

## Candidate Questionnaire

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Sierra Club Sonoma Group  
May 2021 Windsor Town Council Special Election



### **JULIA DONOHO**

Donoho for Windsor Town Council 2021

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Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your questionnaire. I first ran in 2006 when my daughter was very small and I was working full-time. I bring it up because I created a campaign logo then with a Green wave to indicate my commitment to build green and reduce our GHG footprint.

Question 1. Please describe your public service record on environmental and social justice issues, particularly membership and leadership in environmental organizations, work on conservation and climate justice campaigns, public positions you have taken and activities you have initiated or actively supported.

I was the lead project manager for the Comprehensive Energy Project at the County of Sonoma which involved multiple energy efficiency measures throughout county facilities, reducing greenhouse gases and saving the taxpayer millions at the same time. My project included the construction of a fuel cell power plant in partnership with PG&E and reducing water usage at the jail by 10,000,000 gallons per month.

Additionally, I was responsible for supervising the installation of electrical vehicle charging stations around the county, and I own two plug-in-vehicles as part of my commitment to reduce our GHG footprint.

Like many architects, I have a keen interest in protecting the environment, and have taught workshops on building sustainably and designed a variety of dwellings and structures using alternative energy and materials. I have advocated and voted for the Green Code and measures to advance environmental responsibility my whole career.

Question 2. If elected to the City Council, what will be your priorities?

My first priority is creating a defensible edge around our town and working with the County to pre-defeat wildfire onslaught. My other priorities include sustainable water supply and usage; planning and regulations for a healthy, resilient, and sustainable community; sustainable operations and maintenance of Town facilities; increasing the utilization of solar throughout the Town; and promotion of policies that protect the environment.

Question 3. All the jurisdictions in Sonoma County have committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but have fallen short of their initial goals. What will you do in your first 100 days to reduce GHGs in your city? How should your city mitigate GHGs from tourism? What long-term actions should your city take to help city residents and businesses, especially those most disadvantaged, adapt to global warming?

I will advocate for more incentives and awareness programs and promote more solar, including for apartments, rentals and affordable housing, and more EV stations around Town so that people can live and work without burning fossil fuels.

Question 4. What natural resources/systems (such as creeks, wetlands, open spaces) within your city's urban growth boundary do you consider in need of protection or restoration?

Walking door to door this year, I have heard a lot of complaints about our creek areas being filled with debris – creating wildfire hazard and inviting the homeless. A clean up of that scale will require a community effort. I have done this on a large scale when I was part of the Friends of the Los Angeles River and we had annual clean up days. Still I think it would be worthwhile to organize the community to clean up these areas, while protecting themselves from poison oak.

Question 5. Where will your city get its potable water from over the next 20 years? How do you think your city can ensure water supply for its residents without jeopardizing water availability for the natural environment?

Many citizens are concerned that growth and the new tribal project will tax our water and sewer resources, and we have already seen a significant rise in water costs, so this is an urgent concern. We need new strategies for sustainable water resources. More non-potable landscaping, more incentives to retrofit with low flow fixtures and more low water landscaping are critical.

Question 6. Please describe how wastewater is disposed of and re-used in your city. When is wastewater re-use appropriate? What disposal or re-use methods would you support for your city?

In Windsor we have a non-potable landscape irrigation system. That is using just river water untreated, so it is not reuse. I am not aware of grey or brown water systems for the Town, but I have installed both in dwellings in my architectural work for clients who

prefer sustainable and energy efficient structures.

Question 7. How can your city encourage non-automobile and alternative fuel transportation, or create transportation efficiencies that will reduce trips?

The coming of SMART creates some opportunities to encourage residents to forego the 101 and use the train. The Windsor extension project got derailed during COVID due to a lack of funds. We will need to get that back on track. I have been an advocate for SMART and chaired a committee that sponsored a community Charette around the Guerneville Station to promote TOD Planning. I wrote my college thesis on transit-oriented development. I moved to Windsor to live within walking distance of the train stop and sent my daughter to high school on the SMART train.

Question 8. How has your city been using Smart Growth principles and how do you see your city growing in the future? What is your position on the Windsor Town Green project proposed by Robert Green Company?

Windsor is a leader in demonstrating Smart Growth principles, and it has led us to have a very walkable and cohesive community with one of the lowest crime rates in California. I would like to continue to develop with more Smart Growth strategies.

Around the Town Green, anything we build should reflect the culture and values of the residents. I support leveraging a good project to help increase the density and complete the container of our Community Living Room and would prefer to see family friendly activities and Civic functions on the Green and have the Hotel take a step back and focus on view of the vineyards. It would be so wonderful to have the Council Chambers, Library, and community services housed in a beautiful signature building on the site of our current library, as a backdrop to our stage, and to complete the fourth side of the Green with similar development strategy to the other two sides. The Hotel could still have a piece of the frontage but does not need the whole side. We also need to get the apartments next to Oliver's built and that project should never have been severed from the housing.

Question 9. What would you do to ensure the housing inside your Urban Growth Boundary becomes more affordable? What challenges do you see in creating additional affordable housing opportunities? Where should new affordable housing units be located? What are your thoughts on vacation rentals and time shares? Do you support efforts to control rents and/or raise minimum wages?

