



Bluff Park Neighborhood Association

Community Meeting

March 28, 2018

Mayoral Position: Community’s Questions & Candidate’s Responses (alphabetically listed)

- A. How would you improve **safety** in our neighborhoods, parks, beaches and schools?
- B. How would you address **homelessness** in the city?
- C. What are your thoughts on **rent control** in the city?
- D. Given the currently passed Land Use Element and the California State Legislature's efforts to promote development and expand housing, how do you see your role going forward in **protecting our city's founding neighborhoods, especially historically designated neighborhoods**, such as ours?

Henk Conn Page 2
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3rd Council District Position: Community’s Questions & Candidate’s Responses (alphabetically listed)

- A. How would you improve **safety** in our neighborhoods, parks, beaches and schools?
- B. How would you describe your **leadership and communication approaches** in connecting with and representing residents and neighborhoods?
- C. Given the currently passed Land Use Element and the California State Legislature's efforts to promote development and expand housing, how do you see your role going forward in **protecting our city's founding neighborhoods, especially historically designated neighborhoods**, such as ours?

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Key Dates

Tue April 10	Election Day
Fri April 13	Friends of Bixby Park Annual Fundraiser Dinner
Sat April 14	Bluff Park and Bluff Heights Historic District Design Guidelines Workshop At Immanuel Community Housing, 3215 E. 3rd Street @ 11am - 1pm. Free event.
Sun May 6	The Lamppost Love Boat: A BPNA Unique Benefit Fundraiser Event At Hotel Maya @ 1pm. Get your early-bird discount tax-deductible tickets tonight or online
Wed June 27	Bluff Park Community Meeting

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Visit Us **Online**, **Sign Up** for Our Emails, **Volunteer**, and **Join or Renew** as a Member: BluffPark.org
 Like Us on **Facebook**: [@BluffPark.org](https://www.facebook.com/BluffPark.org) | Follow Us on **Twitter** and **Instagram**: [@BluffParkorg](https://www.instagram.com/BluffParkorg)
 Email: info@bluffpark.org Phone: (562) 449-0977
 BPNA operates as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) entity. All donations and memberships are tax-deductible

Henk Conn, Candidate for Mayor



A. How would you improve **safety** in our neighborhoods, parks, beaches and schools?

The biggest weapon we have against crime and creating safety in our city is maintaining a community that is caring of their neighbors. Residents who stay for years in their homes and apartments care about their community. The recent rotating population due to the recent rent increases by-in-large place 60% of our community in a temporary situation; not invested in their community, because they believe that the city is not invested in them.

I believe we put too many responsibilities on the LBPD. We must increase funding into the Parks and Recreation, increase employment in this department to increase community engagement. We must increase funding in our schools. We are seeing increases in classroom size, overburdening our teachers. The parents of the students are working longer hours to pay for housing and continue to commit to stay in Long Beach the city we love. Affecting homework and test results, parents are left at work where they should be home with their children. We must increase funding in after-school scholar programs; in the schools, in our libraries, and in our sports and science programs.

B. How would you address **homelessness** in the city?

For 10 years I worked as a homeless outreach worker. I have a Masters Degree in Social Work. In Long Beach I worked at the Village Integrated Service Agency, a program that put an end to homelessness for their enrolled clients. I worked on Skid Row in Downtown Los Angeles for the LA County Department of Mental Health. I worked for 3 years on a contract with Humboldt County Department of Mental health as a mental health clinician and a coordinator for their Crisis Intervention Training program (developing a clinician ride-a-long program with local police agencies).

We need services. We cannot rely on brick-and-mortar solutions to address a disease. Our Long Beach MET team which started in the 1980's (the model which I taught in Humboldt and has become a state model of police intervention) needs re-investment. We must return to the idea that a homeless individual should have options outside of arresting officer, a temporary hospital placement due to a 5150 criteria (suicidal or homicidal ideation), or the extremes of housing options of the streets, winter shelter or the extreme of permanent housing. We have lost all that lays in the between... Services to support the rehabilitation of the homeless and a Transition into permanent housing.

