

# Third Council District Candidate Questionnaire

**Please return by June 1.** No limit on the length of responses.

If helpful, feel free to include links for further information.

## Landmarks

Name a historic preservation battle with which you've been involved — what was your role, why were you involved?

When I was young, my mother took me to a protest to save the Morosco Theatre. At that time, I was just a child, but it sparked my interest in activism and has led to the other important battles I have taken up as an adult.

Would you like to see more buildings or areas landmarked in City Council District 3, especially Greenwich Village, less, or would you keep it as is? If you would like to see more or less, where would you expand or decrease landmark designations?

We need more areas protected. We should increase landmark designations in many historical spaces that have been neglected, protecting them once they have special status. For instance, the Merchant's House, where status has not guaranteed its protection from developers. There are so many areas particularly in the village that need to be protected. Greedy developers always have their own best interests at heart so we need to make sure the cultural institutions that make New York special stay protected.

How would you evaluate the job the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) has done in regulating District 3, especially Greenwich Village? Have they done a good job with approving or not approving changes to existing buildings? With approving or not approving proposed demolitions and new construction? In considering and approving new landmark designations?

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is faced with the tough task of determining many stakeholders and externalities when making decisions about landmarking. My position is that we need to make sure that the LPC reflects a broader swath of community members and that it isn't a rubber stamp for development. At its core, the LPC needs to be a reflection of the community's wishes.

### Landmarks (continued)

If there are changes you would like to see with the LPC, how as a City Councilmember would you help effectuate that?

I would introduce legislation to make sure that the LPC is both more accountable to the public and reflects a greater diversity of participants.

What would you tell a property owner who was opposed to their property being landmarked, given that you as City Councilmember must ultimately uphold the landmark designation when it comes before the City Council?

I would tell them that regardless of their personal opinion or mine, this decision was made by the community. The very nature of these designations is that they transcend the individual and are rather a reflection of our neighborhoods, history, and cultural spirit.

## Zoning

What sort of changes to zoning in Council District 3, and especially Greenwich Village, would you support or advocate for? Would you support upzoning (i.e., increasing the allowable density of development as compared to current rules), and if so, where and/or under what circumstances? Would you support contextual rezonings (i.e., limiting the height of new development and limiting the transfer of air rights) or downzonings (i.e., reducing the allowable density of new development as compared to current rules), and if so where and/or under what circumstances?

We need to increase the amount of affordable housing in our district. When it comes to zoning, there isn't a one size fits all approach. I would support upzoning in scenarios where a non-oppressive amount of housing is being built, and much of that development must be affordable. However, hard and fast rules are counterproductive as each individual project has its own externalities, details, and consequences.

### Zoning (continued)

Do you support the City's current mandatory inclusionary housing program, and if not, why (and be specific — do you oppose all mandates for affordable housing? The fact that it requires a very large upzoning? The breadth or depth of affordable housing it requires)?

I do not support the current proposals as the ratio of new luxury housing to affordable units is almost always bad. In practice, there has not been one proposal that I would have supported.

Would you seek zoning changes that would require new affordable housing in parts of the 3rd Council District and especially in Greenwich Village? If so where and under what conditions (upzoning? subsidies)?

I would focus my attention on building affordable housing in our vacant lots before proposing new zoning changes. With all the current vacancies in the city, landlords should support additional subsidies.

What is your position on the proposed SoHo/NoHo rezoning, which the Mayor and leading Mayoral candidates have said they would seek to replicate in other historic neighborhoods with median incomes above the city average, such as those in the 3rd Council District? Do you support the approach in the plan or any elements of it? If so, which? What is your position on the SoHo/NoHo community alternative plan? Do you believe that upzonings increase pressure for demolition of existing rent-regulated housing and create a huge amount of new very expensive market-rate housing, which has the opposite effect of the purported increase in affordability and diversity?

I do not support the current SoHo/NoHo rezoning, as it would be a giveaway to developers. I support upzoning in the case where it would build substantial new housing. However, this proposal would likely have the opposite effect than it claims to. Oftentimes, proposed rezonings would not result in a meaningful increase in affordable housing. The community alternative plan certainly engages more stakeholders and is a much more tenable solution than the current proposal. Upzonings should be reviewed on a case by case basis.

## Zoning (continued)

In general, are there changes to our zoning and planning system you would seek to implement or support, and if so, what are they? What is your position on the City Council's proposed "Planning Together" framework?

My position is that while the "Planning Together" framework correctly analyzes some problems, we should reserve judgement on solutions until the release of the Conditions of the City report. The report should be accompanied by research and interviews with community stakeholders to make sure everyone is represented.

## Small Businesses

The City has implemented a plan to make permanent the outdoor dining allowed during the pandemic. Do you agree with this move? If not, how would you seek to change it, and what system and allowances for outdoor dining would you support?

I am not opposed to outdoor dining in all cases, but as a disabled person, I have noticed that the outdoor dining often interferes with bike lanes or sidewalks. As long as outdoor dining doesn't interfere with an accessible sidewalk or transportation alternatives, they can be reviewed for approval by an oversight committee.

What sort of measures would you support or propose to help small businesses? Do you support the implementation of zoning restrictions on chain stores in certain locations, and if so where? Do you support the Small Business Jobs Survival Act? Any other measures?

I support the passage of the Small Business Jobs Survival Act. I would work to provide the small business community with incubator opportunities so they are prepared and able to compete with big box retailers and e-commerce giants. I would support zoning restrictions on big box stores. I would also cap commercial rent prices in our district to make sure our small businesses can remain competitive.

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***Thank You for Your Answers***