I have thought about this question since I first ran for Council and have done some research. It should not be estate homes - here - and affordable housing - over there - but whole neighborhoods with mixed socio-economic strata. I will advocate for making our neighborhood designs be reflective of a diverse society. I found a great example in Davis – at the Cannery. It is a healthy farm to table mix of housing densities and types around public spaces that make everyone live healthier.

Question 10. What is your position regarding Urban Growth Boundaries? What can your city do to assure that most future housing units are built in areas served by accessible public transit?

Urban Growth boundaries help us preserve the natural environment and create a healthier landscape for all Sonoma County jurisdictions. Where I would advocate for change would be around the perimeter to create a smooth and defensible edge.

I believe that housing developments must be designed to serve multiple socio-economic strata with higher density toward the core and/or major boulevards, and lower density toward the edges.

Question 11. Do you believe that your city is meeting the requirements of its Growth Management policy? How would you address traffic impact requirements and mitigations when much of downtown traffic comes from outside your city? How will you balance economic priorities and realities with environmental needs in your city?

The most urgent concerns right now regarding growth are traffic and parking. I am a big advocate for creating some additional municipal parking in the downtown area, to facilitate a healthy downtown business and activity environment.

Question 12. Do you support efforts to manage tourism to protect housing, the environment and quality of life for your residents?

Absolutely! And I would like to attract more Agritourism.

Question 13. Do you support the Black Lives Matter protests?

Yes, I participated in Washington in a Black Lives Matter march on Pennsylvania Avenue in 2016 then, after the Dallas Shootings, I successfully advocated for the first black architect to win the Gold Medal in architecture. The best thing about going to law school in your late thirties is that you get to relearn American and Constitutional history with an adult brain. I have stood up against bullies, against racism, against discrimination, and won, and will continue to advocate for social issues like unconscious bias training.

I stood up for Rosa Reynoza last year when I thought she was being discriminated against and there were people in town who have not forgiven it and have twisted it into something else. I do not agree with Rosa on some of her political stands, but I did stand up for her right to be treated fairly as she is trying to get a seat on council to represent a voice that is often drowned out.

Question 14. How do you plan to win the election? Please identify core constituencies and community leaders you expect will support you. How do you plan to fund your campaign? Who is your campaign consultant? What is your budget?

This is a very short election, two months Feb 5–Apr 5, and many people are not even aware of it. I plan to win by getting more votes. Door to door, eyeball to eyeball, having fun on a scooter, making structures with my signs, repeat ads, signs, mailers, and making sure people know my name and my qualifications. Being presentable, approachable and friendly, and just trying to enjoy every moment. I have already knocked on the doors of 8,500 voters.

My core constituencies are the voters. I am President of the Windsor Democratic Club and a member of the Central Committee. I know most of the County Supervisors personally, and I have lived here a long time. I have previous name recognition. I made some significant things happen after the Tubbs fire and increased name recognition through that. I am going door to door more intensely in my district in addition to the other three, because it has more voters, and have already made a second visit in my own neighborhood.

Because of the shortness of the election and my intent to run for District 4 next year, I am loaning myself \$10,000 to start, and filling in a little as we go and more later. Will start in January with a total campaign for District 4. I promised some people to run until elected and I intend to succeed.

Question 15. Why is an environmental endorsement important to you? If we endorse you, what are the most effective ways we can help you get elected?

As an architect who has taught how to build sustainably and built structures with straw and clay, with passive solar, with non-toxic and natural materials, I hope that I have earned your respect. I have put my money where my mouth is building sustainably, buying two plug-in vehicles, and now I am building a rental in Davis at the Cannery, with a house and an ADU with solar and purple pipe for landscape water. And, I pull the thistle up by the tap root rather than using weed killer.

What would help most for the campaign are developing positive social media posts, on Next door and similar sites, and articles, or newsletters broadcast to your Windsor membership.

Please include biographical information, applicable campaign literature and other information helpful in evaluating your candidacy.

I am a single Mom and I chose to move to Windsor to raise my daughter in a small, family friendly community for elementary and middle school. She let me coach her in soccer for three years, and I served on the Parent Board of her school and was highly involved. She is now 19 and in college at UC Davis so I have time to serve.

While raising her, I worked at the County of Sonoma in General Services as a Capital Project Manager for 11 years, providing construction management for a whole host of

facilities, getting to know every department and how to get things done in government. The last four years I spent in disaster recovery helping people rebuild their homes and recover their property and am now CEO of a company that is streamlining the insurance recovery process for policyholders.

Prior to moving here, I lived in Pagosa Springs Colorado where I served on the Planning Commission and many other committees and Boards. The Mayor invited me to be on a Community Facilities Committee to help transform public opposition to a Civic Center Project into public support for a Community Center project with a Teen Center, Senior Center, gymnasium, catering kitchen, media center, computer center, and crafts rooms.

My professional career is filled with service to professional associations and community based organizations. I completed Leadership Santa Rosa with Class XXV, and have served on the local, state and national boards of the American Institute of Architects. Previously I served as a Planning Commissioner, started an Historic Preservation Board, and served on the Steering Committee for a Community Plan. I studied architecture at Princeton University, and attended Empire College of Law for my Juris Doctorate. I am a licensed architect, attorney, and general contractor.

Thank you,  
Julia Donoho