**Diane Farsetta, candidate for District 12 Alder**

Campaign

1) Why are you running for elected office? What are your priority issues?

I’ve been active in my neighborhood for more than a decade, including as a council member and officer of the Emerson East Neighborhood Association (EENA), serving as EENA’s liaison to the then-East Isthmus Neighborhood Planning Council and as a core volunteer with the Occupy Madison Tiny Homes Village. I care about our area and will work hard to effectively represent it at the City level.

I’m running for City Council because Madison is facing major decisions - including how to develop the Public Market and redevelop Oscar Mayer, and how to respond to studies of Madison police policies and practices - that need strong progressive decision-makers at the table. My priority issues include expanding affordable housing, ensuring that developments facilitate transportation alternatives and support small local businesses, and broadening the dialogue around community security concerns to include public health responses and neighborhood capacity-building, as well as a well-trained, accountable and diverse police force.

2) What is your campaign’s strategy to be successful during the election?

Our strategy includes a heavy focus on voter outreach at the doors, along with multiple events and lit drops prior to the February 19 primary, plus conversations with neighborhood associations and other local leaders.

3) Who is on your campaign team? (Treasurer, Campaign Manager, Volunteer Coordinator, etc.)

We have a strong grassroots campaign team with most members coming from the district, including two former EENA co-chairs - Meredith Lowe as working treasurer and Chris Heaton as data / walk list manager - plus Jessica LeClair as volunteer coordinator, Heidi Wegleitner as treasurer and advisor, John Peck and Janet Parker. Team members from outside the district include events coordinator Bruce Wallbaum, messaging advisor Kira Stewart and graphics / layout artist Norm Littlejohn.

Legislative

4) There will be many new alders on the 2019 Council. If you are an incumbent, what challenges does that present and how will you respond? If you are not an incumbent, please describe the experiences that prepare you to hit the ground running as an alder.

In addition to my neighborhood involvement, I have served multiple terms on the City’s Sister City Collaboration Committee, including a year as vice-chair. I am a graduate of the Wisconsin Women’s Policy Institute of the Wisconsin Women’s Network. I also have policy experience at the state and national levels. As the former Executive Director of the Wisconsin Network of Peace and Justice, I organized several state advocacy days to to highlight member groups’ priorities, such as immigrant rights, clean energy and opposition to race-based school mascots. As the former National Field Organizer for the East Timor Action Network/U.S., I helped organize national call-in and lobby days of members of the U.S. Congress.

5) What key recommendations are you looking for from the Task Force on Structure of City

Government?

Addressing the City’s committee system - how well it does or doesn’t represent different geographic areas, different kinds of expertise and diverse communities - is a vital part of the Task Force’s work. Committee structure, process, and meeting location and times should all be designed to facilitate meaningful and diverse citizen involvement in local government.

The task force will also address the size of the City Council. It’s imperative that the Council keep at least 20 members, to maintain accessibility and accountability of local government to our residents. I think a strong argument could be made to increase the Council’s size, as doing so would make it easier for constituents to connect with their Alder and would lower the barriers to running for office.

6) What do you consider to be the key recommendations from the OIR Report?

Of the many excellent recommendations in the OIR Report on Madison police policies and procedures, three areas stand out to me: strengthening officer training around de-escalation, trauma-informed practices and mental health crises; collecting and making available public data on police officer activities as well as analyzing demographic data related to arrests, summons and use of force; and enhancing civilian oversight through an independent auditor’s office and civilian review body.

Improved training around trauma, crisis and de-escalation is necessary to address the tragic incidents of officers shooting people who were having mental health crises or behaving erratically due to drug or alcohol use. Collecting and reporting data is the most meaningful way to assess the impact of changes to police policies and procedures. Lastly, increasing independent and civilian oversight of the police addresses the need for community control and addresses the erosion in public trust following multiple shootings, excessive use of force (especially against youth of color) and the defensive responses of police leadership to expressions of concern and calls for reform.

7) The City’s strategy for increasing affordable housing has relied upon Low Income Housing Tax Credit project developments. This approach is not creating enough units to meet the need.

