

Q3 Having observed Newport's City Council members in a variety of formal and informal situations – City Council meetings, workshops, ceremonial occasions, social events – please list and define the primary qualities and skills necessary for success as a City Councilor. Include both professional and personal attributes.

Answered: 3 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Valerie Larkin: The most important skill is listening. Some people are very talented at one-way communication- using their mouths, but not their ears. Many citizens have the same complaint- that no one in government listens to their issues. Responsiveness is also important- returning calls and emails and making sure that one is accessible, Honesty is obviously an absolute must. Being able to work with people whose opinions and backgrounds are different, in order to build a consensus.	8/21/2018 10:15 AM
2	Liam Barry: The ability to listen is the most important quality. When seeking my nomination signatures, I heard a broad array of ward 2 concerns. It was an educational process that led me to seek additional knowledge on the subject matters brought up. Using that information and my own personal views to formulate policy ideas I believe the second most important quality required. Too many times in politics we hear concerns but are unwilling or unable to redirect city policy.	8/21/2018 10:11 AM
3	Lynn Ceglie: A successful City Councilor must be responsive to the needs of the residents by answering emails and phone calls, investigating solutions with City staff, and finding resolutions in a timely manner. To do the job successfully, the Council requires long hours, an enjoyment of the process and a dedication to public service. The Council meets formally twice a month but most preparation is done by working with City Manager and staff, understanding the issues, writing resolutions, etc. I am the liaison for nearly 15 city groups including the School Committee-Council Liaison Committee, the Edward King House Senior Center, Newport Partnership for Families, and Newport Public Education Foundation. I attend many community board meetings and have the City assist these organizations in anyway it can. I also make every effort to attend all ceremonial and social events including the hosting of visiting sister city delegations in order to promote Newport as a place to visit and do business. A successful City Councilor must listen to all sides, work cooperatively with different personalities and look at issues outside of any partisan lens.	8/21/2018 10:07 AM

Q4 In 2016 the City Council approved a new Strategic Plan to guide its setting goals and approving initiatives. Since then the Plan has not been mentioned further at Council meetings, it has not been updated and there have been no reports of progress towards any of the strategic goals enumerated in the Plan. What efforts will you initiate to make the Strategic Plan a true working document and upon which of the strategic goals in particular will you focus your efforts?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Valerie Larkin: The Strategic Plan established four tactical priority areas- Infrastructure, Communications, Continuous Improvement, and Economic Development. These are all critical areas, and we must achieve excellence in all of them if we are to make Newport the city that we envision in our mission statement- the most livable and welcoming city in New England. The City Council is accountable to the people for showing progress in meeting expectations of the stakeholders- the people who live and work in Newport. We should establish metrics so that we can measure and demonstrate progress on these goals. In fulfilling the aims of the Strategic Plan, we must also be conscious stewards of the city's resources, and responsible in our spending. Finally, the Strategic Plan is not written in stone, but it is a living document. It needs to be reviewed and revised periodically to reflect new concerns and priorities.	8/21/2018 10:15 AM
2	Liam Barry: I don't want to comment on why the city council has not mentioned the Plan or updated it without talking to my colleagues there first but I do think it is a working document a lot of the goals are being worked towards even if there has not been a updated report highlighting the progress	8/21/2018 10:11 AM
3	Lynn Ceglie: The City has a Strategic Plan and can be found in the front of the Budget document. The next Council must make an updated Strategic Plan and an Implementation Plan a priority. The Strategic Plan works in synergy with other documents such as the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. During the 2014-2016 council, the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the Open Space Plan were high priorities and required exhaustive work on behalf of the council, staff and the public. My involvement as a Council liaison to community groups helps me understand the concerns of residents, non-profits, the school department, and city organizations that I hope to include in the updated plan.	8/21/2018 10:07 AM

Q5 During the past school year, the Newport School Committee adopted a wide-ranging strategic plan, One Newport, setting the course for improving education and work-related training for Newport's youth. How might the City Council work with the School Committee to achieve the strategic plan goals and which goals do you believe require priority attention?

