



Montgomery County 2022 Candidate Questionnaire - Trent Kittleman

Personal Information:

Name Trent Kittleman

What Office Are You Seeking in the 2022 Election? Delegate in District 9A

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

My website is TrentKittleman.com. All of the weekly newsletters that I've written during each session over the last six years are on the website and cover almost any issue in which you might be interested. You can contact me at trentkittleman@verizon.net.

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?

I, myself, am somewhat new to Montgomery County. The recent redistricting has put Damascus and Clarksburg into District 9A which is the area I currently represent, and all of the State Assembly candidates in 9A are residents of Howard County. Although I haven't been involved in the Montgomery County program, we sold our 111-acre farm into the Howard County Ag Preservation program a number of years ago, and I am a strong proponent of preserving agricultural land. We also took part in the Howard County reforestation effort allowing a forest of trees to be planted on the farm. The Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve is a unique approach to farmland preservation and is very impressive.

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 be protected, and I am inclined to listen to my constituents viewpoints on how the State should be involved in making that happen.

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

During Governor Ehrlich's administration, I was the Deputy Secretary of Transportation and ran the Transportation Authority. During this four-year period, we were able to work with all of the state and federal agencies to get an approved Environmental Impact Statement and to build the Intercounty Connector (ICC or what is now Rt. 200). A big part of our ability to achieve this 50-year effort was through the "environmental stewardship" program proposed, created, and carried out by our State Highway Administration (SHA). This meant going beyond the typical environmental efforts involved in roadbuilding; SHA addressed the water run-off issues in neighborhoods not just adjacent to, but near the highway. Partnering with federal and state environmental departments, the construction of this parkway resulted in improving the environment, rather than disturbing it. I look to support innovative ideas and approaches such as this to enhance and improve natural resources throughout the state.

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

[See answer to the above question.]

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

Clearly, the Ag Preserve is already playing a major role in preserving trees and reducing air pollutants. It has been and continues to be my policy to defer to the counties in matters such as this. I am even more inclined to do so as a "non-resident" representative of Montgomery County.

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

Both Howard and Montgomery Counties do a lot to support our farm communities. This is one issue where my being from Howard may prove an advantage, since I may be able to share what programs have worked best in each county. With respect to supporting rural communities, I do wish that the Montgomery and other urban/suburban county delegations would refrain from urging urban solutions county-wide, and be would more receptive to the unique differences that our western, southern and eastern shore counties have that often are not amenable to such urban-oriented legislation.

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?

From 1996 to 2001, I worked for Marriott in their Bethesda Headquarters. As part of my job as Vice President of Legislative Affairs, I was appointed to the Montgomery County Transportation Policy Task Force II. During the 18 months and 150 meetings, we had a great many discussions primarily revolving around "roads v. transit." For some reason, Democrats tend to support transit and Republicans tend to support roads – which has made the topic of transportation unnecessarily political. In Montgomery, the original general plan for the County's growth laid out a wedges and corridors plan for development with two additional cross-county parkways (to transport the growing population). The county adhered more or less to the plan for development but ignored the plans for transporting its residents from one side of the county to another. This is why the need for roads such as the ICC was so dire. Transit serves a critical purpose where most of the residents are commuting into the same general area (New York City, Washington D.C.), but does not attract enough riders to make cross-county transit viable. The data on this issue is irrefutable; no matter how new the transit is, no more than under 10% of people will leave their cars to ride it, and the exorbitant cost of transit – both capital and operating – makes it difficult to justify new rail lines.

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

This is strictly a county issue; to the extent that the County needs the assistance of the state to achieve its goals, I will defer to the county and my constituents.

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

Again, this is clearly a county issue. See answer above.

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?

Communication among entities can always be improved. I would like to see the State refrain from encroaching on issues that have always been governed by the counties. For example, the State has implemented serious restrictions on local land use. In this past session, the legislature passed a bill virtually eliminating the counties' jurisdiction over their local health officers. I voted against this bill; it is a bad idea. With respect to communicating with the public, the legislature abandoned all pretense of considering public input when it unilaterally redrew the redistricting maps along party lines. The Congressional map was deemed so partisan that a court-appointed judge ordered the legislature to redo it. These actions were particularly disrespectful of public opinion as the public participated en masse in creating the Citizens Commission maps which the legislative supermajority roundly ignored.