



Montgomery County 2022 Candidate Questionnaire - Kristin Mink

Personal Information:

Name

Kristin Mink

What Office Are You Seeking in the 2022 Election?

County Council District 5

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

www.kristinmink.com

kristin@kristinmink.com

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 Ag Reserve is a protected expanse of land that holds special importance to Montgomery County owing to its natural beauty, unique economic output, and cultural history. County residents work in the agricultural industry in the Reserve, visit the reserve to enjoy the protected landscape, and live in the Reserve in limited numbers due to forward-thinking restrictions on residential and commercial development. County residents cherish the Reserve and overwhelmingly support its continued conservation.

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

I believe the Reserve should continue to serve as a protected space for residents to live, work, and play. I want future generations to be able to hike in beautiful open spaces, purchase local, sustainably grown food products, and find meaningful employment in the agriculture industry. To achieve that vision, we must maintain current protections against development in the Reserve and expand funding to support local farmers.

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

The County should enact much stricter regulations to protect and expand tree canopy, responsibly manage waste-water, and protect Ten Mile Creek and other vital tributaries. We cannot continue to develop our open spaces, and must instead direct new development into denser areas around public transit.

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

I will work with activists to push for the enactment of stricter regulations on developers and property owners regarding storm-water, run-off and waste-water management.

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

In order to meet or exceed the county's Climate Action Plan goals, we need to move quickly, think

creatively, and act boldly. I support Community Choice Energy, deep investment in renewable energy including expanding community solar, ensuring County construction and redevelopment is sustainable, fast-tracking construction of public transit, and developing walkable communities. The Ag Reserve can play multiple roles, providing locally sourced food that does not need to be transported over long distances, as well as large, open green spaces and tree canopy that capture carbon.

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

Programs to support local farm businesses run by the County's Office of Agriculture suffer from woeful underfunding and understaffing. Some programs have been suspended entirely due to lack of funding. If we want to live out the vision of an Ag Reserve where new and existing farmers can thrive and produce a meaningful percentage of our local food economy, we need to fund programs to support farmers. The Land Link program run by the Montgomery Countryside Alliance is a valiant effort, but it is not enough. We need to raise revenues to greatly expand support for local agriculture in order to adapt to climate change and live up to our values.

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 strongly oppose all new highway construction, including M83, an outer beltway, and a second Potomac bridge crossing. Our transportation dollars must go towards maintaining our current assets and developing additional mass transit between population centers in and around the county.

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

The County must find a long term solution that allows us to close the Dickerson incinerator. To do so, we must massively expand composting by making it a public service provided by the County, and we must sharply restrict the use of unsustainable plastics and other materials that cannot be recycled or composted. These steps will require political courage and additional revenue in order to achieve a sustainable solid waste management system. Unfortunately, we are very far from achieving that vision at the moment.

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

While Thrive 2050 contains many policy proposals that I support, including expansion of public transit and development of additional affordable housing, the Planning Board and the Council did not conduct sufficient community outreach to bring the plan to a final vote by the full Council. A vote on the plan should be delayed until communities - especially communities of color - all over the county can provide deeper and more meaningful input. One unfortunate oversight in the plan is that it does not mention the Potomac River, one of our most important resources.

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?

Montgomery County residents should have a more direct impact on the County's finances through processes such as Participatory Budgeting. In addition, the Council and other government entities need to be more clear and honest with the public about who holds ultimate responsibility for specific policy choices.