



★ ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE ★

Deadline: September 25TH

Candidate Event: October 15TH, 5:30PM

Solidarity Lowell 2023 City Council Questionnaire

Name: Fru Nkimbeng

Office Sought: District 7 Councilor

Website: n/a

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Instagram: n/a

Section 1: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

1. The city has more work to do in the area of fair, unbiased policing.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Why or why not? How would you address this issue?

Community policing and engaging sensitizing the police through education is important to build trust. The citizens Police academy should be brought back and funded to educate the community.

2. The city needs to diversify its hiring practices so that City Hall proportionally represents the ethnic makeup of our city's residents.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree

3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Why or why not? What are your proposals to address Lowell city hiring practices?

Lowell is not a melting pot but a bowl of salad and diversity should reflect the city labor force. Diversity should be considered as a requisite to hiring policy for qualified candidates for city jobs.

3. Would you support requiring developers in the city to sign community benefit agreements? These might include requirements that their workforce reflect Lowell's diversity, that a certain percentage of their workforce be local hires, and/or that pay be a living wage. (YES/NO)

YES.

4. The city needs to ensure that all marginalized communities are equally protected.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Why or why not? What proposals do you have for ensuring equal protections for all Lowell residents and visitors?

There should be increased police visibility in marginalized communities as they are in rich neighborhoods.

5. Systemic racism is a public health crisis in Lowell.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

If so, why and how do you propose to respond to the crisis in Lowell-specific ways? If not, why not?

Knowledge is power. Education and highlighting the enormous positive contributions by all Lowell's diverse communities is very important to bring awareness and respect to contributions by all in the development and human advancement.

6. What steps would you take, if elected, to engage all of the diverse communities of Lowell in policy-making, and what past actions of yours should give voters confidence that you will follow through?

I love Lowell and always ask myself what can I do to move Lowell forward. We started the African festival in 2000 to bring a "Taste of Africa" to share with the people of Greater Lowell. I volunteered at the Lowell folk festival for many years. I served on the Board of Lowell TeleMedia Corporation for ten years, served on the Boards of One Lowell, Co-chair Lowell Community Charter Public school board, Lowell General Hospital Patient Advocacy board, and member Lowell Police Community Oriented Police Service "COPS". I volunteered my time with the Police department and worked with four Police chiefs to engage and build bridges with the immigrant communities of Lowell. I travelled with Lowell Police chief Ed Davis III to Police conferences in Washington and California to talk about policing in a diverse community. I am an action individual who believes in collaboration and compromise to advance Lowell for communal and greater good.

Section II: Housing, Labor, and Development

1. Lowell's code enforcement should do more to protect tenants from evictions and/or penalties for previous evictions.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

If so, why and how do you propose to strengthen tenant rights? If not, why not?

I would work with the city law department to study this matter and apply state law and consequences for violators.

2. How would you expand affordable housing in Lowell and ensure development without displacement of established communities?

Develop vacant abandoned public buildings in the city into affordable residential apartments. Work with CTI, CBA and property owners to award subsidized loans to develop vacant private buildings

3. How would you address the needs of the unhoused population of Lowell?

Develop vacant abandoned public buildings in the city into affordable residential apartments. Work with CTI, CBA and property owners to award subsidized loans to develop vacant private buildings.

4. Do you agree with a Housing First approach? (YES/NO)

YES.

5. Do you agree with the city's unhoused encampment sweeps? (YES/NO)

YES.

6. Would you agree with establishing legal camping areas for those unhoused persons for whom no other accommodations are available? (YES/NO)

YES.

7. How would you ensure there are adequate services for all unhoused persons?

I connect with nonprofit organizations (CTI and CBA) and convene a brainstorming meeting with property owners, landlords and stakeholders about how to build affordable houses.

8. Would you support a city wage theft ordinance that would set up structures to protect workers from wage theft violations such as failure to make wage payments; failure to abide by minimum wage, prevailing wage and overtime laws; and independent contractor misclassification? (YES/NO)

I would study the situation and the options and then make a decision.

9. How would you fill the empty downtown storefronts?

I will award business incentives and tax breaks to attract business investment downtown.

Section III: Environment and Transportation

1. Would you support programs to subsidize retrofitting the old housing stock in Lowell to be more energy efficient, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce energy costs for residents? (YES/NO)

YES.

2. Climate change is causing more days of extreme heat, flooding, damaging storms, and drought; just to name a few of the impacts. Lowell could do more to prepare for the impacts of climate change.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

What steps would you recommend that the city take to improve its preparedness?

The city hall should take lead and work with UMASS Lowell Environmental department to organize a climate summit and bring the community and all the stakeholders to discuss and brainstorm ideas and a way forward.

3. In 2018, the Lowell City Council passed a resolution supporting a goal of 100% renewable energy use in Lowell-- including in buildings and transportation-- by 2035. This year, Massachusetts passed a new climate law that requires significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions across our economy by 2030. What steps would you recommend that Lowell take to accomplish these goals?

Lowell is blessed with a world class university: UMASS Lowell. The collaboration and partnership with the university is crucial in terms of creating and sustaining new technology for renewable energy. The university should be a magnet to bring together all the stakeholders to work together. It will bring employment opportunities and be good for our economy.

4. The hours and reach of the LRTA need to be extended.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Why or why not? If so, what would you recommend in order to reach this goal?

Our senior citizens and many who can not afford a car need public transportation. They depend solely on LRTA to do their grocery shopping and run errands. The city should increase the budget for LRTA and hire more drivers and workers.

5. Lowell should prioritize policies that make it easier to get around the city without depending on cars.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Why or why not? What policy priorities do you support to achieve this goal?

Safety is a major concern for pedestrians and those without cars. Street lights and sidewalks around the city should be maintained, Police patrol should be increased in all areas of the city and neighborhood watch should be encouraged. LTC should use local cable TV to educate the public to be the eye and ear of the police on the streets. See something. Say something.

Section IV: City Management/Council Relations

1. Do you agree that too much of our City Council meetings are spent on discussing items that could have been delegated to the City Manager or the appropriate department ahead of the meeting?

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

2. Do you support the five minute speaking time limit being extended to also cover City Council and School Committee members?

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

3. Do you agree that there should be a limit on the number of amendments a Councilor can propose on a given motion or ordinance?

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Please share any additional thoughts on how our city meetings are run.

I think there should be time limits agreed on for the discussion on a motion and how long each councilor should speak.

Section V: Final Thoughts

1. Communication between the Lowell city government and the people of Lowell needs to be improved.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

If so, what ideas do you have to improve the communication between the Lowell city government and the people of Lowell? If not, why not?

Lowell city government should organize regular town hall “meet the people” discussions in the various districts. Lowell city government should utilize Lowell TeleMedia Center to engage and keep the public informed about public matters. Lowell city government should once a year organize an international potluck celebration to celebrate our rich ethnic diversity. The police department should

visit various neighborhoods and annually meet with religious and community groups and leaders to listen and engage.

2. What will you do to maintain contact with your constituents while you are in office?

I will walk the streets and pavements in my district, not drive by. I will meet and listen and talk to my constituents to bring their concern to city hall. I will organize regular town hall meetings in my districts and attend neighborhood meetings. I will engage the youth in summer activities and partner with nonprofits in my district to provide after school programs for youth.

3. Do you commit to ensuring that important city communications are accessible in the main languages (English, Spanish, Khmer) of the city's residents, including City Council meetings and minutes, policy and emergency announcements?

YES.

4. What are your top three priorities if elected?

1. Safety and neighborhood wellbeing.
2. Education and after school programs for youths.
3. Provide a compassionate program for Mental health and the Homeless