriculture ordinance, perhaps similar to Sacramento's.*
 - *Vallejo voters supported Measure T, the 2008 orderly growth ordinance, by more than 65%, some of the highest in the County, an ordinance that concentrates development in our cities, where public infrastructure already exists, helps stop suburban sprawl from taking over important Solano County farmland and provides open space between our cities.*
- 9) Many cities around the Bay Area have a Sustainability Commission to advise Councils on important issues such as climate change (including green house gas reduction and adaptation to sea level rise), green building standards, renewable energy, waste reduction, and other environmental issues. Would you support such a commission in your City?

Absolutely! It is already starting somewhat organically by some residents and I have supported their efforts. They are supportive of my bringing CCA to the City.

- 10) The Bay Conservation and Development Commission predicts significant sea level rise in the Bay Area. What, if anything, do you think Vallejo should be doing to protect the city from this?

We have a great opportunity to incorporate protection against sea-level rise as we update our zoning, by creating zoning such as "Conservation Zones" (allows for gradual relocation of development vulnerable areas with sensitive natural resources) and "Accommodation Zones" (allows for development and requiring structures to be resilient to impacts). We will be updating our zoning next year, now that our General Plan is complete. North Mare Island is planned for building (a proposal I support) and it's planned that they will have buffers on the east and west sides of the island, with complete access to the Napa River as a conservation easement and a large park next to it – almost 52 acres total.

In 2006, the Waterfront Coalition attempted to influence the majority of the sitting council, but was not successful in stopping approval of the Waterfront Plan that included building on Parcel A. The City filled in most of the wetland on Parcel A decades ago, which they mitigated by paying for the creation of a wetland in AmCyn. The Waterfront Coalition won some concessions on Parcel A, retaining part of the wetland, xeriscape for the homes to be built there, design review and the elimination of a "gated community" type development.

- 11) What is your position on shipping coal from or through Vallejo. This, of course, would include shipping it in via rail.

I don't want to see coal shipped to or through Vallejo and I don't want garbage shipped to or through Vallejo; although I suppose this is happening on our freeways already.

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- 12) Are you aware of the risks to the city from the existing Solano 360 development of the fairgrounds? Would you oppose the project if the County refuses to indemnify the City from losses or underfunding? Would you continue to support the concept of the City surrendering tax revenues to the County?

I am completely against Solano County creating development on the Fairgrounds that competes with Vallejo's retail across the freeway. One iteration of the proposal even had Vallejo getting 25% of the sales-tax generated by the 360 and the County getting 75%.

I won't support a plan that includes Vallejo protecting the county from losses. The County needs to ensure that whatever they do, doesn't impact Vallejo with losses or underfunding.

We also must demand that whatever goes there protects Rindler Creek and the natural watershed.

The 360 has been around for years – I remember the failed Mills Project. The county ought to rethink their strategy on those parcels and likely away from retail. I still think the regional sports center idea is viable.

- 13) Do you support a comprehensive watershed management plan for the "Chabot Watershed"? Will you support the use of city resources while working with other watershed stakeholders (GVRD, DK, VFWD, County, RCD, etc) towards the creation and implementation of a watershed management plan?

I don't know what kind of resources it would take – I support the idea and the Solano 360 could be a vehicle to introduce this, possibly through some sort of fee structure, including Discovery Kingdom since they have a large impact on the watershed.

To best address the impacts on the watershed, we need many partners and combined solutions (this is true for all impacts on all bodies of water that surround and flow through Vallejo):

- *Vallejo now has IDEAL Vallejo to address illegal dumping. We need individual citizens to participate, perhaps through our "See-Click-Fix" app, by safely capturing illegal dumping with photos: license plates, descriptions of perpetrators.*
- *Vallejo's Neighborhood Law Program is prosecuting these crimes and the council recently changed the charges for illegal dumping from an infraction to misdemeanor, increasing fines as well.*
- *Vallejo has many public jurisdictions: Cal Trans, Rail right-of-way, etc, who need to be held accountable for illegal dumping on their property. This has happened in a few instances; what is problematic is that they fall under state and federal jurisdiction. We will need to enlist our legislators to help us.*

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- *While not directly related to dumping (but directly related to blight), and while the problem has subsided with the housing market rebound, we still have foreclosed/abandoned homes that attract squatters and dumping. The Neighborhood Law Program has been placing liens on these properties in order to get them cleaned up and ready for resell.*
- *The City needs to reduce permit fees for infill – its in the city's interest to have vacant lots built on, creating more housing, increasing the tax base and removing blighted vacant lots that attract trash and dumping.*
- *Solano County should adopt some of these interventions for areas under their jurisdiction.*

14) Mare Island Historic Preserve, Do you support the Preserve? What is your vision for the property?

Ultimately, I want to see the Preserve a part of a Regional Park System. In the short-term, I support the preserve, it is one of Vallejo's special places, and the city has to figure out a way to keep it open while reducing risks. It isn't appropriate for dogs to be let off-leash (maybe dogs shouldn't be allowed at all) and campfires to burn. Beyond the cluster of structures near the entrance and the cemetery, it's one of the very few natural landscapes we have in our city. It is fragile, prone to fire danger and has vulnerable species of birds and mammals, and where the human footprint should be as light as possible – the idea of a "preserve."

I am thrilled that the VA has finally been made accountable to maintain the cemetery.

15) The Vallejo Lakes Water System. Do you support the leasing of Vallejo's water rights? What is your strategy for Vallejo's long term water goals for the Lakes System?

The City of Vallejo is in dire need of water delivery infrastructure repair, including the Lakes System that supplies Green Valley. This issue is exactly the reason why open space between cities should stay open. It is too costly to deliver services to these areas, and these are also fire-prone areas. I am open to leasing Vallejo's water rights only if we can ensure that we keep long-term control over these rights. If new development is proposed for areas that would depend on Vallejo for new water delivery and infrastructure, Vallejo should refuse to supply it.

16) What environmental issues concern you the most? What will you do as a Council member to improve our local environment?

Vallejo is an urban city close to significant bodies of water. My biggest concern is the incredible amount of dumping in our streets, parks, everywhere. It is so out-of-control. Even in the county; dumping lines the edges of Cordelia's backroads. We see remains of household evictions on the streets. We see construction debris dumped on our on-and-off ramps to I-80, 37, in our downtown alleys, etc. The City has a fulltime, 5-day a week crew that picks up

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dumping and it is still a huge problem. We need enforcement but we also need to give folks an opportunity to have large dump disposals for free. There is one planned on Mare Island this fall.

I am very much in favor of closing some of the on-and-off ramps in Vallejo. CAL TRANS brought this to Vallejo City Council in 2008 or so, but the Mayor was not interested. We have too many. A strategic closing of some ramps (chosen by a traffic engineer) could help move traffic quicker – less idling which means less pollution. And, less on and off ramps could result in a reduction of dumping, less easy access for dumpers to dump-and-run. It's too easy to get in and out of Vallejo. Interstate I-80 contributes to many of Vallejo's environmental, pollution and crime problems.

But since we're stuck with it, second best is to close a majority of on-off ramps. Berkeley has three, why do we need fourteen.