

Dear City Council Candidate:

You are receiving this email because you are listed on the Baltimore City Board of Elections website as a registered candidate for the 2016 Primary Election.

In the coming weeks, Tubman City News (www.tubmancitynews.com) will publish a series of online articles informing the general public about various aspects of the 2016 Baltimore Elections. Although Tubman City News will not endorse any particular candidate, it will provide its readers with relevant information regarding each of the registered candidates.

Please take a moment to answer each of the questions listed below. Your response will be posted along with your photo in a future edition of Tubman City News (www.tubmancitynews.com).

**Mary Pat Clarke, Democratic candidate for
Baltimore City Council, 14th**

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- 1) Do you think a residency requirement for city employees, including Baltimore City Police Officers, to live in Baltimore City would help ensure a greater level of care and concern for Baltimore neighborhoods by City employees and their families? Why or Why not?

I think that local Baltimore City residency is a positive factor for the City itself. For one thing, it means that earnings from City employment will flow into city coffers. The piggyback tax on earnings goes back to where employees live, not where they work. In addition, city residency means that city employees are more likely to shop in the city if they live here, bolstering our small local businesses. They also have the same stake in city services

and the same positive relationships with city residents as we have. Because the State controls public safety and police, the city's previous efforts to require police residency have failed in Annapolis. The city lacks the authority to impose that requirement. One positive alternative is to offer the kind of home buying incentives currently being proposed -- - and to recruit city employees who already live here as a hiring priority. .

- 2) Lead poisoning is an environmental health issue that has plagued Baltimore for decades. What will you do, if elected, to help combat the problem and to help those families and communities who have been impacted the most?

On February 4, I convened and chaired a City Council hearing involving city and State officials and advocates on the status of our city's and State's efforts to eradicate the lead paint poisoning which disables and disadvantages so many of our children, especially the poorest, and deprives us of a large share of the rising leadership required for the city's positive future. Helping to end this solvable plague on our future will be a priority for me in this and the following term of office, if elected.

No amount of lead poisoning is without negative and irreversible effects. I will work to cut in half, to 5 micrograms per deciliter (from 10) the State's trigger for enforcement. (According to the Maryland Department of the Environment, more than 1,000 Baltimore children tested between 5 and 9 micrograms per deciliter in 2013.) I will likewise work with the city Health department to ensure that every toddler-age child is tested for the early signs of poisoning --- for which we need a community-wide and sustained call to action to families

and health providers.

Two challenging needs to make progress on the lead poisoning front are 1) for the city to provide immediate and adequate temporary relocation for families whose children are showing even the earliest signs of lead poisoning; and, 2) a radical program of new, affordable lead-free housing to replace the blighted stock of rental housing still holding our families hostage to this poisoning. If we could tear down and replace our blighted family high rises, we can rebuild our housing infrastructure to address this plague. But it would be a costly and controversial undertaking for which citywide advocacy and historic funding will be required.

- 3) Many of the buildings and learning spaces provided by the Baltimore City Public School System for use by children and school staff in Baltimore are deplorable. Most of the water (i.e. fountains, bathroom sinks, toilets, showers, cafeteria/kitchen) is lead poisoned because of lead-based pipes. Additionally, many of the buildings lack adequate heating and cooling systems. Many more have other environmental health problems like asbestos and mold. Furthermore, a majority of the school buildings in Baltimore City are dark, dreary, and poorly lit; they resemble miniature jails. If you are elected, what steps will you take to improve the safety and aesthetics of Baltimore City Public School buildings? How will you remedy the lead, asbestos, and mold issues in Baltimore City Public School buildings? What steps will you take to create a beautiful and safe learning environment at all Baltimore City Public Schools in Baltimore?

We set out several years ago to rebuild or significantly

rehabilitate the Baltimore school system's inventory of active school buildings. We raised the local match (through the bottle tax) to leverage the State's majority financial commitment and kicked-off with the first \$1 billion to cover an estimated half the buildings. Meanwhile, costs escalated, delays have occurred, temporary student relocations have proved complex, but we are underway and should never lose sight of reaching whatever new financial goal is required to fix all of our operating schools in the historic manner that brings in the light, includes community and after-school activities, and upgrades technology to adequately prepare our children for 21st century careers.

Ever keeping our eyes on that historic prize, we must meanwhile ensure that today's students have the basics of safe and sound school environments, well lighted (because light encourages achievement), well cooled, well heated --- and free of mold and exposure to lead and asbestos. As chair of the Education & Youth Committee, I will continue to oversee and encourage the plan of remedial action required for interim work to accelerate on a school-based level. Part of that effort will include encouraging private sector investment in individual school technology and mentoring and in the art work which helps light-up our students' school lives as we roll out the more comprehensive 21st century plans.

