



Montgomery County 2022 Candidate Questionnaire - Dawn Luedtke

Personal Information:

Name Dawn Luedtke

What Office Are You Seeking in the 2022 Election? Montgomery County Council - District 7

Where Can Voters Learn More About Your Positions Or Contact Your Campaign?

Voters can reach me directly at dawn@dawnluedtke.com, or by calling or texting me at 443-878-2954. They can also visit my website: www.dawnluedtke.com, and follow me on social media: Twitter: @PennDawn96 Facebook: @PennDawn96 Instagram: @Dawn_Luedtke.

Please Answer the Following Questions- responses will posted in their entirety and will not be edited.

Someone new to Montgomery County may ask, "What's the Ag Reserve and why is it important?" What's your answer?

The creation of the Ag Reserve in 1980 and its importance to the County's health today is incredible. The lasting benefits of this preservation for sake of the overall health of neighboring communities cannot be underestimated. Our agriculture community and its contributions not just to our county but to surrounding areas is necessary to protect and further develop and enhance our food security and resiliency. It is also ecologically important to maintain the green space, support and expand agriculture operations, and recognize the need to preserve this land for generations to come.

What is your vision for the future of the County's Agricultural Reserve? Briefly, how would you achieve that vision?

We need to protect the zone from development and focus on its intended purpose. At the same time, we do need to be able to re-examine whether the TDR program is working equitably for the landowners within the Ag Reserve, and address the operational needs and concerns for those working farms. We should support agritourism and facilitate educational opportunities and partnerships with other local businesses. We also need to ensure collaboration with the family farm operations in neighboring Howard and Frederick Counties and to continue to support the work of the Food Council and the outstanding partnerships forged through that group across the State.

What are your priorities regarding stewardship of the County's natural resources (water, forests, open spaces) and parkland?

Outdoor recreation and positive environmental stewardship are family passions for our household. I view our environmental gifts as a part of our history, and there are plenty of stories to be told on this land. Preservation of old growth forests, policies which prevent/reduce runoff to our streams, and maintenance of open spaces and trails for hiking, biking, camping, and simply appreciating all of it are items near and dear to me. It is my sincere hope that the increased use of outdoor recreation that residents across the State experienced during the pandemic is a lasting trend and that we act accordingly.

What role will you play with regard to ensure that we safeguard our drinking water supply both surface and groundwater?

For me, this question is an environmental and conservation question as well as a critical infrastructure

question. I am not a scientist, but with respect to the safety of our drinking water, I would want to work closely with those who do have oversight on that issue, review data, and make sure that any decisions the Council is making do not have unintended consequences that create a negative impact on the drinking water supply. With respect to the critical infrastructure question, this is a more complicated issue involving a complex set of stakeholders who I've had the privilege of working with in my current role. I hope to bring that knowledge regarding protection of critical infrastructure to my work on the Council, and to make sure that I maintain those relationships that are so vital to maintaining our resources and services.

What are your top priorities to help the County address climate change? What role will the Ag Reserve play?

Because it is the area with which I have more familiarity from my current role at the State, I have an interest in resiliency planning and mitigation with respect to climate change. While we all have a great part to play in ensuring that the policy changes we have made at both the County and State levels are implemented with fidelity and expediency, we must also attack this issue from the standpoint of preparedness and prevention of the inevitable events that will occur from environmental factors already at play (super storms, flooding, etc.). I believe my knowledge and experience in the statewide work on this issue, as well as my experience supporting emergency management issues will be of benefit to the Council in this area moving forward.

What more can be done to support our local farm businesses and rural communities?

Having spoken to our local farmers early on in my campaign, and through my own personal relationships with farmers in other parts of the State, I know that we must do a better job ensuring that the roadways leading to the farms support their operations. Everyone in policy making positions and in the Executive Branch of county government needs to do a better job of listening. The County government should also do a better job of helping to connect our local farm businesses to our other local small businesses. Last, but not least, this should be a 365 day a year proposition, not just something that happens during campaign season or during a recognition day/week, etc.

What are your regional transportation priorities? Do you support M83 and an additional Potomac bridge and outer beltway through the Reserve or adjacent rural zones?

I support BRT expansion and development starting in the most densely populated areas of the county simultaneously and moving outward along the proposed routes. That will maximize ridership in the areas that need it the most. I also support the purple line, and other mass transit projects already in the works. We are in an interesting time where we need to see what the long-term impacts are of work from home policies, flexible work times, etc. to determine what the new normal will be. I fully appreciate the desire to expand additional roadways. However, that kind of expansion in and around the Reserve or adjacent rural zones would have significant environmental impacts on the land and the food supply grown there. And once that is done, it cannot be recovered.

How should our County manage its solid waste? What role should incineration, composting and recycling play?

Composting and recycling as much of our waste as possible should be a top priority. Expanding our recycling services and composting pickup services for residential and commercial has to happen. And development of a less pollution driven method of dealing with solid waste that cannot be recycled or composted. I grew up in South Jersey and it was filled with Superfund sites. My parents were constantly worried about our well water. Those early memories of fear of what would go into our bodies and the need to do better stay with me and inform my positions.

What are your views on the general plan update "Thrive 2050," both the process and the draft now before the Council?

I view Thrive 2050 as the guidance document that it is. It is a start, it is imperfect (and I am saying that having written State-level guidance and knowing that it will need to be reviewed and revised based on changing circumstances and lessons learned). I think that if we collectively took that approach to Thrive 2050 and found more productive ways of expressing the need for changes or improvements,

we'd be in better shape. It's become a very divisive talking point when I don't think it needs to be. It does not have the force and effect of a law, and we can adapt and modify it to best suit the County's changing needs.

Do you believe that the way that local government branches, state entities, and the public currently interact can be improved? If so, what steps would you take?

Yes - I think that far too many websites (County and State) are too complicated for citizens to navigate. I also believe government communications needs to do a better job connecting individuals with the services/programs that are available. There are ways that we can use data to geotarget populations who aren't "getting the messages" and are at greatest need for particular programs and services. Rather than repeating the Tweet or email newsletter, we can shift to more targeted outreach that is meaningful to that group of residents.