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#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Valerie Larkin: Effective communication between the City Administration and the School Department and between the City Council and the School Committee must be a priority. Ensuring that all of our students graduate with the necessary academic, vocational, and social skills is critical both for their own well-being and success, as well as ensuring that Newport has the well-educated and skilled workforce that will be necessary for us to compete in an increasingly technologically-driven economy. Technology in the classroom is crucial. We need to provide broadband connectivity in the classrooms, and we must achieve a 1:1 ratio of computers to students. One of the most effective ways to achieve a high-performing school system is through community engagement; working with individuals and organizations to facilitate the achievement of the strategic plan goals. Newport has a vibrant technology and industrial base, and the city should take advantage of this. One of the things that I believe that the City Council can do is work with the School Committee to foster collaboration between the schools and the businesses and organizations in our community. We all have the same goal- we want our students to succeed.	8/21/2018 10:15 AM
2	Liam Barry: I think having all 3rd graders be math and reading proficiency for their grade is a very important goal. Children realize from an early age if they are level with their peers on education. They realize it themselves before any adult does. Making sure they are helped at an early age to keep up helps with not losing them totally in the years that follow.	8/21/2018 10:11 AM
3	Lynn Ceglie: Being separately elected bodies, the lines between the School Committee and the City Council are very distinct. Since I have been on the Council, we have had a very good relationship with School Committee. As a liaison to the schools, we discuss how the City can assist in school issues. While the Council cannot give mandates to the School Committee, it can recommend priorities. I have supported the school department's "One Newport" initiatives including the funding of much needed technology in the classrooms. In the next year, however, the school department must get their financial management under control. Any deficits are impediments to yielding positive results.	8/21/2018 10:07 AM

Q6 By the end of the next decade, projections indicate that about 50% of Newport residents will be over 60 years of age. With this age demography shift, what are the most important adjustments and/or adaptations the City should make in its services and support for older Newporters? What problems do you anticipate in the implementation of these changes?

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#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Valerie Larkin: I'm not saying that it's a bad thing that the city's population is aging. We all are! But that should make us think of ways that we can also attract a younger constituency to Newport- improve our schools to encourage young families to move here; foster an atmosphere that will attract a young, vibrant creative class. But the reality is that the population is getting older. It seems that every day when I am out and about, I see older residents navigating the city in walkers. And it occurs to me that one of the challenges of living here when you are older is contending with our infrastructure- it can be difficult just getting around. Making improvements to our streets, sidewalks, and transportation is important, especially for our older residents. Of course the main impediment is having the resources to make these improvements. But just as we have an obligation to foster and support our youth, we also are obliged to make this city more habitable for our more senior residents.	8/21/2018 10:15 AM
2	Liam Barry: I think ensuring that these residents are not taxed all the way to Florida is the most important thing. Newport has a great medical set up with facilities in close proximity to residents but the cost of these services is increasing alarmingly. Keeping property taxes low will help them handle these costs.	8/21/2018 10:11 AM
3	Lynn Ceglie: I am currently on a committee that is looking to make Newport an "Age Friendly" community. This fall, the Van Buren Foundation will gather stakeholders to address the challenges our older population face in Newport. Recently, I was part of a small group that visited Salem, Massachusetts to look at their "Aging in Place" initiative. Many factors contribute to an "age friendly" community including improvements in transportation and housing, promoting social participation, inclusion, community support, health services, effective communication, as well as civic participation and employment. A plan will be developed to ensure Newport has a clear path in addressing each factor and how to implement each goal. For instance, the Broadway Streetscape plan was developed with AARP's input that included the need for better lighting, walkability, handicap access, wider sidewalks, bump outs that create shorter crosswalks, etc. I am working with RIDOT on traffic improvements on Memorial Boulevard to ensure that all residents, including those who live at Donovan Manor who are elderly and disabled are safe crossing the street eliminating isolationism in a city that has so much to offer every resident.	8/21/2018 10:07 AM

Q7 Do you believe Newport needs more moderate priced (\$250,000 to \$350,000) housing? If not, why? If yes, what measures will you initiate and support to encourage the development of moderate priced housing in Newport?

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#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Valerie Larkin: Housing is one of our greatest challenges in Newport. We need to ensure that our teachers, police officers, and social workers have an affordable place to live. Children of longtime residents leave because they cannot afford to live here. We need to ensure that our low and middle income residents aren't pushed out as a consequence of progress. This problem is exacerbated due to the fact that virtually all developable land has already been built. So we need to come up with creative solutions such as mixed use development to ensure that everyone's housing needs are met. Newport has a higher than average percentage of residents who rent rather than own. I am particularly concerned about the lack of availability of reasonably priced long term rentals, due to the number of rental units that have been made into short-term rentals. This is a situation that needs to be looked at, and might warrant increased regulation.	8/21/2018 10:15 AM
2	Liam Barry: On my Facebook page Liamforcouncil, I've listed the newspaper articles where I've set forth proposals on this subject.	8/21/2018 10:12 AM
3	Lynn Ceglie: Prices have skyrocketed in the past several years making housing unattainable for middle income individuals and families in Newport. The City Council cannot control the real estate market, but we are working to develop non-subsidized, attainable work force housing with the goal of helping young people and families live, work and play in Newport. A necessary component of the Innovation District is availability of moderately priced housing.	8/21/2018 10:08 AM

