

Linda Matthews

## **Candidate for City Council – Responses**

1. I was motivated to run for Cincinnati City Council because for the last twenty months, I witnessed inept leadership from the current members of Council. My experiences as a small business owner, Trustee at the only public historically black university in Ohio, and membership as State Central Committee Member with the Ohio Republican Party have prepared me to effectively service the citizens of Cincinnati as one of their next Council Members. The measurable outcomes voters should hold me accountable for are whether the legislation passed by City Council reflects their values of having a full complement of Cincinnati Police Officers on staff and whether the city has become more efficient in delivering basic services to the citizens.
2.
  - a. I would accelerate the implementation of the Cincinnati Futures Commission by immediately voting for the following: increase financial support for minority businesses and CDCs, investing more in the Affordable Housing Leverage Fund, reforming EMS billing, identifying police and fire operation efficiencies, having the Cincinnati Recreation Commission absorbed by the Cincinnati Park Department (although not recommended by the CFC report but a position I hold), turning Greater Cincinnati Water Works into a public, regional system (no privatization) and using the revenue to bring the Cincinnati Retirement System up to 80-85% funding so OPERS can absorb the CRS, increasing parking enforcement, expanding the parking meter system to include more locations for meters, eliminating peak hour parking restrictions across the City limits, devoting proceeds from the railroad sale to fix any and all deferred maintenance of our city's assets and infrastructure, which will free up revenue to go into the city's operating budget general fund rather the capital budget.
  - b. No.
  - c. The city should not pursue tax or fee increases on its own. I am open to voting to put ballot measures before voters to decide if they want to pay more in taxes and fees.
3. My number one budget priority is public safety. Safety equals capital. To fund key priorities, I would vote to eliminate the City Prosecutor's Office and allow the County to pursue misdemeanor criminal offenses committed in Cincinnati. The City Solicitor's Office would represent the City in civil matters only. As I indicated above, I would vote to have the Recreation Commission absorbed by the Parks Department. I would also vote to cut the \$3 million ACT for Cincy proposal and reallocate those funds to proven, crime fighting initiatives, which would include more funding for Cincinnati Police and Fire to have the equipment they need to do their jobs effectively. I would vote to reallocate the \$500k passed by Council for LGBTQ youth and invest that into strengthening job opportunities for all youth in Cincinnati.

4. No.
5.
  - a. Yes
  - b. Yes
  - c. Ensure that public safety is adequately funded so citizens feel safe and are safe.
6. It is imperative that Cincinnati continues to grow. Cincinnati's greatest opportunity to grow is in construction. City Council should invest in expanding trade opportunities for potential employees and professionals in the local construction market. Considerable effort should be made by City Council to invest in training local, minority citizens in the field of construction to meet the demand for workers.
7. No, I do not support Connect Communities legislation. The zoning and land use changes that I would support would be ones mutually agreed upon by developers and residents of the specific community involved in the transaction.
8.
  - a. The City Council should vote to repeal Connected Communities and reevaluate how to use the zoning laws to promote the expansion of housing. A "one-size-fits-all" approach is wrong when there are 52 unique neighborhoods in the city. City Council and the City Planning Commission should be mediators in how developers and citizens in a given neighborhood come to a resolution on the best use of zoning laws to expand housing on a case-by-case basis and pass policy based on what those groups can agree on.
  - b. Yes.
  - c. TIF districts should play a vital role in advancing the City's growth. TIF funds should be used to fund a neighborhood's infrastructure and economic development projects. City Council should prioritize using TIF funds to improve roads, sidewalks, and acquiring under utilized land to activate private investment and redevelopment the neighborhoods. TIF funds should not be used for speed cushions and speed humps.
  - d. Improving the city's permitting and development process will require City Council to, first, repeal Connected Communities.
9. The City Council has a huge responsibility to balance pro-growth housing policies with the voices of the neighborhoods. Council, once debate ends, must vote in a manner that does the most good for the community at large and consistent with those councilmembers' conscience and values.
10. Incentives will play a major role in Cincinnati's growth. Projects that warrant the most incentives include the Convention Center, a potential indoor sports arena, and the development going on around TQL stadium.

11. City Council should play a big role in growing a skilled workforce and remaining attractive to young families. It all begins with public safety.
12. To improve actual safety in the short term, I have been championing the strategy that the Mayor accepts any and all state support for criminal justice services from Ohio's Governor. Long term, I have been championing the idea to have a national recruiting and marketing strategy to hire and retain top criminal justice talent to become Cincinnati Police Officers until we have the full complement of officers necessary to adequately protect citizens and visitors. Attracting top tier talent and retaining it may require offering increases in police officer salary and benefits, which I support.
13. I would organize a roundtable with business leaders on at least a quarterly basis to listen to their public safety concerns and discuss strategies to prevent crime before it happens. I would invite the police Chief and county Sheriff (or their proxies) to be involved with these meetings. I would ensure accountability by setting meeting dates well in advance, taking attendance, and publishing ideas taken from those meetings to important stakeholders.
14. I would support new and old small business entrepreneurs by making sure the neighborhood business districts are safe and clean. I would ensure these business leaders are connected to the Office of Economic Inclusion and Economic Development so that the city, if capable, can meet their needs.
15. The one existing barrier to growing these businesses is the political will to make these businesses a priority in obtaining capital to operate in the market.
16. The cultural and tourism investments that should be prioritized are BLINK CINCINNATI, the Cincinnati Music Festival, the Taste of Cincinnati, Riverfest, Oktoberfest, Music Hall, and Playhouse in the Park. I would suggest that since Music Hall and Playhouse in the Park are existing pieces of infrastructure the city owns, revenue generated from the sale of the railroad could be used to maintain those two buildings. When it comes to tourism and cultural investments into certain events, the safety and security of visitors and citizens are top priority. As such, I would vote to use operating revenue to pay for police visibility and potentially overtime so that visitors and citizens feel safe at these cultural and tourism events.
17. I am willing to work with leaders from every level of government, regardless of political affiliation, to support the needs of Cincinnati. When the need arises to collaborate with other leaders from different political affiliations, I will not hesitate to reach out to those leaders to find out how we can work together for Cincinnati's benefit.