



GSSCC Candidate Questionnaire
Montgomery County Council – At-Large

Name: Jill

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Elected Office You are Seeking: County Council, At-Large

Legislative District: _____

Number of Years Lived in that District: 25 years

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Relevant Non-governmental Professional Experience/Positions Held: Principal, T.E.A.M. Consulting; Communications and development consultant; Dir. Of Development, FPI; Production Coordinator/Producer CTNA; Habitat for Humanity, Press Relations Officer; Director of Public Affairs, WCPE

1. GSSCC believes that a thriving business community brings prosperity for all of our citizens by increasing the number of good private sector jobs and expanding the tax base to support necessary public services.
 - Please list all the initiatives/legislation you have supported/or would support to foster the growth of existing businesses and encourage new business creation.
 - I support the public/private partnership of the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation. As a Council member I will pursue energizing and bolstering this partnership to ensure they have the resources they need. Increase tax credits and incentives to attract high-wage companies. I support job training, high school career programs, dual enrollment and stacking credentials and certifications beginning in high school to prepare more students for high paying jobs. Our unemployment is very low, but companies must import the workers they need to fill higher paying jobs. Attract and support more incubator spaces. Support small business growth through streamlining permitting, and grandfathering regulations. Connect more businesses to WorkSource Montgomery. Support partnerships with local banks to expand business loan availability. Review with businesses what is working now, and what they would like improved.
 - Please describe your plan for increasing the tax base – rather than tax rates – in the County.
 - Increase revenue through increased economic activity. Support social mobility through higher wage opportunities, more affordable housing and access to reliable and affordable public transportation options. Support small businesses with
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 - What is your plan for making Montgomery County more attractive to businesses looking to expand or relocate (i.e. increased tax incentives, subsidies, streamlining the development approval process)?
 - Yes. See above.

2. Montgomery County leaders have continued to approve increases in the County's operating budget that require spending at levels exceeding private sector growth. GSSCC believes the County government needs to do a better job of living within its means. This is even more important given the recent announcement of a \$120 million revenue shortfall for the current fiscal year.
 - Did you or would you have supported the 2016 property tax increase?
 - As the size and needs of the school system grew over the last 8 years by the size of a high school a year, with the poverty rate of students' climbing as well, property taxes did not increase from 2009-2015. Among other strategies to compensate for lack of adequate funding, class sizes increased twice, teacher training was cut, and choice programming (gifted and talented, second language and other choice programs) did not grow with the size of the population increase. The 8.7% tax increase was intended to make up the \$90 million school funding gap, however, only a little over half the increase is going to schools. The lump sum was a steep climb for many property owners and an incremental tax increase would have been more bearable for our residents.
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 - Did you or would you have supported the 2016 recordation tax increase?
 - The recordation tax increase was needed for capital funds as MCPS has 11,000 students in 437 portables. It would cost over \$800 million to get all those students into seats in additions. Also, MCPS has a \$790 million backlog of system-wide facility needs like HVAC, windows, roofs, plumbing, wiring and compliance needs. Even with the recordation tax increase and the property tax increase, the County still had a \$120 shortfall in revenue for this fiscal year. We must increase economic activity because the taxes have not addressed the level of increasing need, and we can't raise them again as we don't want families to leave the county because the cost of living has gotten so high.
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 - Did you or would you have supported the eventual phase out of the County's exorbitant energy tax?
 - We need to identify replacement revenue for the energy tax as it has risen substantially and was scheduled to expire. I do support the credit for rainscapes with up to \$10,000 in rebates for conservation landscaping, and the exemption of electricity generated through onsite solar installation from the tax, and other incentives for companies to use solar.
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 - Other than raising taxes, what ideas do you have for creating an economy that will meet the growing needs of county residents?
 - We need an economic development plan designed through a collaboration with our municipalities, businesses, and residents. Do a needs assessment and map out community assets. Equitably locate new assets to attract business – especially around areas most accessible to underutilized public transportation.
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 - Would you support consolidation of some County Government functions in order to reduce costs? If so, please describe which programs or services you would recommend be consolidated, reduced, or eliminated.
 - Yes. I would support a review and evaluation of services based on resident usage rates.
 - Other comments:
3. In recent years, our members have faced an increasing number of federal, state, and expanded local regulations that directly impact their ability to remain viable.

- Did you or would you have supported the additional increase to the Montgomery County minimum wage to \$15 by 2020?
 - By increasing the minimum wage, more residents are able to pump money back into the economy, pay for child care and higher education, meet the needs of their families for thriving communities, and decrease dependency on county services. Businesses that were and will be most impacted by this increase – particularly small businesses and businesses with small profit margins should be rewarded with credits and incentives as they are make a direct contribution to the economic growth and vitality to the community.
- Did you or would you have supported mandatory sick leave, even for part-time employees?
 - I do support mandatory sick leave for workers. Temporary part-time employees who choose working hours should be exempt from the sick leave. I support generalized leave which can be used however a worker chooses (sickness, maternity, vacation).
- Do you support an employer’s right to hire and schedule its employees according to its individual needs?
 - Businesses should be able to hire according to need. For families who are dependent on jobs with unpredictable schedules, I support guidelines that encourage management to publish schedules in advance to make arrangements for child and eldercare. Family friendly environments foster employee loyalty, retention and higher performance.