Q8 What are the most important environment and energy issues facing Newport? What current initiatives treating these issues will you support? Please explain why? What new measures will you initiate and support?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	<p>Valerie Larkin: Climate change is a reality. We are particularly susceptible to its effects as a coastal city. We have to contend with both rising sea levels and an increase in the number and intensity of storms. One of our greatest challenges is to make Newport into a resilient city. Newport has already made progress in this area, and should continue to make resiliency to climate change one of its highest priorities. We are dealing with increased flooding, and this impacts our needs in infrastructure and transportation. An example of the kind of project that we should support is the study that was undertaken by Rhode Island Sea Grant, which involved design students and looked at means of contending with the increased threat to the buffer between First Beach and Easton's Pond. This is our source of drinking water, and the combined effect of storms along with rising sea level increases the likelihood that the berm around the reservoir will be breached. We need to take advantage of the ample expertise in design, engineering, and science to contend with climate change.</p>	8/21/2018 10:16 AM
2	<p>Liam Barry: Rising sea levels are the most prominent environmental issue facing Newport. The Pell bridge off-ramps will help with evacuation in the event of a tragedy and I totally support those initiatives</p>	8/21/2018 10:12 AM
3	<p>Lynn Ceglie: The City is in talks with National Grid to purchase the street light system. If successful, we will be able to retrofit the lights to LEDs which will save on costs. This council has been very sensitive to the environmental impact of trash and plastics in our harbor. The single-use plastic bag ban passed two years ago is a major initiative that helps reduce plastics affecting wildlife and water quality. I am very concerned about other plastics such as straws entering the harbor and have spoken to owners of restaurants about reducing the use of straws. Cigarette butts are also a major concern as they litter our streets and enter the harbor. The city and businesses have installed cigarette butt dispensers, but people still throw them on the ground. I initiated - and the council passed - a stronger city ordinance that requires all businesses to clean up trash in front of their businesses on a daily basis. I have also been part of a clean Newport initiative that reminds people to place trash in its proper receptacles.</p>	8/21/2018 10:08 AM

Q9 What suggestions do you have to increase Newport's revenue other than raising property taxes and expanding taxes derived from tourism? Please include both annual (ongoing) revenue and one-time revenue.

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#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Valerie Larkin: There aren't that many ways to increase revenue other than through taxes of one sort or another. But minimizing property taxes is essential to making Newport an affordable place to live, and increasing hotel or restaurant taxes is detrimental to the tourist industry. One area that I would look at is short-term rentals. There are an estimated 1,400 Airbnb units in the city- how many of them are collecting rental taxes? Also, Newport has many tax-exempt properties. The Finance Review Committee make recommendations to negotiate Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) from these organizations, as well as contributions from the State. We need to examine this, and ensure that these recommendations are implemented.	8/21/2018 10:16 AM
2	Liam Barry: Increasing the outdated fee structures derived from permits & registrations would fill a large hole and help pay for those services a lot more	8/21/2018 10:12 AM
3	Lynn Ceglie: The city needs to find a financial balance to fund very expensive infrastructure improvements without much impact on the City's residents. Some ideas: 1. Reallocate the distribution of the hotel and food and beverage money that comes from the State. 2. Reclassify the residential vs non-residential tax rate. 3. Apply for grants that help fund the repair and upkeep of improvements to Cliff Walk, Bellevue Ave, parks, open space and monuments.	8/21/2018 10:08 AM

Q10 1 Would you support a homestead exemption that would reduce property tax on owner occupied primary residences in Newport and all other residential property would absorb a larger share of the property tax burden? Please explain your reasons.

Answered: 3 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Valerie Larkin: I would certainly consider this, but I would have to look at how it would actually be implemented (e.g., flat dollar or percentage, is it capped at a certain level, etc.) Homestead exemptions can be a way of relieving the burden on low and moderate income homeowners.	8/21/2018 10:16 AM
2	Liam Barry: I think it would be costly to manage and oversee. An easier way to lessen the burden on owner occupied residences would be to charge more in fees for those properties that do not have an owner onsite. When registering for guest house licensing, the fees should be higher if the owner is not on the premises. This would also cover the higher city oversight costs associated with these properties.	8/21/2018 10:12 AM
3	Lynn Ceglie: Yes, if such an exemption is determined to be financially viable.	8/21/2018 10:08 AM