C. What are your thoughts on **rent control** in the city?

I support Rent Control and protecting renters from unjust evictions. Per the report provided to the current Mayor to research affordable housing and workforce housing (2017), and further data as published by the Long Beach Press-Telegram, the city of Long Beach will see roughly \$280,000,000 loss in the community monetary resources over 2018. In 2016 there were roughly 105,000 renting housing units in the city of Long Beach. These units were rented out at an estimates average of \$1,500.00 per month. Multiply that by 12 months, the owners of the apartment collected roughly \$2.8B in citywide rents in 2016. In 2017, rental units renting rates went up over 10% (as published by the Long Beach Press-Telegram in January 2018). This will result in a estimated loss of over \$280,000,000 over the course of 2018. That will go into the hands of the few, leaving the pockets of 60% of our renting residents. This monetary resource was going to goods and services spent in our city. If this money would have been spent in our city, it would have been taxed by a 10% sales tax.

D. Given the currently passed Land Use Element (LUE) and the California State Legislature's efforts to promote development and expand housing, how do you see your role going forward in **protecting our city's founding neighborhoods, especially historically designated neighborhoods**, such as ours?

I have lived most of my life in Long Beach. I believe we must protect the architectural integrity of the city. Not only the bungalows and the wonderful 1950's architecture, but to work with developers to stop creating unsightly and cheaply made developments that will ultimately blight the city for our life. A bad neighbor will eventually move or we can find a social middle ground. But a unsightly building is there for decades. I witnessed incompetence of a city government that had no idea of the needs of the city. They put out a horrible plan for density planning, and the only accomplishment our neighbors have made is making a soured plan less sour. Our government should have started with community involvement in the beginning of LUE development instead of checking with the people as the last step in the plan.

Robert Garcia, Candidate for Mayor



A. How would you improve **safety** in our neighborhoods, parks, beaches and schools?

Some of the proudest achievements of my first term are the restorations to our Police and Fire Departments after more than a decade of reductions. The restoration of the South Division, creating dedicated academy staff to return officers to patrol, and restoring Engine 8 and Rescue 12 have improved response times and puts us near the top for large cities. Nothing is more important than ensuring the safety of residents and visitors; it will continue to be a top priority moving forward.

B. How would you address **homelessness** in the city?

Homelessness is a huge issue in Long Beach and most large cities in California. The City of Long Beach is working very hard to address this issue and has helped house more than 1,000 veterans and hundreds of other people in the last two years. Still, much more needs to be done. The passage of Measure H in the County is providing funding for new services and the City is working to create the first year-round homeless shelter in Long Beach. Outreach teams and special deployments of police officers and firefighter/paramedics work daily to help get those experiencing homelessness off the street and into services. I have made building new affordable units for formerly homeless veterans and families a key priority in my administration. I will work to implement an inclusionary housing policy this year and identify new local funding sources for affordable housing.

C. What are your thoughts on **rent control** in the city?

The housing affordability crisis is one of the most pressing issues facing Long Beach and California. I have worked diligently as Mayor to increase housing development at all levels in Long Beach. Fundamentally, this crisis is a result of too few new housing units being constructed in recent decades. Producing more housing is the only solution.

I am a strong supporter of affordable housing and believe the state and federal governments should be investing more into the creation and preservation of affordable units. Long Beach has more than 6,300 rent-stabilized units and I have supported funding and keeping those in place along with expanding the supply by building hundreds of additional homes. I think this approach is better than blanket rent control, which many academic studies show limits the production of new housing units and investment in existing housing stock.

D. Given the currently passed Land Use Element (LUE) and the California State Legislature's efforts to promote development and expand housing, how do you see your role going forward in **protecting our city's founding neighborhoods, especially historically designated neighborhoods**, such as ours?

Protecting every Long Beach neighborhood is my highest priority as Mayor. While I supported the final Land Use Element (LUE) plan the Council adopted, I personally worked to protect single family and historic neighborhoods from developments that would change their character. I support the development of new homes in our downtown and along our transit corridor and am very wary of legislative efforts that limit the ability of cities to control development.

Gordana Kajer, Candidate for 3rd Council District



A. How would you improve **safety** in our neighborhoods, parks, beaches and schools?

It's important to distinguish between what our City leaders define as a 'safe' community - with recent local crime statistics, for example- in contrast with residents' perceptions of safety in their community. These are two different benchmarks. What is relevant, for me, is what residents believe is happening in their neighborhood. And, unfortunately, what I hear from neighbors is that their concern about safety is increasing. And that's where the conversation about improving safety needs to start.