Do you support legislation that dictates minimum work hours or scheduling requirements?

- A spectrum of flexible work options for employees is preferable to match the scheduling availability of residents looking for different opportunities that match their lifestyles, and mandatory minimums could make it harder for some start-up businesses. For large businesses, they must have benefit options for lower hour employees that don’t make the threshold for healthcare purposefully out-of-reach for employees, as healthy workers are an important element of a job-ready and productive county workforce.
 - What policy ideas do you have to enhance the success of our member job-creators?
 - I’d be most interested in their experiences and feedback. Before proposing changes, I would want to hear what they believe has worked well; what is cumbersome, outdated or unaligned, and what new policies would be most helpful.
 - Other comments:
4. Prior to considering any legislation, the County Council seeks a Fiscal Impact Statement to determine the impact of that legislation on the County’s budget.
- Would you support a law that requires the same kind of analysis to determine the fiscal economic impact on businesses and non-profits, prior to consideration and enactment of any new law or regulation?
 - Yes
 - Would you require that this analysis include interviews and discussions with actual business owners?
 - Why or why not?

- Interviews and discussions with business owners are essential to learning from their experience and insight to smart, effective and efficient decisions are made without unintended consequences.
5. Many of our small- and medium-sized business members feel that the policies adopted most recently by County government reflect a lack of appreciation for the contributions they make to our community. Please describe your understanding of the difference between the challenges faced by large multinational companies and small locally owned/operated businesses. Provide three specific examples of how you will support small businesses and ensure opportunities for them to grow and expand.
- Progressive tax structure so smaller businesses are less impacted
 - Use small, local businesses for county procurement
 - Promote small businesses and reward their contributions through the Economic Development Corporation
 - Expand the use of Move grants to be use to reduce cost of leasing space.
6. The Silver Spring Central Business District was envisioned to become a smart-growth live/work/play community. However, in recent years, Silver Spring has evolved into a primarily residential neighborhood (bedroom community), with virtually no commercial office development in the past 10 years. Local retailers and restaurants are feeling the brunt of having fewer and fewer customers during office hours. What will you do to address this and help bring more businesses back to Silver Spring?
- Incentivise businesses to lease in Silver Spring
 - Work with the Economic Development Corporation to locate incubators in this space
 - Examine zoning and planning, and recommend changes through process as necessary
7. The Route 29 Corridor in Eastern Montgomery County has suffered from a lack of commercial and other development for many years. Traffic congestion has increased, and most of it is through traffic to the Beltway or downtown D.C. Few, if any new employment opportunities have been created to provide jobs that would take these cars off the road. What are you going to do to ensure economic development that brings new businesses to Silver Spring including downtown and the East County/Rt. 29 Corridor?
- Strategically attract industries to locate in these areas. Market the extraordinary assets of our county, particularly the linguistic and cultural diversity of this area, and access to three international airports, to the world market. The Rt. 29 corridor is a perfect area for international business hubs, and I would work with our international community to attract those businesses.
8. The Chamber supports a balanced approach to transportation policies that take into account the needs of our member businesses, their employees, their customers, and their vendors. That balance must accommodate those who use public transit, drive on our roads, travel by bicycle and on foot, and need sufficient parking options at their destination.
- Please describe your approach to finding the right balance of transit, roads, parking, and other transportation options.
 - We need to start with having the public transportation infrastructure to take more of the weight of traffic off the roads. Connectivity is very important to job access for our most vulnerable families. Parking is essential for access to businesses, and we must make sure it is a priority when developing. Roads must be maintained, but repaving has to be better coordinated with utilities, and state highway funds must be invested.

- How will you assure the future success of the Metro?
 - If the current state legislation passes, we will have \$150 million more in dedicated funds for metro
 - We should concentrating housing and development around underutilized metro stations with attractive amenities and
 - Connecting metro with other transportation options including BRT and Purple Line.
- What will you do to address the needs and concerns of businesses that expect to be harmed financially during the construction of The Purple Line?
 - Advocate for the needs of the businesses for access and parking. Be creative in supporting businesses with assistance in marketing and promotion.

9. What is your vision for the future of greater Silver Spring and Montgomery County over the next 5 years?

- See below.

10. If elected, how will you measure your success at the end of your term?

- If the number of families living in poverty has gone down; the availability, reliability, affordability, access of public transportation options has gone up along with usage, if the schools are best preparing students to meet the requirements of county businesses, and are college-read if that is the path they choose, if we have substantially reduced our carbon footprint, more high-wage businesses have located here, and we become a location known for innovative start-ups.