



Cleveland Heights City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Dear Candidate:

This questionnaire is a prerequisite for consideration for endorsement by the Cleveland Heights Democrats at our endorsement meeting at 7:00 p.m. on September 13, 2017 at the Cleveland Heights Community Center, One Monticello Boulevard, Cleveland Heights, Ohio. You are encouraged to attend this meeting, and if you choose to do so, you will be given an opportunity to speak to the Club prior to the voting on endorsements.

With respect to the endorsement meeting, only club members who are in good standing and on the official membership roster for thirty or more consecutive days prior to September 13, 2017 may vote on the endorsements. A majority of those members in good standing present and voting make an endorsement for office.

Please complete and return this questionnaire to Screening Committee Chair Katura Simmons at katuras414@yahoo.com, 1736 Wood Road, Cleveland Heights, 44121, no later than September 4th at 5:00 PM. This is a Word Document, and we request that you insert your responses in the appropriate spaces in the questionnaire.

Name: Melissa Yasinow

Residence Address: 2964 Washington Blvd.

Home Tel: N/A

Mobile Tel: 216-395-4629

Email: YasinowForCouncil@gmail.com

By completing and returning this Candidate Questionnaire, I affirm the following:

1. I am a registered Democrat.
2. I agree to comply with the purpose of the Club as stated in Article 1, Section 2 of the Constitution, that is:

The purpose of this organization shall be to provide a means by which residents of Cleveland Heights can organize to promote and develop the highest principles of the Democratic Party, to improve the administration of government, and to work for the good of all citizens. This organization shall endorse and support for public office all candidates whose election will, in the judgment of the membership, best advance the

Purpose. In pursuing its Purpose, this organization may also cooperate with the National, State, and County Democratic Committees, and pursue other programs of benefit to the community.

3. I agree not to openly oppose any Democratic nominee in a general partisan election.
4. I agree not to openly support any opponent of a Democratic nominee in a general partisan election.
5. I have not violated the above 1-4 during the past five (5) years.

If you cannot affirm as to numbers 2-4 please explain your reasoning here:

Please answer all of the following questions.

1. What do you hope to accomplish on behalf of the community as a member of the City Council?

As a member of Cleveland Heights City Council I hope to continue to strengthen the City as it promotes fiscal sustainability and economic development and growth. I am proud of the work I have done so far on Council, where I serve as Chair of the Municipal Services Committee. Some of the major projects that I am proud of, and hope to build on, include the establishment of a Budget Stabilization Fund, the development of Top of the Hill, and the execution of an Energy Savings Contract, that is projected to save the City \$11.5 million over the next 20 years.

2. What qualities, skills, insights, or perspectives do you possess which would be of value as a member of the City Council?

As shown through my previous four years on Council, I am a passionate advocate for the citizens of Cleveland Heights. I know how to work with our Council and City Manager to enable progress and reform in our City, such as through the strengthening of our Human Rights Ordinance, while addressing local and regional challenges, such as cuts to the Local Government Fund and our transition to Cleveland Water. Additionally, of any candidate, I have the deepest roots in this City. I was born here, and I'm a fifth-generation resident; my great-grandfather is listed on the Cumberland Park Veterans Memorial. In Cleveland Heights, I see my family's past as well as its future, and I feel a great responsibility to those generations that have passed, as well as to those who have yet to come.

3. What education, employment, and/or life experiences have prepared you to serve as a member of the City Council?

I am a current member of Cleveland Heights City Council, so I know first-hand the requirements for the position. In addition to my work on Cleveland Heights City Council, I am a sixth-year attorney at Kohrman Jackson & Krantz. Additionally, I am a *magna cum laude* graduate of the Case Western Reserve University School of Law. My professional and educational background have taught me how to manage time, research and address complex issues, and work together with my co-workers to accomplish a common goal. I also know the importance of listening to others, particularly Cleveland Heights constituents, to address their needs and concerns on a timely basis.

