



AIM County Council Candidate Questionnaire

Responses from Bill Conway candidate for At-Large

Affordable Housing

How would you work with AIM to increase the Housing Initiative Fund to \$100M by the year 2022?

Affordable housing is a pressing issue in Montgomery County.

I support increasing the Housing Initiative Fund to \$100M, but our County already does not have sufficient revenues to pay for the future cost of existing programs. The clearest indication of this is the fact that the County government was forced last year to cut back on the issuance of general obligation bonds in order to maintain our AAA bond rating. In order to increase funding of the Housing Initiative Fund as well as maintain other programs we must grow jobs in the County as a way of increasing our tax revenues. Simply increasing property taxes (the major tax over which the County has authority) won't work because County residents (particularly seniors) are already tax overburdened.

How would you work with AIM to put 200 units of affordable housing on public land, in the development pipeline each year?

I think there are two parts to the answer. First, we need to have the funds to provide for building these units, and that depends upon increasing County revenues through job growth as indicated above. Second, we should ensure that new units are distributed in wealthy as well as lower income areas of the County. The data are pretty strong that concentrating affordable housing in lower income areas encourages social stratification and perpetuation of income inequality.

Equity in Schools

How will you work with AIM to expand the Excel Beyond the Bell Elementary program to four additional Title I elementary schools each year so that the program serves 2,400 students by the year 2022?

Excel Beyond the Bell provides a needed after school enrichment to students at 7 middle schools, and I support its expansion into elementary schools. As in the case of the two housing questions above the principal issue is finding the money to pay for the expansion. Unless cuts are to be made to other programs, this is yet another example of the pressing need to increase our County's revenues.

Protecting Immigrants and Refugees

Many Montgomery County families are living in fear of one or more parent being separated from their children because of deportation. How will you work with AIM to include funding for deportation defense and family preparedness in the county budget, as well as work with AIM to find private funding for these efforts?

I favor County funding of deportation defense for those who cannot pay, but fear that the magnitude of the issue far exceeds available funds. For DACA and TPS alone there are approximately 31,000 participants in Montgomery County. I believe that in the chaos surrounding these programs there is a large unmet need for legal services. In the event I am elected I would promote an effort to harness pro



bono, volunteer representation from private law firms to address this problem. There is a measure of pro bono help already being provided to DACA and TPS participants, but I have in mind a significantly larger effort. The template I would use (on a Montgomery County scale) is Clemency Project 2014 which was a national project that organized the preparation of pro bono clemency petitions for non-violent federal drug offenders. In my law practice I provided pro bono representation as part of Clemency Project 2014, and its structure worked well.

Will you commit to work with AIM and Montgomery County landlords to house refugees in Montgomery County?

Yes. I strongly believe that our country, state and county have a moral obligation to accept refugees for resettlement in our communities.

Transportation

Will you work with AIM to protect good transportation jobs from privatization?

I interpret “privatization” to mean “non-union”. I support the right of collective bargaining and favor the preservation of union jobs. That is one of the principal reasons I oppose privatization of the Department of Liquor Control. I am not aware of imminent proposals to convert union transportation jobs to non-union but would view any such proposals with deep skepticism.

How will you hold WMATA accountable to prevent cutting bus service in the county, particularly to low-income areas?

My sense is that rationalization of both WMATA and Ride-On routes could increase the daily volume of riders served by both systems. However, that should never be done at the cost of leaving low-income residents with no or poor bus service.

Democracy with Accountability

Do you commit to meeting with AIM within a month of taking office, and on a quarterly basis subsequently?

I will always have an open door to AIM as well as other community organizations and will be happy to meet on the schedule suggested above.