A safe neighborhood is built on neighbors knowing one another, where outdoor activity is encouraged to "take back" areas where people feel unsafe – such as along our beach, late at night – and where neighbors know their police officers and how, and when, to call them. Seeing the impact in Bluff Park from the changing homeless population, I believe our leaders need to address serious safety concerns from BPNA residents and respond with a comprehensive, coordinated approach that engages the community in addressing the issue. I suggest the creation of a community Task Force or Neighborhood Watch Committee that would coordinate meetings, educate and inform residents in a timely fashion on matters involving safety and ensure that residents' concerns are heard. Resources could include Nextdoor.com and other web-based communication tools. I'd add that BPNA is not alone in these concerns. Safety for residents is a city-wide issue and it's likely that getting engaged with other Long Beach council districts, and neighborhoods, might offer useful experiences and insights from successful programs that have been implemented.

B. How would you describe your **leadership and communication approaches** in connecting with and representing residents and neighborhoods?

My leadership and communication approach comes from working over 20 years as a community advocate on quality of life and environmental concerns in Long Beach, in the 3rd District and on city-wide issues. My experience reflects the fact that a genuine outreach process includes a real value for input from stakeholders & residents, ensures transparency and results in outcomes that everyone can trust.

Our City Council and City staff have a routine practice of "selling" pre-determined outcomes on projects and plans to the community, and use a "check the box" approach for community outreach. Decisions are made before public outreach begins, and any so-called 'outreach' is more intended to defend decisions than honestly solicit debate. It's a top-down process, it creates distrust and frustration -as well as cynicism- for government. This has simply got to end. Genuine community outreach is time-consuming and it can be messy, but the City knows how to do it. I'd point to the partnership between the City and the Army Corps of Engineers on the breakwater (East San Pedro Bay Ecosystem and Restoration Study) as a great example.

C. Given the currently passed Land Use Element (LUE) and the California State Legislature's efforts to promote development and expand housing, how do you see your role going forward in **protecting our city's founding neighborhoods, especially historically designated neighborhoods**, such as ours?

The recent approval of the Land Use Element (LUE) reflected a process that, in my opinion, didn't value community outreach (see my response to Question 2, above) or input from residents – and it's a flawed plan. The LUE was approved without full knowledge or understanding of how newly passed State laws, and upcoming legislation, may impact it with overriding density and building heights. As a result, every neighborhood in the 3rd District will need to be vigilant about proposed development and act pro-actively during the permit process for new commercial or residential development. I would suggest, in addition, that a Design Review Board be organized with qualified professionals (architecture, design and engineering) to ensure any new construction is visually integrated with the surrounding neighborhood and historic architecture.

Suzie Price, Candidate for 3rd Council District



A. How would you improve **safety** in our neighborhoods, parks, beaches and schools?

I am currently the chair of the City's Public Safety Committee, and have worked as a prosecutor for over 18 years. Today, we have more police officers on the streets of Long Beach than we have had since the recession almost a decade ago! We restored Engine 8, funded numerous training academies for the police and fire departments, and brought a Neighborhood Impact Prosecutor to the 3rd District. We also allocated \$250,000 to a residential burglary detail in 2014, since those crimes were on the rise when I took office. If re-elected, I will continue to gradually increase our Public Safety resources so that we can address quality of life issues and crimes that are impacting neighborhoods.

B. How would you describe your **leadership and communication approaches** in connecting with and representing residents and neighborhoods?

The 3rd District is notified and engaged in city government in a way they never have been before and I am proud of that. Community engagement has been a top priority for our team. We have a full time staff at City Hall every day and as a team, we attend multiple community meetings each week. I have personally met with every resident who has ever requested to meet with me, attended every community meeting that I have been invited to, and have a staff that is consistently responding to the issues of concern from our residents that are directed to the council office, as opposed to me directly. Our team, which is comprised of ALL 3rd District residents work around the clock for our community, seven days a week.

We have created a robust email and social media communication system that includes a monthly newsletter, a weekly council agenda announcement, notification emails on issues that impact individual neighborhoods and monthly community meetings (held at publicly accessible places at times that are convenient for all residents).

I do my research and keep an open mind about every item that I am voting on and I represent the voice of my district when I vote after gathering input from everyone. My community and I have spent countless hours discussing the District's priorities at community meetings, city council meetings, and even over coffee on weekend mornings and, through those efforts, we have been able to develop a strong list of priorities for our district. As with everything, it's unlikely any decision will get 100% approval, but we make sure there is a process where everyone feels heard. Even if I don't ultimately agree with them, they are heard and given them time to share their thoughts. If re-elected, I will continue to approach every issue with my residents in mind and I will meet with stakeholders to form a perspective that takes the whole community as well as actual data into account. Above all else, I will always put the community above any and all political agendas. I have developed a reputation for doing so over the past 3.5 years.

