



Queens Central Democratic Club
Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire 2021
New York City Council District 29

Thank you for applying for the Queens Central Democratic Club (QCDC) endorsement. If you have any questions about this document or the endorsement process, feel free to email us at qcdcny@gmail.com. Please email us the completed questionnaire by Friday, March 12.

Full Name: Sheryl Ann Fetik

Thank you for permitting me to address the community's concerns.
Stay safe and well.

1. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a large number of businesses closed their storefronts in our district. As Council Member for CD29, what is your plan to bring back businesses to our storefronts? Additionally, how do you plan to support the storefronts that already exist?

We must support our small business community. Small businesses provide part of the backbone of our community, and hold up our community. I am a small businesswoman, and am learning about how to go forward. Hopefully, the vaccines will help to bring us back.

Small businesses need to be able to operate safely, while making their employees and customers feel safe. We need to provide short term assistance, in the form of grants and loans, and ask businesses what else they need.

All government programs and policies should include the views and needs of residents and small businesses. Too often, this has not been done. The effects of some current policies favor big business, over small business.

We should explore having real public spaces, online, for businesses to communicate with customers, and residents with one another. Online spaces are now privately owned, by big businesses, based upon their own business models.

2. The Mayor and DOE Chancellor just announced that they will be disbanding the gifted and talented program in NYC Public Schools. Do you agree with this cut? Why or why not?
We should continue the Gifted and Talented Program, and continue to seek excellence in the Specialized High Schools. We should continue to encourage educational growth, and increase educational opportunities, for all students. We should recognize that students progress differently, and provide opportunities for all to succeed.

3. We have seen our neighbors suffer from food insecurity unlike any other point in recent memory. How will you work with NYC to provide emergency food services to our neighbors (particularly seniors) and support to our food pantries such as Masbia, Queens Community House, and Commonpoint Queens?



We need to have much better coordination in the distribution of food. Many people are helping their neighbors, and they should. Many people are falling through the cracks, and are not able to get the food that they need, to stay healthy. NYC's Get Food distribution is a short term fix for some seniors; this program does not provide complete nutritional needs.

During this Pandemic, and for the future, we should be planning for the real needs for nutritious foods for NYers. We should be collaborating with farmers, charitable organizations and businesses (related to my response to question 1. above) Food distributions through NYC, charities and Meals on Wheels, are well-intended. But we must do better. The food must provide more nutrients, and be lower in carbohydrates, to keep the elderly and others with health concerns, in good health.

We could have a City sponsored resource list, accessible to everyone, with greater opportunities for collaboration, to provide for those in need. We should consider how to better organize deliveries, where necessary.

4. We have a couple of citywide races coming up - if a citywide candidate wanted to see some of the best food and shops CD29 had to offer, where would you take them on a tour?

We have had some good stores and restaurants, at moderate prices, although some have unfortunately been closing. Due to the Pandemic, I haven't been to a restaurant, recently. (a little take-out) Over the past few days, I have been out on Metropolitan Avenue, Continental Avenue, Austin Street, and 63rd Drive, and can recommend places to shop and eat, on all of these streets. People are out more; and they seem to be enjoying themselves, again.

5. Business is a lifeblood to any community, and that also translates to jobs. If a major commercial business (i.e. Target or Key Food) wanted to come and open shop in CD29, what requirements would you ask of them in order to bridge them into our community?

I will ask them how they intend to meet and serve the needs of their customers. How will the choices of products offered in their stores, relate to their customers' wishes. There is some traffic congestion and not many parking spaces. How will their customers travel to their stores? Where will they park? And how will they carry their purchases home? Will the store provide delivery, and under what circumstances. There are many seniors and PWDs (People with Disabilities) in the area. What will the stores include, to make their stores accessible. This is a mostly middle and working class community. Who are the store's target customers in our community? Customers look for quality, as well as moderate and sale prices. What will be the return policy; it should be fair.

6. In your view, what are the biggest criminal justice concerns in CD29? What changes, if any, need to be made, and how?

I must answer this question based upon what I am reading and seeing on the Internet, as well as my experiences from before the Pandemic.

It appears that bail reform legislation should have been more restrictive. Judges should be given more discretion to hold defendants, especially when there are serious or violent crimes involved. It appears that there is less concern for arrest, when defendants can be let go. I agree that bail should not be required, and that defendants should not be held in many cases.



We must provide services and housing, to those in need, especially the homeless and the mentally ill. Proper housing doesn't mean jail, and doesn't mean warehousing people in shelters.

I keep hearing about mass thefts and burglaries. I raised a question about drugstores being looted, at the last meeting of the 112 Pct. Community Council. Captain Cappelman explained that there were 17 related arrests, during the past month. He explained that these were thefts by individuals who ran into the subway. Photos showed entire areas of stores, left with empty shelves. This appears to be organized, with transportation waiting to haul away the goods.

I am deeply concerned about hate crimes, and believe that they must be taken seriously.

I am concerned about the number of scams, with people contacted over the phone and the Internet. Additional priority should be given to these problems, both in the NYPD and in the DA's office.

7. Forest Hills Hospital provides front line, life saving work on a daily basis, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. What reforms need to be implemented for our healthcare workers, and what recommendations would you provide to help streamline vaccine distributions?