- 4) Large corporations like the Horseshoe Casino and health conglomerates like Johns Hopkins are essential to boosting the city's economy and employment rate. Great efforts have been made over the years by city officials to provide incentives and supports to attract big business to Baltimore. However, small business owners in Baltimore City receive very few incentives or supports even though

small businesses employ a large segment of Baltimore residents. If elected, what will you do to help small businesses in Baltimore thrive? How will you encourage entrepreneurship? How will you support new and emerging business owners?

I am a co-sponsor and supporter of Councilwoman Helen Holton's recently introduced legislation to afford favorable city bidding status and opportunity to local entrepreneurs in city contracting for goods, services, consulting. Johns Hopkins University has recently announced an array of local employment goals and local contract advantages. I am already promoting such private sector opportunities to build the base of our Baltimore small businesses. Again with Councilwoman Holton in the lead, I support the infusion of greater instruction and experience in budgeting and entrepreneurship into our public school curricula, as orientation and preparation for growing up to establish small businesses of the students' own.

5) If you are the parent of a school-aged child, is your child currently enrolled in a Baltimore City Public School? Why or why not? If your child is beyond school-age, did he/she graduate from a Baltimore City Public High School? Why or Why not?

All 4 of our children attended the Baltimore City Public Schools. Two attended private high schools. Two graduated from Western Senior High School. Of our 3 grandchildren who live in Baltimore, all attend public schools, one at Baltimore City College and 2 at Mt. Washington Elementary/Middle School.

6) Baltimore is unique in that it is one of the few urban cities in

the United States with public access to so many parks and green spaces. If elected, what will you do to help protect and enhance all of the public parks and green spaces in Baltimore?

I have worked since its establishment, by a Waverly constituent, of the Baltimore Greenspace, Inc. non-profit land trust. Many community gardens are self-help efforts to remove the blight of vacant lots by volunteer neighbors. Many such lots are still titled to original and long-gone owners, making the stewardship unstable. Gardeners cherish the gardens but neither they nor neighborhood associations can afford the liability or cost of pursuing ownership. Baltimore Greenspace works with neighborhoods to help foreclose and take title on the community's behalf, also overseeing the need for continued maintenance when original gardeners and organizers move away or "retire" from their volunteer leadership. Such permanent green spaces add value and beauty, and they promote the cooperative effort which helps neighborhoods thrive.

7) 2015 marked a year of unprecedented murders in Baltimore. If elected, what is your plan to address the violence and murder crisis in Baltimore?

More than anyone else --- more than beloved mothers, respected fathers, favorite teachers --- youth in their teens seek the approval of their peers. I have seen the best of students and the most cared-for of sons get into trouble to be part of the peer groups they fall in with, the peers they admire and whose approval they seek. Many of especially our young men end up injured, murdered or with lives ruined as perpetrators of violence before they ever have the chance to outgrow this stage of such a desperate need to be accepted.

At least where such peer group pressure is the trigger, we need to fill-up lives and neighborhoods with peer activities of relevance, like sports teams, restored pal recreation centers, scouting, after-school robotics. Our youth deserve, but we cannot wait to begin for, shiny new regional recreation centers. I will continue to seek out older teen or adult leaders who are flexible and dedicated enough to pick up and make activities happen wherever possible. At the same time, we must unceasingly target the identification and turn-in of illegal guns that turn youthful impulse into deadly force.

8) Baltimore City is a city that is suffering from neglect. Elected officials and public servants in Baltimore have turned a blind eye from everything to the mistreatment of families in less than standard public housing complexes to the intentional oversight of hundreds of abandoned commercial and residential buildings throughout the city to the less than standard public transit system in Baltimore. If elected, what will you do differently to ensure that Baltimore receives the attention and care it needs to become a better place to live, work, play, pray and learn?

Along with removing blighted blocks where our children play and travel to and from school, we need to focus on putting our tax incentives into what best serves the city itself: in major development of attractive and affordable rental and homeownership housing, in mixed-use communities throughout the city within walking distances of quality elementary and middle schools and of employment centers dedicated to training and hiring city residents. To ever end lead paint poisoning, our lowest income families require emergency relocation housing to escape lead-poisoned rentals and permanent lead-free housing by the hundreds of units at a time.

9) Many residents in Baltimore City are unable to find affordable and beautiful housing in Baltimore that is lead, asbestos and rodent free. If elected, what will you do to ensure that everyone in Baltimore has access to affordable, beautiful, healthy and safe places to live?

Market-rate housing developers have benefitted from tax incentives to build their developments. As a result, our assessable wealth as a city has risen beyond the State average -- - to the extent that our wealth has triggered a reduction in State education formulas funding of city schools. Meanwhile, the property tax breaks developers have received makes the city too “cash poor” to make up the funds we have lost. The time has come for Baltimore to limit tax incentives to developers of the affordable, mixed-use projects we desperately need and to employers who pledge to recruit, train, and hire city residents as a priority in locations within walking distance or affordable and reliable transit of where our citizens live.

Thank you for this opportunity to answer questions for the subscribers and followers of Tubman City News. Mary Pat Clarke