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Q1 Candidate Information

Candidate Name: Cynthia Hawthorne
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Q2 What office do you seek to be elected to?

Santa Cruz City Council

Q3 Please choose the option best describing your candidacy: **Open Seat**

Q4 Do you identify as LGBTIQ? **Yes, I am a lesbian**

Q5 Are you a member of the GLBT Alliance? **Yes, I am currently a 2018 member!**

Q6 Please describe your qualifications for the elected position you seek. Include your main issues, priorities if elected, key endorsements, plus anything else that you'd like our members to know about you and your candidacy.

I've lived in Santa Cruz for 33 years—on both the Westside and Eastside. I raised my children in our beloved city, developed a small business and was elected to two terms on the Santa Cruz City Schools Board. The reasons to love Santa Cruz are too many to count. But we also have challenges. We need to address our severe lack of affordable workforce housing, foster a strong local economy, ensure safe and vibrant neighborhoods, and sustainably support community members in greatest need. Our city government must also prepare for tough fiscal challenges that many predict will be faced by local governments in California in coming years. My experience as an elected leader—8 years, more than any other candidate—will enable me to hit the ground running. I have experience in making tough decisions in tough times (Great Recession), while protecting labor, staff jobs, and programs and doing my sworn duty to maintain fiscal solvency. As a member of the city council, I will use my strong understanding of budgeting, governance and public service to develop solutions, increase collaboration and move our community forward on key issues. As a co-leader of the 2017 and 2018 Santa Cruz women's marches, I witnessed the energy our community has for a better future. We need to apply the focus and civility of those marches to the challenges and opportunities we have in Santa Cruz. I believe we need to bring courage and imagination to our most pressing challenges. As an elected school board trustee, I led efforts to develop student safety programs, reform school nutrition, establish the award-winning Green Schools Committee, navigate the historic and very difficult impacts of the Great Recession, and pass local school funding measures. Having raised two children in Santa Cruz as an out lesbian, I was proud to be one of the first out lesbians to serve on a school board in Santa Cruz County. According to John Laird, if elected, I would be the first out Lesbian to serve on Santa Cruz City Council. Key endorsers include Wiggys Sivertsen (BAYMEC founder), Shannan Wilber (NCLR Youth Projects Director), former PDC chair Nancy Abbey, Santa Cruz Mayor (Ret.) Katherine Beiers, Gail Jack, Pete Kennedy, Joe Hall, Capitola City Councilmember Stephanie Harlan, Scotts Valley Vice Mayor Jack Dilles, Watsonville City Council Candidate Jenny Sarminento and many more.

Q7 Why are you seeking the endorsement of Santa Cruz County's grassroots LGBTIQ political organization, the GLBT Alliance?

It has truly been an honor to receive the endorsement and support of the GLBT Alliance twice previously. It is important to me, personally as a lesbian and as a candidate, to have the GLBT Alliance endorsement as the GLBT Alliance represents my community. The GLBT Alliance has long been an important political and community presence in Santa Cruz County, making a difference in lasting ways that I support. I would be proud to have the support of the GLBT Alliance

Q8 Please tell us about any past or current experiences or involvement you've had addressing LGBTIQ issues or work you've done to support the LGBTIQ community.

My career since 1983 has been working as a clinician in private practice, primarily focused on supporting LGBTIQ individuals and families. My specialty is LGBTIQ couples with children and supporting LGBTIQ individuals in the work place. This is the work I do every day and am proud to have helped countless individuals and families navigate the stress of the workplace, public schools, and neighborhoods while maintaining the health and identity of being a gay or lesbian individual and/or family. Previously my policy experience in supporting LGBTIQ students and staff came as an elected school board trustee for 8 years. During those years I helped write and implement policy to support LGBTIQ staff and students. I encouraged the school district to welcome and support the work of the Queer Youth Task Force. My focus was to ensure that state law protecting the rights of students and staff was implemented properly, including the Safe Schools Policy. Policy was developed and passed at the state level and trustees directed staff to ensure that Santa Cruz City Schools implemented the law, as well as the intent of AB 1266 (the bill passed in the legislature) to reinforce and protect the rights of transgender students. As a leader of Santa Cruz Women's Marches 2017 and 2018 and the coordinator of the post-march Activist Fair, I made the decision to highlight the work of the GLBT Alliance and The Diversity Center at both activist fairs held in Loudon Nelson Center by placing the tables for both organizations in the main room. This placement gave access to the literally thousands and thousands of community members to become more aware of the important work being done (and resources being made available) for the LGBTIQ community.

Q9 What historic political or civil rights struggles are you familiar with that impact LGBTIQ equality?

The LGBTIQ community is a part of every community in our country. They are us. We are them. Every civil rights landmark is a part of our history, including all the civil rights organizing from the work of Dr. King and Cesar Chavez, to the courage and leadership of Harvey Milk, Audre Lorde, and Lavern Cox. The history that I associate most with our community begins with Stonewall in 1969. I was a freshman in college and it started the rise of “gay power” and what ultimately has become GLBTIQ PRIDE. When the psychiatric community changed the DSM (diagnostic manual) in the mid-70s so that homosexuality was no longer a “mental illness,” I was working as intern counselor. The impact of this important change was huge and immediate on clients and our struggle for identity. The murder of Harvey Milk was a pivotal moment here in Northern California and around the world, and it led to many finally having the courage to come out as a way to honor Harvey. The AIDS epidemic is its own kind of political struggle and is the backdrop to everything that has happened in our community since the 80s. The incredible suffering and loss of our “best and brightest” gay men has affected our community forever. It also forced the mainstream medical community to see us as people with a right to compassion and treatment. And in a way, AIDS helped our community to organize and fight for equality. I was also influenced when President Clinton implemented “Don’t Ask, Don’t tell.” I had clients from the military/civilian staff of the federal government’s “Blue Cube” facility in Silicon Valley who felt relief, but not safe. The 90s and early part of this century are symbolized for me by the switch to the word QUEER from GAY and all the lobbying and organizing by the national groups such as HRC culminating in Obergefell v. Hodges.

Q10 What is your philosophy about working with minority communities of which you are not a member, and how will this manifest in your future work with the LGBTIQ community?

My personal approach is to be welcoming, respectful and inclusive. I listen in order to hear and understand. Within our LGBTIQ community, there are many differences and all deserve respect and inclusion.

Q11 Please describe any programs you know of that impact the LGBTIQ community and that are governed by or funded through the elected office you are running for? Include any suggestions you may have for improving these programs.

The City contributes a modest dollar amount to many community programs. Every community organization serves LGBTIQ, as we are community members. But the Teen Center, The Diversity Center Family Services and Planned Parenthood MM do the best job of meeting the unique needs of our community. I support all of these community service organizations. I would advocate for the City to up the dollar amount when possible and I would help look for dedicated funding from grants or corporate partnerships that the City may be able to leverage. I also think we need to address the unique needs of homeless GLBTIQ youth and acknowledge the crisis and vulnerability of youth who make up this part of our community.

Q12 If elected, how would you use your position to help further issues of importance to the LGBTIQ community?

The most basic answer is I would make myself available and willing to listen to ideas and concerns from the LGBTIQ community. And take them forward for action as appropriate. As an elected, I answered every email and returned every call from constituents. I often met with community leaders from our community and other diverse communities and constituents. The first step to making change is to listen to understand.

Q13 If you receive the GLBT Alliance’s endorsement, will you display it in your campaign literature?

Yes, please send me the GLBT Alliance's logo (jpg file) so I can proudly announce the endorsement on my campaign literature, social media and website!