C. Given the currently passed Land Use Element (LUE) and the California State Legislature's efforts to promote development and expand housing, how do you see your role going forward in **protecting our city's founding neighborhoods, especially historically designated neighborhoods, such as ours?**

When the Land Use Element (LUE) came to City Council, I voted in favor of the item after asking for several specific changes, which reduced height and density at certain locations throughout the 3rd District, including historic neighborhoods. As well as, asked for a 5 year review of the plan and annual reports from City Staff regarding population and transportation trends. The LUE will allow for our city to accommodate and plan for population growth.

Updating this plan is an essential responsibility for local elected officials. It is necessary to plan for and accommodate the changes we know are coming in the future, so that our historic districts are not negatively impacted. I have worked with my residents for nearly 4 years holding meetings, taking input, hearing solutions, and I believe they have had a great impact on how this plan was developed. Several of my amendments, including the requirement of a 5 year review and a historic asset study, came DIRECTLY from the community. In my opinion, the current LUE maps will not pose an unnecessary burden on historic neighborhoods in the district because I personally met with every neighborhood group and took their recommendations into consideration. The final maps were a community effort. This District needs a leader who takes seriously the responsibility of creating a smart plan for the future and protecting our historic neighborhoods.

Robert Savin, Candidate for 3rd Council District



A. How would you improve **safety** in our neighborhoods, parks, beaches and schools?

The only thing I can see Long Beach doing immediately for school safety is to put more police on and near schools. I am personally glad to see the extra police support on the high school campuses in the recent month. As for safety at our beaches and parks, many people have come to me with concerns about homelessness in Long Beach. Social status, including being homeless, should not negate a person's crimes. If people are breaking the law, then it should be addressed. On the other hand, nothing has been done for so long that now we have a large displacement of homeless people. The current city council has had many opportunities to address homelessness, yet, while they claim to have a 360-degree plan on homelessness, I have never seen as many homeless people in Long Beach as I have currently. Why am I qualified to address this issue? Because I am willing to get to work on it. I was impressed by the work of Jack Smith, who spoke to the city council in October of 2016. He focused on three key issues to end homelessness in Long Beach: Status, Listening, and Political Will. Smith believed that we need to focus on behavior, not status, and that status is not an excuse for bad behavior. He also thought that it is important to listen to the homeless and send them to the appropriate people to address their needs. Lastly, Smith believed that these people are homeless, but not serviceless. A recent article published on March 25th by Hoa Quách stated that the state of California has 100 million dollars set aside to help combat homelessness, yet has spent no money on this issue. This needs to change.

B. How would you describe your **leadership and communication approaches** in connecting with and representing residents and neighborhoods?

If I was your councilperson, I would respond as soon as possible to your phone calls, messages and emails. After all, you would have taken the time to make said phone call or compose said message or email, and it would probably be about something that needs attention. Even if I did not have an immediate answer or solution, I would be working it. My usual response time on social media messaging is as fast as 13 minutes. If there is a staff working for me, they would all be informed that my priority is to represent the voices of my constituents and that any and every issue brought to me is important. I am always working and I never stop. I have 180 students, 7 kids, a wife, 2 jobs, and I am still always available to return emails.

C. Given the currently passed Land Use Element (LUE) and the California State Legislature's efforts to promote development and expand housing, how do you see your role going forward in **protecting our city's founding neighborhoods, especially historically designated neighborhoods**, such as ours?

The current Land Use Element in California does not need to be implemented until 2040. Until Long Beach can prove that there is a crisis, we should delay implementing it. In fact, there is an exodus of people from Long Beach right now, with 4,000 people leaving the city in 2016. I want to represent the needs of the 3rd district, and I have not met one person in Long Beach who is in favor of the LUE. We do need low income housing (half of income goes towards rent), but the LUE will not provide it. For instance, in a current project only 11 of 271 units being built are actually set aside as affordable (one quarter to one third of income goes to rent) and none will be low-income. Long Beach's history and tradition are important to me. Historical neighborhoods should remain historical. Bluff Park does an excellent job of preserving traditional architecture that may otherwise have been torn down.