



2014 - Daniel Dodge, Sr. Watsonville City Council, District 5

1-Please tell us why you are interested in reaching out to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender community.

ANSWER: I am always interested in reaching out to all communities. Working on this questionnaire, meeting with your Steering Committee and talking with my family and campaign volunteers, has helped me realize that I am willing to learn more about LGBT issues.

2- Why do you want the endorsement of The GLBT Alliance, Santa Cruz County's grassroots progressive gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender political organization?

ANSWER: I am interested in creating a greater dialogue with the LGBT community. To receive your endorsement would be an honor.

3-Please tell us about your history with the LGBT community, and your awareness of issues specific to our community.

a - Have you had any opportunities to address LGBT issues in the course of your community service or professional life to date (i.e., have you helped formulate corporate non-discrimination standards, worked on the board of a non-profit that developed a LGBT outreach program, etc.)? If so, please tell us about this work.

ANSWER: I have many years of community involvement here in Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley. I helped create guidelines and define the concept of cultural competency while I was Chair of the Latino Affairs Commission of Santa Cruz County. I look forward to learning more about the issues within the LGBT community especially in the LGBT Latino community. With our Watsonville youth becoming empowered through our Youth City Council, GSAs at our High Schools, I am working to have more voices heard.

b - The queer community is diverse, and we work to represent all elements of it. In support of that objective, we'd like to ask, specifically, whether you are familiar, at any level, with the issues faced, specifically, by the bisexual and transgender communities. If so, what influence would this have on your decisions as an elected official? If not, what steps will you take to become familiar with the issues, needs and concerns of these communities?

ANSWER: I am not familiar with a lot of the issues that the LGBT community faces. As an elected official, I have always kept my door open to listen to the concerns of all community members. As I campaign, and after the election, I would like to take you up on your offer to be a resource.

c - As documented in the The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute publication, "Bisexual health: An introduction and model practices for HIV/STI prevention programming" (2007), which is available for download at the URL below, in many cases bisexual people face even greater health risks and obstacles to accessing effective health care and health information than their peers in the queer community, including higher levels of self-harm, suicide attempts and thoughts of suicide. What specific steps would you take to address the issues raised in this report, and elsewhere, that are specific to bisexuals, including "biphobia" and lack of service provider awareness of bisexuality?

http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/reports/reports/bi_health_5_07_b.pdf

ANSWER: I did not complete the reading of this very extensive report. I will continue to educate myself on these issues so that I may make informed decisions that affect the bisexual community. If there are opportunities to hear directly from you and Watsonville residents about these issues, I welcome it.

A summary of the top ten health issues for the bisexual community, sourced from the above report, can be found here:

http://brown.edu/Student_Services/Health_Services/Health_Education/lgbtq_health/bisexual_health/health_concerns_for_bisexuals.php

4 - Many adults, in and outside of the queer community, express their sexuality in a variety of ways, many of which are not well understood by the general public or the service provider community, and often subject to severe social stigma; this frequently leads to poor health outcomes for the individuals in question and / or complications when interacting with the legal system and social services providers.

What do you know about "alternative" sexualities aka Leather/BSDM/Fetish (often collectively referred to as "kink") and their associated communities? Are you willing to learn more about them and engage in dialogue with people from your community who express their sexuality in this manner, in order to ensure that these constituents are better served by the agencies and institutions that you will be overseeing?

The Woodhull Sexual Freedom Alliance, which "works to advance the recognition of sexual, gender, and family diversity" and "to affirm sexual freedom as a fundamental human right" addresses these issues as part of their larger agenda of supporting "sexual freedom." Their web site is at <http://www.woodhullalliance.org/> <http://www.woodhullalliance.org/%E2%80%8E>

The National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (NCSF) has an introduction to SM that outlines the governing principles followed by responsible individuals and organizations within these communities:

<https://ncsfreedom.org/key-programs/education-outreach/education-outreach-program-page.html>

ANSWER: I am always willing to learn more about other communities that I don't have a lot of contact with and understanding of their issues. My policy is to listen to their concerns and assist how I may.

5 - Many adults, in and outside of the queer community, participate in relationships that do not fit the traditional two-partner model, and in doing so, are subject to discrimination in housing, insurance coverage and access to health care, immigration, custody and parental rights.

What do you know about these "alternative" relationship structures, often referred to by those participating in them as the practice of "polyamory" (defined as "the practice, desire, or acceptance of having more than one intimate relationship at a time with the knowledge and consent of everyone involved"), the people who participate in them, and the communities that have formed around them? Are you willing to learn more about how these types of relationship structures work, and engage in dialogue with people who participate in them, in order to ensure that these constituents are better served by the agencies and institutions you will be overseeing?

ANSWER: Always willing to learn more. Are there issues around health benefits that affect these families?

You can find out more about these types of families, and the issues they face, on the Family Matters Project website (sponsored by the Woodhull Sexual Freedom Alliance) at <http://www.familymattersproject.org>, which is "dedicated to advancing, respecting and protecting the fundamental human right to family by eliminating discrimination based on family structure and relationship choices."