Q11 As more and more summer visitors arrive in Newport, the challenge of limited parking and congested traffic for both visitors and residents continues to increase. What measures would you initiate and support to help solve this vexing problem?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Valerie Larkin: Our current mode of the automobile as the predominant means of transportation within the city is clearly not sustainable. That is increasingly evident every summer. I don't expect everyone to do what I do- use a bicycle as the primary means of intra-city transport, but I would like to see a lot more people doing it! A bikeshare system might encourage some people to leave their cars outside of downtown. Parking facilities away from downtown with frequently-running shuttles are one way to reduce traffic. Intelligent redesign of our streets can improve traffic flow.	8/21/2018 10:16 AM
2	Liam Barry: I think there should be a full review of the resident parking sticker program to see what changes can be made. We should try revisit the idea of a multilevel parking lot at the Mary Street location too.	8/21/2018 10:12 AM
3	Lynn Ceglie: The traffic issue is a vexing issue and very difficult to resolve. The Pell Bridge Realignment brings an opportunity to use land to create a "park and ride" facility that will move traffic and parking outside of the downtown. The plan includes transportation shuttles to the downtown areas.	8/21/2018 10:08 AM

Q12 The City Council has approved beginning discussions with developers for potential changes and/or new use of the current Gateway Visitor's Center. This decision is on the heels of concerns expressed by many citizens that too many decisions like this which affect the entire community are made without proper public input and discussion. Do you agree with validity of those concerns? Please explain why or why not? As a Council member, what specific action(s) will you take to ensure that citizens' input and involvement is part of the process of decision making?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Valerie Larkin: One of my overarching concerns is that city government must be open and transparent. Many people believe that important decisions that affect the entire city are made "behind closed doors". Any significant decision such as this needs to have a process for solicit and collecting public input, and the decision process must be completely out in the open. I would make it one of my highest priorities as a Council member to ensure that NO important decisions are made without open engagement of the citizenry.	8/21/2018 10:16 AM
2	Liam Barry: I think the proposals should be put forth first, a public forum to discuss these proposals should follow (as is happening with the Pell bridge off ramp contract) and the final proposal should be sent out to bid to a number of contractors/developers to achieve the best price	8/21/2018 10:13 AM
3	Lynn Ceglie: The Council endorsed a process to look at the Gateway Visitors Center for redevelopment and to find a best use. I will promote a process that includes workshops and various forms of public input via email and questionnaires. In addition to Council meeting and workshops, all Planning Board and Zoning Board meetings are advertised and open to the public for citizen input. I encourage all residents to attend to make their voices heard. The difficult part of any project is that once the City Administration or Council floats an idea, the public can view the idea as a "done deal." I understand why people would be frustrated but public input does shape the Council's decisions. The Council needs to communicate more effectively. We need to work on efforts so that residents better understand the city's processes as we look forward to such important projects as the Gateway Visitors Center, Innovation District and Pell Bridge Realignment.	8/21/2018 10:09 AM

Q13 Efforts to attract businesses to the so-called Innovation Hub in the North End have yet to yield significant results. Why do you think this is the case? Should the City consider filling at least part of that space with housing? Please explain your answer.

Answered: 3 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Valerie Larkin: I don't know that there is a problem in attracting businesses, as this project is still in its early stages. It is certainly anticipated that there will be development that occurs around the Innovation Hub; this would most likely include retail and residential.	8/21/2018 10:16 AM
2	Liam Barry: I definitely believe that some of this space should have low cost micro-housing (see my Newport Daily News article on my Liamforcouncil facebook page). The reason I believe that there have been no real discussions on the north end development is because we do not know how much land will be available till the ramp layout is chosen and will not know how much of that land is developable until a while after that proposal has been chosen.	8/21/2018 10:13 AM
3	Lynn Ceglie: The Pell Bridge Realignment is integral in the development of usable land for attracting such businesses and companies. The land is not yet usable. When that land is available, the city will be able to yield the results that are so important to the entire city. Housing is a necessary component of any Innovation District but at this point, we need to focus on developing the land for the best possible economic development uses.	8/21/2018 10:09 AM

Q14 The development of the old Navy Hospital property is a major concern of the community – especially to those neighborhoods that abut the property. Will you commit to requiring that citizens and abutters be given opportunity to give input on plans for uses and development before decisions are made? What will you do to coordinate this development with other linked projects, such as the Pell Bridge Ramp Realignment, the Innovation Hub, the Casino property and park and ride plans?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Valerie Larkin: We need to consider all of the development happening in this area of the city- the Pell Bridge Ramp Realignment, the Innovation Hub, redevelopment of the Newport Grand property, along with the Navy Hospital- in a holistic manner. I believe that the public must be given an opportunity to provide input on any major decision made by the city, and that would certainly apply to any plans with the Hospital property.	8/21/2018 10:16 AM
2	Liam Barry: I can commit that citizens and abutters have an input. It should follow the same procedural process that RIDOT is carrying out with the Pell Bridge project	8/21/2018 10:13 AM
3	Lynn Ceglie: Citizen input is paramount and the State and City have been working together to gather input from residents concerning the Pell Bridge Realignment. Any of these projects are so important to the community as a whole and we must work together to bring the highest quality results to Newport. The Casino property is privately owned but my understanding is that the new owners want to work with the City and residents on any plans they have for the property.	8/21/2018 10:09 AM

