

Responses cannot be edited

## Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce Candidate Questionnaire

Please tell us about yourself.

Your Name: \*

Ledell Zellers

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Aldermanic District: \*

District 2 Alder City of Madison

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Current Address: \*

510 N Carroll St. Madison

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Email: \*

[REDACTED]

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Phone: \*

[REDACTED]

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

## Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce Candidate Questionnaire

Instructions: Please state your position on the following issues. Please limit answers to 100 words. Any answers exceeding the word count limitations will be cut after 100 words.

If you have filled out this questionnaire before, you may skip starred\*\* questions or modify previous answers to those questions. If you skip starred answers on this questionnaire, we will re-publish your 2015 answers.

### \*\*1. Why are you seeking this office?

My love of Madison and the near east neighborhoods and the desire to work with others who care - to help make a great place to live and a great place to work even better - is what led to my decision to run in 2013 and still motivates me to continue serving as alder for District 2.

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**\*\*2. What in your background or experiences qualifies you to understand the unique needs facing small businesses?**

I have experience in public and private sector leadership positions. I was HR Director for the Wisconsin Investment Board for 15 years. Prior employment included positions at MGE and National Guardian Life.

I was a member and past chair of the City's Downtown Coordinating Committee (DCC) where I worked with State Street Business Improvement District and the GSSBA on issues facing business owners. I continue to serve on the DCC.

I advocated for a grant to help businesses on E. Johnson Street weather recent street reconstruction. I attended bi-weekly meetings between reconstruction managers and business owners to facilitate problem resolution

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**\*\*3. What are the most important issues the businesses in your district face?**

Lack of off-street parking is an obstacle for E. Washington area businesses. The city needs to identify options for solving this. I sponsored a budget amendment to fund a parking ramp just off of E. Washington. This is proceeding successfully through the city process with construction expected to begin in 2017. I initiated extension of parking time on E. Washington to address parking needs of the new restaurants and bar.

Developing a stronger identity for businesses on E. Johnson can help their success. One outcome of a grant for businesses on E. Johnson was a business association which will help this promotional initiative.

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#### 4. What is the City of Madison's role in growing the economy? How can the City of Madison best support the growth and retention of jobs?

- Recognize economic development is more than real estate development
  - Facilitate joint marketing strategies.
  - Provide planning assistance to businesses seeking to locate here.
  - Have ready information about financial assistance (brownfield remediation, façade improvement grants, TIF, etc.)
  - Make city website easily navigable with easy to use applications/keep current
  - Maintain up-to-date inventory of buildings/sites available
  - Support innovation-type district(s), incubators and support business spin-offs from the UW
  - Facilitate mentoring programs
  - Improve public transportation
  - Build on food culture including Public Market
  - Partner with others to develop a trailing spouse program
  - Retain inventory of older building stock since they are places smaller businesses often are housed
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#### 5. How can the City of Madison best attract and retain a diverse and talented workforce?

- People are attracted to areas with robust transit systems allowing reduced dependence on cars. Madison should implement transit enhancements including Bus Rapid Transit.
  - Promote walkable neighborhoods with a variety of living options and associated retail and service businesses.
  - Partner with recruitment firms/businesses to develop trailing spouse program
  - Support vigorous cultural/arts scene.
  - Ensure high quality schools and daycare.
  - Enhance parks with a variety of passive and active options for use (including new sports such as slacklining, bike polo and pickle ball); keep expanding off-street bike trails.
  - Improve water quality of our lakes.
  - Create a welcoming environment for diverse populations.
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**\*\*6. Do you support the use of TIF, and how do you believe it should be utilized moving forward? How would you rate the City of Madison's past use of TIF? (Would you describe the use of TIF as underutilized, over-utilized, or appropriate?)**

Use TIF:

- For projects that could not otherwise be done and which accomplish specific city and neighborhood goals. TIF should be provided fairly and with attention to ordinances and guidelines.
- To support creation and retention of living wage jobs, stimulate additional development, enhance the desirability of surrounding properties and support improvements to public infrastructure.

City staff should work with applicants to ensure all necessary information is gathered and should analyze the information. Negotiations with applicant should be handled by senior staff and the mayor's office with input of the district alder.

In general the City uses TIF appropriately.

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**7. What specific initiatives in the Connect Madison economic development strategy**

**(<http://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/economicdevelopment/economic-strategy-symposium/554/>) do you support, and which, if any, would you like to see modified? Why?**

I support strategies/projects being evaluated through an "equity lens". I agree with identifying "development zones". This must be well thought out, targeted and include neighborhoods and other community partners. I agree with building on Madison's existing economic strengths and preparing people for employment opportunities. I like the concept of "innovation districts". I agree with making an economic case for investing in efficient transportation solutions. We rely too much on the auto which is not sustainable and wastes land which could achieve better economic use. I agree with creating career pathways. The "Connect Madison" Economic Development Strategy is well done.

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**8. What is your perception of Madison’s business brand? How do you think business in Madison is perceived locally, statewide, and nationally?**

For business, as for its natural environment, schools, and overall quality of life, Madison is seen as one of the top cities in the country. We have a high-quality, well-educated workforce and a growing economy. Our business sectors benefit from close association with one of the foremost research universities in the world, a key driver for innovation and the most robust engine for growth in the state. We are known as home to hugely successful corporations such as Epic Systems, growing newer enterprises such as Exact Sciences, and as a vibrant Midwest hub for entrepreneurial incubation.

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**9. How do you define economic development? Please elaborate.**

I define it based on people. Sustainable economic development promotes the general quality of life and economic resources of the people in the community. It includes business retention and expansion, tourism and entrepreneur support. This also requires that the requisite infrastructure is in place and maintained; basic city services, transit options, attractive housing choices and urban amenities. Active marketing of Madison and the region as an ideal place to start or relocate a business is also essential.

**10. The Chamber believes that equity and social mobility are achieved through wealth creation and that the surest way is through an entrepreneurial class of color. The Chamber is launching initiatives to support this goal. What do you believe is the City of Madison’s role in creating an entrepreneurial class of color?**

I am very supportive of removing economic barriers that hinder people of color from attaining greater prosperity. Encouraging the creation and advancement of businesses owned by people of color is an important part of this goal. I look forward to hearing more about the Chamber's initiatives in this area and how the City can be an effective partner.

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11. How can the City of Madison provide better customer service to new or existing businesses that seek approval through the permitting and planning processes? How do you define customer service in this case?

We could improve customer service, particularly for small businesses (including restaurants), by having an ombudsman who is deeply familiar with all the permits required and all planning steps needed for approval to help guide the way. The development review/approval process has improved over the past several years with opportunity for applicants to meet with the city "Development Assistance Team", which meets weekly and includes the full range of departments involved in review/permitting. Customer services is working with small businesses to completely answer questions and guide the contact through what is needed to kick-off the business.

12. If offered an endorsement from the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce, would you accept it? \*

Yes

No

By submitting this candidate questionnaire, you agree that the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce may publish it with the intent of sharing it with its membership and the general public. \*

I acknowledge that the Chamber will publish my answers to this questionnaire

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