

Council candidate Hillary Kwiatek at LV4ALL

The Bethlehem Gadfly Candidates for election, Election February 25, 2021

 Latest in a series of posts on candidates for election 

Candidate for City Council Hillary Kwiatek at the Lehigh Valley for All “Meet the Candidates” event February 17.

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I am a resident of the west side, and I work at Lehigh, so I am an employee on the Southside. And I love the whole city. I’ve lived here since 2000. I moved here with my family. I’ve been thinking about running for a while, but recently sat in a great Zoom session with Professor _____ from Lehigh talking about what are the actions we can take to really make change. Lehigh is working toward being an anti-racist institution, and I would also like to see Bethlehem move in that direction. And some of the things she said really stuck with me. And that was if you want a just world, you need to have a just community. And this is the community that I live in and that I love, so that is my goal. I have a 4-part progressive vision for the City. I think that we are totally up to the challenge. First, recovering from the pandemic is the number one priority, but we can do that through an inclusive, transparent approach to economic development. I want to be on the Council to ask those questions. Will this project bring family-sustaining wages to people without college degrees? Are we just looking to build luxury condominiums? Or are we really going to look at how we can integrate affordable housing, affordable rental properties into those plans as well? So that’s really important to me because I believe we will only really emerge as stronger on the other side _____, the whole community along with us. Next, re-imagining public safety. This to me means not just looking at policing in a vacuum but integrating our approach to public health and our approach to policing. I do think that Chief Kott is on the right track in a lot of ways, but I would love to be there as well to ask how we approach that. There are a lot of new models



in cities that are bringing out social workers, public health professionals who are disrupting the police engagement when people are in crisis over things that are non-violent and non-criminal. So I'd like to pursue that. I believe that we can be a vibrant and sustainable City for all, that includes supporting our small businesses, not just on the west side of the Southside but on the east side where there are so many great small business people. Also, all over the City we have great small businesses that I would like to be able to listen to, hear their needs, and see what Council can do. I also support the Climate Action Plan very much and being a model Green City will be a big part in our bounce back from the pandemic and our move into the future. Finally, I want to not just address racism and inequity in policing but in everything we do in the City, so I would want to identify and eliminate racist and discriminatory practices across all aspects of City government. Black lives matter and Latino lives matter, and that's very important to me. I work at Lehigh. I have worked in non-profits and higher education doing fundraising and communications for twenty years. I was honored to serve with Councilman Reynolds on his Connect Bethlehem plan to learn how we can connect better as a City with community members.

There are 6 candidates running for 4 seats on City Council. The other candidates are Bryan Callahan, Grace Crampsie Smith, Rachel Leon, Adam Waldron, Kiera Wilhelm.