

THE ISSUES: LEXINGTON COUNCIL AT-LARGE


Candidates were asked to answer each question in 45 words or fewer.

LILLIE E. MILLER-JOHNSON

Born: Feb. 22, 1955
Residence: 1050 Russell Cave Road #4110
Occupation: Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor
Website: www.lilliemiller4council2018.com
 No answers provided.

CHARLES ELLINGER

Born: April 13, 1964
Residence: 1823 Nicholasville
 Road
Occupation: Attorney, investor
Website: Chuckellinger.com

STEVE KAY

Born: Sept. 28, 1943
Residence: 250 Campsie
 Place
Occupation: Consultant; vice mayor
Website: Kayforcouncil.com

CONNIE KELL

Born: Nov. 20, 1953
Residence: 3909 Weber
 Way
Occupation: Retired auditor
Website: None

RICHARD MOLONEY

Born: March 11, 1960
Residence: 126 Westgate Drive
Occupation: Council at-large member
Website: Richardmoloney.com

ADRIAN WALLACE

Born: July 25, 1985
Residence: 2825 Jenna Rest
Occupation: President and CEO of Bishop and Chase, a nonprofit
Website: Wallaceforlexington.com

QUALITIES
 Why are you the better candidate to be Lexington's vice mayor?

I'm the best candidate because of my leadership and experience. I'm a former at-Large council member from 2003-2014, who served many years as the Budget and Finance Committee chairperson. In the Herald-Leader's endorsement, they described me as collegial and focused on building consensus.

In my first term as vice mayor I have worked collaboratively with council colleagues and the administration to move a number of significant initiatives forward. That experience will be especially valuable in working with a new administration and new council colleagues.

I have over 15 years of service working for state and local government as an accountant and governmental auditor. Now, it's time for new energy serving Lexington. I pledge to strive for Lexington to be the model city that other cities want to be.

I am running for council at-large, and I would be very honored to become vice mayor should I get the most votes. I have experience in a variety of positions and believe I am uniquely qualified for the job.

In Lexington, we speak 175 languages. We are diverse. I am the only candidate running who has a proven track record for building bridges across difference. As the only veteran and the only candidate raising school-aged children, I get who Lexington is in 2018.

TOP PRIORITY
 How would you fix the most pressing problem facing Lexington?

Increasing violent crime and the opioid epidemic is our most pressing problem. Last year, Lexington set a record for homicides. There is a direct correlation with homicides and drugs. We must have adequate funding for prevention, intervention and rehabilitation. Public safety is my top priority.

The most important short and long-term challenge is maintaining our high quality of life while we grow. I have led efforts to make smart policy decisions about infill and redevelopment projects because our rural heritage is an indispensable part of what makes Lexington exceptional.

I thought about this question long and hard. The opioid epidemic, crime, and poverty need constant attention for a resolution to these problems. Always engaging and networking with community leaders, social services, health care workers, public safety agencies and philanthropists.

I have already taken steps to fix the opioid problem by initiating the lawsuit against drug manufacturers. I will continue to work with our Department of Social Services and other nonprofit service providers to put the \$2 million grant to best use fighting this problem.

I would fix income inequality by supporting small business owners with capital investment, by helping people move into home ownership, and by equipping people to get better paying jobs.

DEBT
 The city spends more than 11 percent of its revenue to pay off debts. How much debt is appropriate?

When I was on council we created the current debt management plan. We had a debt service goal of 10 percent. It has since been raised to 12 percent. I think the 10 percent goal is more fiscally responsible, especially since interest rates are rising.

Debt should be avoided when possible, but sometimes it costs less in the long run to move forward now with projects via bonding. Lexington has a top bond rating which means we issue bonds at favorable rates. I believe the present spending rate is appropriate.

The more a government spends on financing its debt, the less it will have available to fund ongoing services. Lexington should strive to have its governmental debt service expenditure ratio be lower than 11 percent. Lexington must focus on lost revenue..

I like us to be at 10 percent or below.

I would like to see Lexington have a surplus with zero debt. There are circumstances when debt is appropriate, like when we buy a home. I would like any debt that we acquire to be limited to infrastructure and/or direct aid to Lexingtonians.

INFRASTRUCTURE
 What is Lexington's most important infrastructure need in coming years and how should it be funded?

The most important infrastructure need in Lexington is the EPA consent degree to repair our sewer systems. The consent degree mandates that we will repair the systems at a cost of around \$600 million by the deadline of 2026.

We must meet the provisions of our consent decree with the Environmental Protection Agency or face significant fines. Fixing chronic problems with our storm water and sanitary sewer systems must be our top priority. Planned increases in the sanitary sewer fee will fund that work.