6 - Have there been any LGBT people who've had a significant impact on your life as role models, inspirations, mentors, friends, etc.?

If so, please tell us a little bit about how they've influenced you.

ANSWER: My good friend, John Laird, has always been a good example for my work in local government. I have admired how he was the first member of his community that I met that reached out to members of the Latino community so they we may build bridges of understanding and communication together. I was part of his campaign staff on his 2010 Special Election campaign for State Senate. His hard work and dedication to our community is very admirable. As I am learning more about how to be an ally to the LGBT community, especially to youth in Watsonville, I will keep in mind John's way of reaching out to and being an ally to the Latino and Watsonville communities.

7- Please describe your philosophy for working with under-represented communities of which you are not a member and, specifically, how this will manifest itself in your tenure in office.

ANSWER: I have always worked with communities that have are under-represented in positions of power. I am willing to meet with them and learn more about what issues are important to them. This has always been my policy as an elected official. As I have said in earlier answers, I would like your help in reaching out more, as well.

8 - Please tell us what you know about current City-operated or funded programs which impact the LGBT community, and what suggestions, if any, you have for improvements.

ANSWER: I know of no programs in the City of Watsonville or the Pajaro Valley that address the specific issues of the LGBT community that receive City funding. I support the LGBT community taking the time to organize and advocate for issues and programs that benefit their community, especially youth. As I said in our interview, I would be glad to meet with LGBT advocates to help them understand the Social Service Request for Proposal Process in Watsonville.

9 - Local non-profits that serve the LGBT community, along with other non-profits, have experienced considerable cuts in funding from all sources over the past couple of years. As a member of the City Council, where would you place funding for health and human services on your priority list?

ANSWER: I have sat on the Sub-Committee that oversees Social Service fund for the last three years. My record shows I support social service and community programs even through the tough economic times we have been experiencing, especially those serving youth.

10 - Will you insist that the City not associate with organizations - such as the Boy Scouts and The Salvation Army - that have clearly stated their intent to discriminate against LGBT people, supporting, instead, such inclusive organizations as Girl Scouts or Big Brothers/Big Sisters or Goodwill?

ANSWER: I will work to educate others in not practicing discriminatory practices. The City of Watsonville operates the Police Cadet Program in conjunction with Boys Scouts of America. It serves boys and girls. The City sets policies on who participates. I have not talked with our Police Chief about this, but will now do so.

11 - Will you ensure that medical insurance for City employees covers complete health care for gender reassignment surgery and medical care for transgender employees and family?

ANSWER:

12 - If elected, do you intend to take a leadership role with respect to LGBT youth in your city, working to ensure that all schools are safe for all students? If yes, please cite a concrete example of how you would do so.

In particular, did you support AB 1266 (text here: <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml>), which guarantees equal access to all school programs and facilities for students in accordance with their expressed gender identity?

ANSWER: I respect the collective bargaining process when employee contracts are negotiated by City employees. If employees want to have those benefits bargained in their contract I will support that.

13 - If elected, do you intend to take a leadership role with respect to rights and services for LGBT elders in your city? If yes, please cite a concrete example of how you would do so.

ANSWER:

14 - What would you do to support HIV education and services for at-risk communities in your city? Specifically, do you support syringe exchange in an effort to stop the spread of HIV and other blood-borne diseases and will you work to keep the program based on best practices and evidence-based research? Do you support safe needle drop-boxes in public areas, such as parks or bus depots? Will you support the syringe exchange program if it encounters interference? Do you support training for your police department around needle exchange?

ANSWER: My door is open to those LGBT elders that would like to meet with me. I ask for your assistance in reaching out to invite them to meet. Respecting and honoring our elders is very important to me, as a Councilmember and in my life.

15 - Do you support marriage equality, and did you do so publicly? Are you aware of a nation-wide movement to create "religious exemptions" to marriage equality and other nondiscrimination laws (e.g.: AB 2237 - text here: http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/asm/ab_2201-2250/ab_2237_bill_20140221_introduced.html)? Do you have a position on such exemptions?

ANSWER: Yes I do. I support the right of people to love each other and to marry, if they so choose. I do not support religious exemptions to civil rights laws.

16 - Have you in the past, and will you in the future, attend LGBT events, such as LGBT Pride, Queer Youth Leadership Awards, or the BAYMEC dinner? If you have not attended, why not?

ANSWER: I have attended the Queer Youth Leadership Awards in the past and would attend future events. I have assisted Watsonville Pride to obtain needed permits, and will help again.

17 - If you receive The GLBT Alliance's endorsement, will you display it in your campaign literature?

ANSWER: Yes, If I were endorsed I would use the GLBT Alliance logo and cite the Alliance in my literature.

18 - Have you received endorsements which you think might be of interest to the LGBT community?

ANSWER: I have received the endorsements of State Senator Bill Monning, Assemblymember Luis Alejo, Democrat leader Leslie Steiner and the Santa Cruz /Monterey Counties Building & Construction Trades Council.

19- Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

ANSWER: I look forward to working together with the GLBT Alliance in the future.