What alternative approaches would you pursue to increase low income housing to meet the

need? Describe a model housing project, including location, design, unit sizes, rents, shared

spaces, and funding sources.

It’s great news that the City’s Affordable Housing Fund is on track to meet its first five-year goal, but it’s far from enough to address our low-income and workforce housing needs. To ensure that major projects - like the Public Market, Oscar Mayer redevelopment and possibly Bus Rapid Transit - don’t lead to gentrification, I support establishing community land trusts for permanently-affordable housing and commercial spaces in areas of rising value. To increase the level of local funding available for affordable housing, I would explore revolving loan funds, general obligation bonds and development impact fees. I would also ensure that private developers who receive public funds are held to community benefit agreements or other enforceable mechanisms addressing the social, economic, workforce and environmental aspects of construction projects. The City should also encourage private sector responses, such as cooperative or or other house-sharing arrangements and preserving and improving existing affordable housing.

My model housing project would be infill development, located near multiple transportation options (such as bus lines, park and ride areas and bicycle lanes) and green space. It would meet high energy efficiency standards, include solar arrays and be landscaped to allow the gradual infiltration of heavy rainfalls. Most units would be affordable, including for extremely-low income families at 30 percent of area median income, but some units would be market rate. There would be 1, 2 and 3 bedroom affordable units, to welcome different family sizes. There would be a community room with kitchenette in each building that could also be used, with permission, by organizations near the housing project to foster neighborhood connections. Most funding would come from private sources, with gap financing from a mix of nonprofit partners and public funding from the city, county and federal levels.

8) Attached is the Progressive Dane Platform for the City of Madison. Please review it and explain how you would prioritize and implement our platform positions. Is there any proposal you would not support? Are we missing something?

My campaign priorities directly relate to and are in agreement with the Progressive Dane City Platform sections on housing justice, community-centered and -controlled policing, sustainable economic development and safe, efficient, accessible transportation. Several of these could be advanced around proposed developments. Those related to the police could be advanced around reports on potential policy and procedure reforms, calls for reform from grassroots advocates or - much less desirably - in response to incidents. Other priority issues, like civil and human rights or a clean environment, must be considered broadly and with regard to process as well as policy. I don’t see anything in the platform with which I would disagree.

While the Progressive Dane City Platform is extensive, I do not see mention of ensuring women’s reproductive rights. Currently, women don’t have access to abortion services in Madison past 19 weeks of pregnancy. Related to the aging of the population (although Madison is a relatively young city, compared to most of the rest of the state), I would add support for older residents aging in place, and supporting living wages, safe working conditions and advancement opportunities for direct care and home care staff.

Progressive Dane Involvement

9) What interests you in seeking the endorsement of Progressive Dane?

My personal politics very much align with those of Progressive Dane. I have volunteered on multiple PD-endorsed campaigns and have worked with the party on priority issues of the Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice. The current and former elected officials who I know from decades of grassroots activism in Madison are affiliated with Progressive Dane. I would also count PD electeds among the most effective local officials.

10) How will you coordinate with other PD elected officials and the Progressive Dane Policy

Committee to work on issues?

I will seek out other PD Alders as natural allies on the Council and look to Policy Committee analyses and priority issues as guidance from thoughtful, experienced people. Coming from a grassroots activist background, I understand the importance of articulating policy analyses and clearly communicating in advance about opportunities to shape City decisions, via Progressive Dane as well as through other channels more focused towards district residents.

11) We also do our best to keep members informed of civic issues. How will you help keep our

members informed? Will you write an article for the PD newsletter or blog during the year and

attend at least one General Membership Meeting (fourth Wednesday) to engage members on

your efforts?

Yes, I would be happy to write articles and attend meetings, as I am able.

12) If endorsed, will you assign a liaison from your campaign team to the elections committee to

help inform our members about how they can support your campaign.

Yes.

13) Are you currently a members of Progressive Dane? If yes, for how long? If no, are you willing to be?

Yes. I set up a recurring donation years ago and more recently ensured that my membership was current.

14) If you get the endorsement are you willing to commit to using it in your campaign materials?

Of course!