Sierra Club Montgomery County Group endorses 11 strong candidates for County Council

Monday May 2, 2022

Sierra Club Montgomery County Group enthusiastically endorses 11 strong candidates for the Montgomery County Council. Our endorsees are Andrew Friedson (District 1); Marilyn Balcombe (District 2); Robert Wu (District 3); Kate Stewart (District 4); Brain Anleu (District 5); Natali Fani-Gonzalez (District 6); Jacqueline Manger (District 7); Evan Glass, Will Jawando, Tom Hucker, Laurie-Anne Sayles (all At-Large).

These candidates will be on the ballot in the July 19 primary election. If you may be busy or away on July 19, **sign up now to vote by mail.**

Sierra Club looks forward to strong progress on a variety of environmental priorities over the next four years. In particular, we'd like to see substantial forward movement on

- Creating robust non-automobile transportation options – including a speedy implementation of Bus Rapid Transit (in dedicated lanes) on Rt 355, Veirs Mill and Rt 29; permanent free fares on Ride-On; rapid roll-out of the Bicycle Master Plan; substantial investments on pedestrian safety and convenience.
- Building energy efficiency programs to significantly lower energy usage in new and existing buildings;
- Upgrading the county's Climate Action Plan to become a true plan – with deadlines, budgets, responsible actors, measures of progress; and to quickly act on the highest priorities in that upgraded plan;
- Increasing reliance on clean energy sources – with an emphasis on expanding solar;
- Using Thrive 2050, sector plans, zoning changes and other vehicles to greatly expand housing (both affordable and market rate) in the county – especially in mixed use, mixed income neighborhoods at transit stations;
- Increasing composting dramatically and other Zero Waste efforts;
- Increasing substantially the county's tree canopy.

We believe that the 11 candidates we have endorsed for the County Council will lead forward progress on the priorities we've highlighted.

- ***Andrew Friedson – District 1*** – Friedson is an incumbent. He is a strong Smart Growth advocate and leader. Sierra Club appreciates Friedson's strategic support of high density mixed use, mixed income development at transit stations; and his push for BRT and other transit.
- ***Marilyn Balcombe – District 2*** – Balcombe will bring strong experience as the CEO of the Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce and as an upcounty civic activist.

While we disagree with Balcombe about highway projects, we are pleased to see her support for transit (MARC and BRT), as well as solar, Zero Waste, increased housing supply, and building energy efficiency.

- *Robert Wu – District 3* – Wu will bring his experience as a Gaithersburg Council member to the Council. Wu is a pragmatic progressive. He is especially knowledgeable on (and passionate about) transportation issues – Wu supports transit and pedestrian-bicycle infrastructure,

- *Kate Stewart – District 4* – Stewart currently serves as mayor of Takoma Park and Vice Chair of MWCOG. She has a strong reputation as someone who can produce results. Stewart will bring to the Council a good understanding of many key issues and the interconnectedness of issues such as climate change, economic and social justice, housing and transportation.

- *Brian Anleu – District 5* – Anleu brings strong pertinent experience to the Council – he has served as a key staffer to Council member Hucker; and he has also served as Chief of Staff at the Montgomery County Planning Board. He has a very good grasp of the issues, especially housing and transportation. Because of his experience inside county government, Anleu will be able to move at full speed from the start of his term.

- *Natali Fani-Gonzalez – District 6* – Fani-Gonzalez brings a strong Smart Growth record from her several years as a Planning Board member. She is aligned with Sierra Club on all key issues – housing, transportation, Zero Waste, tree canopy, building energy efficiency. Fani-Gonzalez is passionate and articulate.

- *Jacqueline Manger – District 7* – Manger is currently at the University of Maryland Smith School of Business, where she focuses on entrepreneurship. Manger is well aligned with Sierra Club on some key issues – such as housing at all income levels along transit corridors and energy efficiency in buildings.

- *Evan Glass – At-Large* – Glass is an incumbent. Glass has supported the Sierra Club position on many key issues. In particular, Glass has been a leader on transit and pedestrian safety – he led the successful effort for free fares on Ride-On buses for kids and seniors. Glass has also worked hard to shine a spotlight on the need for more effective pedestrian safety efforts.

- *Will Jawando – At-Large* – Jawando is an incumbent. He has been an outspoken advocate for more housing, with an emphasis on affordable housing and housing at transit stations. Jawando is strong on equity, linking Smart Growth initiatives to equity – leading to his push for missing middle housing near transit stations.

- *Tom Hucker – At-Large* – Hucker is an incumbent Council member (although he is now running for an At-Large seat, he has held a district seat since 2014). He strongly supports building much-needed housing in the county, using the energy tax for greening our buildings, and securing dedicated lanes for BRT.

- *Laurie-Anne Sayles – At-Large* – Sayles will bring to the Council her experience as a Gaithersburg Council member where she had to deal with many of the key issues she'll

face on the Council – including affordable housing, transportation, land use. Sayles is a fierce proponent of transit (especially BRT), viewing it through both a Smart growth and an equity lens.

You will notice our endorsement lists some incumbents and some challengers. We believe in holding elected officials accountable to high standards of policy, transparency and consultation. Some incumbents did not meet those standards. Sierra Club believes that the endorsees bring complementary skills and experience that if elected will help the county move forward in its climate goals.

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