4. Describe your recent community, professional, charitable, and political involvement. Is there one situation where your participation made a difference?

In addition to my service on Cleveland Heights City Council and my professional experience, as listed above, I am highly involved in local Democratic causes. Among other responsibilities, I am a Trustee for the Cleveland Heights Democratic Club, a Steering Committee Member for the Cuyahoga County Democratic Women’s Caucus (“CDWC”), and a Central and Executive Committee Member for the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party. In addition, I helped found “East Side Progressive Action,” an organization of progressive women in the aftermath of the 2016 Election. I believe that my involvement in these organizations has made a difference. For example, I pushed the CDWC to host its first-ever event for female judicial candidates in 2016. Likewise, I was able to secure a speaker from the ACLU for the May 2017 Cleveland Heights Democratic Club Meeting after a previously scheduled speaker cancelled at the last minute. Finally, in helping create “East Side Progressive Action,” I helped women who had never before been involved with politics organize and host events on behalf of Democratic causes, including a fundraiser for Kathleen Clyde that raised over \$15,000 dollars.

5. How will you raise funds for your campaign?

I will be hosting a fundraiser with Councilman Michael Ungar on September 10. Additionally, I have been raising funds for the past several months from friends and supporters. I am also raising funds through my website: www.YasinowAndUngarForCouncil.com

6. Following is a list of issues facing the City of Cleveland Heights. Please choose three or more and briefly describe how you propose to address the issues you select. You are welcome to write about a different issue, if you like, in addition to writing about at least three of the issues listed below.

- a. Spurring economic and community development that grows our tax base and maintains Cleveland Heights as a vibrant community.

I wholeheartedly support development in our community, and I believe that we should be proactive about fostering such programs. I championed the decision to partner with Flaherty & Collins to develop the Top of the Hill, a project that has been decades in the making. Additionally, I look forward to working with Namdar Realty Group, which owns Severance Town Center, to encourage phased improvements and development within Severance Center. Finally, I believe that the best way to encourage development within Cleveland Heights is to do so with the input of the community. I am proud of the public hearings and forums that we have had and will continue to have concerning Top of the Hill, the Coventry PEACE Campus, and the Mayfield Triangle. I pledge to listen to the community in the development and growth of our City.

- b. Reducing crime and enhancing the quality of life on our streets and in our neighborhoods.

I strongly support our police and fire safety services in making Cleveland Heights a safe place to live. I endorsed and worked hard to help pass Issue 53 in 2015, which helped us maintain adequate fire and police staff throughout the City. Further, I support the expansion of bike patrol and security cameras in our business districts, and the creation and expansion of additional interactive events between our citizens and our safety forces. For example, we recently had our fourth annual Safety Forces Night in early August. This was our largest event and it drew in new community organizations that had never before been involved, such as Everytown for Gun Safety. Finally, I hope to listen to residents to address their safety and quality-of-life concerns by attending regular community meetings as well as Meet Your Police nights.

- c. Achieving sufficient revenues to provide good city services. For example, adequate safety forces, efficient garbage and rubbish collection, snow removal, etc.

As Chair of Cleveland Heights Municipal Services Committee and a Member of the Finance Committee, I know first-hand the importance of maintaining sufficient revenue to support City services. In 2015, I championed the passage of Issue 53 to guarantee adequate staffing for our safety forces. Likewise, I supported our City Manager in authorizing the creation of the Budget Stabilization Fund and the creation of a rotating five-year Capital Improvement Plan. I hope to guarantee sufficient revenue for our City by assisting our staff in: (i) advocating for our City to receive earlier and increased funding opportunities—which resulted in the early repaving of Noble Road; (ii) adopting new and innovative approaches to save resources—such as the Energy Savings Contract that will save \$11.5 million over 20 years, and; (iii) developing dedicated funding streams for capital improvement projects—which includes the timely maintenance, purchasing, and selling of safety vehicles.