Q15 The Sheffield School Tech Innovation Center project has been a priority for close to five years. Construction is underway and the Center is scheduled to be completed sometime in 2019, with a goal of attracting startup companies that could help create jobs in Newport. As of now, the only set tenant is the Newport County Chamber of Commerce, not exactly a startup. If the Center does not produce the results sought by City planning, what steps will you initiate and support to learn from the Sheffield experience and to assure that the North End Innovation Hub does not suffer the same fate?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Valerie Larkin: The Sheffield School project is just gearing up. Hopefully, with the establishment of Innovate Newport, we will see startup companies attracted to the Center. But if it does not achieve the desired results, I would say that the Innovation Hub would need to put more effort in promoting the project and engaging potential partners. We should look at successful similar projects such as the innovation center in Cambridge MA, and learn from their successes.	8/21/2018 10:16 AM
2	Liam Barry: That's a very negative hypothetical question based on the assumption that this project will fail. When construction is complete, we can assess where things stand then.	8/21/2018 10:13 AM
3	Lynn Ceglie: The Sheffield "Innovate Newport" Center construction is now underway and the City has seen substantial interest. The City is finalizing a partnership with Boston's "Workbar" and looks to partner with this leader in shared workspaces for entrepreneurs in the management and operations of the Sheffield facility. The hiring of a program manager is underway who will build an "Innovate Newport" brand to promote and build relationships with organizations interested in bringing their businesses to Newport. Sheffield is a very exciting project and I am looking forward to its success.	8/21/2018 10:09 AM

Q16 Within the next two years, Newport residents will have an opportunity to vote on a local bond issue to fund school construction as a proposed remedy for overcrowding at the Pell School and unacceptable structural conditions at Rogers High School. The bond issue probably will be the largest ever submitted to Newport residents. What will you do to assure voters are well acquainted with the facts of the bond issue? Will you support or oppose the ballot question? Please explain your response.

Answered: 3 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Valerie Larkin: While I can't commit to a ballot question prior to knowing exactly what it is, I do believe that maintaining our schools is a priority and that we really have to address the problems at these two schools. I would ensure that we use all means of communications- internet, mailing, etc., to make sure that voters have all of the information.	8/21/2018 10:16 AM
2	Liam Barry: I will need to see the bond question, proposal, costs and how much of the cost will get picked up by the state before I determine voting for or against it. Information being advertised about the bond prior to voting is paramount.	8/21/2018 10:13 AM
3	Lynn Ceglie: I am the Council liaison on the Rogers building subcommittee and replacement costs of a new high school are staggering. Even more staggering are renovation costs. I would support collaboration with Middletown but it does seem we will not have that opportunity as Middletown resists any partnerships. According to the State, Rogers leads the list of schools that need to be replaced. A new school must be safe, have the infrastructure for students to access the today's technology and a Career and Tech Center that will house programs for students to receive certifications to find employment after graduation. In 2010, I was a member of the Pell building committee and created the website that educated the public on bond information. Any passage of a bond will take an incredible amount of work but I believe we really have no choice but to support the building of a new high school.	8/21/2018 10:09 AM

Q17 Will you support a city-wide citizen's satisfaction survey in 2019, similar to those conducted in 2005 and 2015? If not, why? If yes, what are the primary questions you want to include in the survey?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Valerie Larkin: Absolutely. I would want to include questions that indicate the condition of Newport's infrastructure (streets, lighting, etc.); how satisfied are citizens with services such as trash collection and recycling and maintenance of parks; interaction with police, fire, and emergency responders; and- at the risk of getting bad reviews- how is city government doing?	8/21/2018 10:16 AM
2	Liam Barry: I think each election is a citizens satisfaction survey.	8/21/2018 10:13 AM
3	Lynn Ceglie: Surveys are expensive. I would support a new survey if a private entity were to fund it. I wonder if priorities expressed in the last 2015 survey have changed much. Schools and infrastructure were high on the list then, and I do believe they would be priorities in 2018 and beyond.	8/21/2018 10:09 AM