

MBNC ZOOM MEETING, MEET THE CANDIDATE'S NIGHT (DISTRICT 5)

September 18th, 2024 @ 7:00pm - 8:40pm

A. Introductions/Announcements:

- Margarita Mitas, President of MBNC opened the meeting and welcomed everyone and introduced Kathy Watson as the technical assistant. Margarita mentioned, it was the first of two candidate night meetings that would be hosted by MBNC. She mentioned, the Candidate's questions were solicited from the community and provided in advance of the meeting, framed around: "Marina Bay Local Concerns", "Homelessness, Safety" and "City of Richmond General Concerns".
- Attendee, Pam Stello made a quick announcement about an important upcoming meeting on Sea Level Rise in Richmond Community, scheduled Sept 28th and provided the event registration information (see below):
 - RSVP for Online Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/adapting-richmonds-shoreline-and-industrial-legacy-zoom-ticket-tickets-1003365863307>
 - RSVP in person <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/adapting-richmonds-shoreline-and-industrial-legacy-in-person-ticket-tickets-1003359985727>

B. Candidate's Opening

- Guest speaker, Sue Wilson was introduced. Sue is running for a council seat to represent District 5 (to be vacated by Gail McLaughlin at the end of the year).
- Sue opened by expressing her appreciation for the support and organization provided by her campaign manager, Carmen Martinez. She further expressed her appreciation for Marina Bay community's detailed questions provided in advance and her enthusiasm for engaging in specific policy discussions. Sue provided her Opening Statement that included addressing two (2) local questions provided by MBNC:
 - **Sue's Opening Statement (Political Activism and City Council Challenges):**

Sue, a first-time candidate and Richmond resident, discussed her passion for the city and her political activism. Born in Detroit, Sue moved to California 25 years ago to pursue a PhD in anthropology and became politically active under the guidance of her mentor, Dr. Laura Nader. Sue's career in the labor movement spanned 25 years, including roles as a member, leader, organizer, and negotiator. She emphasized her commitment to independence from corporate influence and shared her endorsements from various organizations and individuals.

Questions answered w/Opening Statement:

1. What do you consider are the two most important challenges confronting our city right now, and in broad strokes, what would you do to address them?
 - Sue identified the current city council's negotiation with Chevron for an additional \$550MM tax payment as a significant challenge and proposed a responsible spending plan for the increased revenue. She also highlighted the ongoing issue of toxic waste on the shoreline and the need for a strong, independent city council member to address it.
2. And moving to a more local level, based on the list of questions provided in advance from the Marina Bay Community, what are two key actions you would take to improve the community of Marina Bay?
 - Sue proposed two key actions to improve the Marina Bay community: working with the city planning department to recruit a grocery store and clarifying the status of Marina Bay as a special assessment district.

C. Q&A session

“Marina Bay Local Concerns”

Q. In addressing community concerns about pedestrian safety on the trails due to increased adult recreational cyclists, would you support working with East Bay Trails to help create protected bike lanes on the Bay Trail and the streets?

- would be willing to join conversations with East Bay Parks to discuss possibility of a plan for designated bike paths in Marina Bay parks to separate cyclists from pedestrians

Q: Asked what she would do to stop the expansion of hazardous materials into Marina Bay by the “TransMontaigne Expansion Project”

- Sue expressed her willingness to help advocate for and with the community

Q. Asked about her position on the transformation of the Craneway Pavilion into a pickleball facility?

- She would be willing to explore ways to negotiate a compromise for public events to return to the Craneway Pavilion.

Q. Moxion project next to the Ferry in Marina Bay is Bankrupt; leaving many employees laid off and a massive unfinished project sitting. How will you engage with MBNC and community to ensure there’s a finished project that aligns with the community?

- Sue provided an updated from Planning, the building is to be completed and the importance of the community to watch for the EIR review due in January 2025 to be able to respond and that it is unknown at this time who will lease up space once completed.

Q. Asked on her position of development into Marina Bay?

- Sue mentioned she would be willing to explore working with the city planning department to support a grocery store coming into MB.

“Homelessness and Safety”

Q. Concerns about safety, particularly fireworks and sideshows; asked if elected what she would do to stop the illegal fireworks in our communities?

- Recognizes the safety concerns and difficulty in coming up with a solution; not just a Richmond problem or a one answer, suggests engineered solutions and prevention strategies for side shows.

Q. What's your position on special assessment districts like Marina Bay and how can you help ensure new business' pay their fair share?

- Sue would work on clarifying expectations and deliverables for Marina Bay's special assessment district services.
- Sue would advocate for fair contribution from new Marina Bay tenants to the landscaping and lighting tax.
- Sue Wilson would push for increased hiring in Public Works, Code Enforcement, and gardening departments to address city-wide maintenance issues.

Q. A lot of money is coming into the city of Richmond to help the unhoused, but where is the money going? If elected, what would you do to address this issue and ensure there is accountability to taxpayers?

- She discussed the need for more affordable housing in downtown areas.
- For homeless encampments, Sue emphasizes the need for transitional housing and a regional approach.

Q. How will you address homeless encampments and ensure we have clean safe streets?

- Emphasized transparency in allocating funds to organizations assisting the unhoused and those with mental health issues.
- Sue would advocate for a data-driven approach to program evaluation.

“Richmond City Wide concerns”

Q. There have been numerous cuts to Richmond Police Dept; what is your position on the defunding that has taken place and what will you do to help increase safety in the city of Richmond?

- Regarding police defunding, Sue explains it refers to reallocating funds from unfilled positions to other safety programs. She highlights and supports successful lower-cost programs like the Office of Neighborhood Safety.

Q. Asked about her stance on the lack of transparency of data and accountability from many nonprofits?

- Sue agrees there’s a need for more transparency and public access to data on homeless/unhoused programs and spending.
- Sue would push for better communication about the work and effectiveness of non-police safety programs like Office of Neighborhood Safety as she feels they do good work.

Q. When asked about her position on RPA?

- Sue responded she supports RPA and shared a personal experience about how RPA, specifically Gayle Mclaughlin helped her family through the mortgage crisis by holding banks accountable for subprime mortgage crisis. Gayle inspired Sue to volunteer, and she has done so for 10 years.
- She also mentioned she does not support corporate money pledge to maintain independent.

Meeting concluded with thanking our guest speaker Sue Wilson and attendees for their participation.