1) Continued enforcement by the Division of Water Quality of EPA's consent decree of the city's storm water system to decrease sewage overflows; maintain good quality of the city's water supply 2) Bridges to improve flow of traffic 3) Solar power.

As a member of the Parks Advisory Board, I support the recommendations of the Parks Master Plan. Over the next 15 to 20 years, we'll need to allocate \$5 million each budget cycle for new park projects, improvements and maintenance. I'll work towards this goal.

As we maintain our Urban Service Boundary and become more densely populated, we must expand our roads, make our sidewalks more walkable, expand our bike lanes, and improve our city transit with a 50-year transit plan that includes light rail.

POLICE
 Do you support hiring more police officers to create a fourth police sector in Lexington?

Public Safety is my top priority. We need to hire more police officers to create a fourth police sector. Currently, the east sector has too large of a geographical area to cover. Moreover, we need a continued emphasis on community policing.

Public safety is paramount, so dollars spent on public safety must be spent wisely. Before making a decision about creating a fourth police sector I would need to see the full costs and the reasons why that is the best option for improved public safety.

Yes, I support having a fourth police sector in Lexington. This has been discussed over the years. Safety is a priority. We must have safe neighborhoods.

Yes. The opioid epidemic impacts our crime rates and drains our public safety resources. I support adding a police sector to widen the reach of police patrol and other effective law enforcement programs.

Lexington spends 56 percent of its budget on public safety. While we may need to create a fourth police sector and add officers, I would prioritize community policing. We need to take a prevention and intervention approach that reduces the need for policing over time.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING
 How will you make housing more affordable for low-income residents in Lexington?

We created the Affordable Housing Program in 2014. We need over 6,000 units in the next 12 years. The council has put in \$11 million since it was created and it has been able to leverage over \$86 million. We must continue to fund it.

I will continue to strengthen the Affordable Housing Fund. As I did in the last budget cycle, I will again advocate for adding \$1 million to the \$2 million already allocated. We have added or preserved 1,300 units, but the unmet need is still great.

Don't ask for affordable housing, ask for jobs paying sustainable living wages — working one job earning wages that allows individuals to be responsible homeowners. One of Lexington's largest employers, Conduent, pays "piece work" wages. Lexington needs more technical career opportunities that pay sustainable living wages.

I have been involved with affordable housing for more than 20 years and have always considered it a top issue. I think we are making progress, but we need to continue to be creative and leverage local funding so that more affordable housing is developed.

We need to fund the affordable housing trust fund at the \$6 million requested by the director. We also need to partner with developers to ensure that new building developments are mixed income and include affordable housing.

GROWTH
 Under what circumstances should Lexington's urban service boundary be expanded?

The objective factors that potentially trigger thresholds for expansion must be vetted well in order to have smart, responsible growth. They need to look at population growth, demographics, diversity, affordable housing, mixed use and maximum use of land, to name just a few.

The Comprehensive Plan specifies a process to analyze all rural lands to identify any that might be suitable for development, and to identify the conditions that might allow for beneficial development. I will not support any expansion before that process is completed.

At some point, you must ask how much is enough? Lexington has reached this point. The urban service boundary shouldn't be expanded. My stance on this issue is to focus on quality, not growth. However, I do support the expansion of the Blue Grass Airport.

The boundary should only be expanded after careful consideration of needs. Right now we are focusing on infill and redevelopment of areas within the current boundary. When we do expand, I want it to be in areas that have sewer capacity and other necessary infrastructure.

I believe in smart growth that focuses on equitable infill and redevelopment. I believe we should create a committee to draft criteria for expansion. By 2030, Lexington is projected to reach 375,000 in population and to have maxed out the capacity of our current boundary.

CITY HALL
 Will you push for a new government center in the next four years? If so, should it be built by the city or through a private-public partnership?

The next administration needs to make this a top priority. We have "kicked this can" long enough. We have at least \$22 million in deferred maintenance on the city's five downtown buildings. As interest rates rise, so does the cost of a new city hall.

We need a new government center. Finding the best path forward will be an exciting challenge for the new council. I intend to listen, lead, and work collaboratively to meet that challenge. I will keep an open mind regarding the best option for funding.

No, I see no reason for a new government center within the next four years. When I was LFUCG revenue supervisor, my office was on the second floor. The building needs remodeling/repairs, but there's no need for a new government center at this time.

Yes. I am committed to building on government-owned property, but I am open minded on whether it should be a public private partnership or funded through bonding. There are pros and cons for both that need to be carefully considered.

I want a holistic plan which looks at new spaces while considering how we leverage current spaces to generate funds or meet other needs. I favor a private-public partnership that has favorable terms for the city and meets all of our needs, including parking.