Disclaimer: I was the main caregiver for many years, for my mother, who died last September, at age 96. She wanted to live longer, and I believe that she could have lived longer. In November 2019, she fractured her hip, and we took her to Northwell LIJ FH Hospital. She thereafter went into rehab, and was back and forth to FH hospital, through the next August. She died in another hospital, after I made the decision to rescue her from Northwell. Much of what I now understand about what must be reformed in health care, I learned from the horrors of how my mother was treated. My mother never contracted COVID; she became ill from 5 other contagions, while in rehab and in the hospital.

We must reform our health care system.

We must listen to patients and families, permit patients to stay in their homes, whenever possible, change how and for what providers are paid, change the rules for how providers can seek authority over patients, seek to reduce the spread of contagions in facilities.

The specific question asked:

I fully support and have supported providing proper PPE to our health care workers, who are our frontline defenders, during this Pandemic. There is a need for much better coordination of the distribution of the vaccines.

For those patients who do not have COVID, there should be additional care permitted in the hospital, from caregivers and family members. This is consistent with NYS guidelines. The pressures of the Pandemic are clearly affecting the quality of care for non-COVID patients, while the hospital and associated agencies continue to aggressively try to obtain the maximum ability to be paid, for providing care that they can not provide. For Northwell, there has been expansion into a vertically integrated business model. They act to keep every possible dollar, in house, even when it will not necessarily benefit the patient.

8. CD29 has a large senior population, and Queens as a whole has one of the fastest growing senior populations in NYC. How would you work with the Department for the Aging to provide more resources to our district and support our seniors?



Seniors' circumstances vary. Some people are healthy enough to work and study, like myself. Some seniors need extra care. I would set up programs to allow for these differing needs.

For working and healthy seniors: We should set up a comprehensive listing of available jobs and other employment resources, as well as educational opportunities. Many people of all ages will need re-training. Senior centers should encourage and allow seniors, including their members, to speak before the group. Many seniors have interesting backgrounds, and this would be helpful for all. Seniors should be used as a resource, instead of merely as a captive audience. A few years ago, political candidates were permitted to speak in senior centers, to introduce themselves and their ideas. This should be continued, to inform the voters. It seems that now only incumbents are permitted to speak.

For seniors who are not as well: We should be listening to seniors and their families, about what concerns them. Seniors should be permitted to remain in their homes, whenever possible. Additional services may be helpful, like cleaning services, or provision of some home equipment. Listings should be more accessible of resources available. Delivery of food, where this is needed, should be better coordinated, and diabetic diets should be provided for. The vaccine distribution must be improved, especially for the home bound, and for those who don't have computers. NYC has set up a new link, and I hope that it works.

In general, more assistance is needed to provide affordable and accessible housing for seniors.

9. According to the Bowery Mission, there are nearly 80,000 homeless individuals in NYC, with over 60,000 of those individuals utilizing a public shelter and 4,000 that live on the street. How would you as a Council Member help stem the tide of homelessness in New York City?

How to help the homeless is a multi-pronged question. There is a need for truly affordable housing. For those homeless who can not work, society has to help them. Helping the homeless should not mean warehousing them in shelters, that are often unsafe. We should be seeking alternative housing, that provides for safety and dignity, with a place to leave possessions. This is being tried in other locales. For ex, a Y type facility with separate rooms to lock, or versions of tiny houses, outside or in larger structures might work. Zoning regulations might need to be changed for this. Additional services might also be needed, ie mental health, food, training, etc.

I don't think that it is helpful for the homeless or for our community, to warehouse people, and not really consider their needs.

10. Our district is one of the few in Queens without a homeless shelter. What are your feelings on homeless shelters to address NYC's growing number of homeless individuals? Should a shelter be developed in this area?

Please see my answer above. I don't think that it is helpful for the homeless or for our community, to warehouse people, and not really consider their needs.



11. Our community boards are considered the first line of local government interaction. Similarly, the Council Member has a say in nominating community board members. If elected, how would you work with our community boards and strengthen them?

I will appoint Community Board Members who care about our community, and preferably who live in our community. Some local business people may care, even though they live elsewhere. There should be much more transparency, in the process of appointment to the Community Boards.

12. Bike lanes were installed along Queens Boulevard as part of Vision Zero, resulting in the removal of parking spots. Are you in favor of extending bike lanes along Queens Boulevard?

I support increased use of bicycles in NYC. I believe that there are problems with the existing plans. I and many other concerned citizens attended meetings, to give our input for the proposed plans. It appears that our concerns were completely ignored. I was informed by local businesses that proponents for the bicycle lanes were not truthful, when the plans were presented to them. A representative of some of the businesses told me that they were not listened to, at all.

Even before the Pandemic, our small businesses had been struggling. Stores on the street, require the ability to get deliveries, and for customers to carry away their purchases. If we don't allow for this, we are pushing them out of business.

Seniors and others, also require the ability to enter and exit vehicles, near the sidewalk.

Parking spaces, blocks away, are not very helpful.

Our society is rapidly headed towards more use of electric cars. The rationale for bicycle lanes on Queens Blvd., in order to reduce emissions, may no longer be valid.

There may be an agenda, a vision, but we must consider and include the needs and concerns of the local community, and how the agenda can work within meeting those needs.

13. The City Council reviews certain parts of the ULURP process, including housing and urban renewal plans and zoning map changes. What are the factors that would lead you to go against the recommendations of the local community board in the ULURP process? How do you view the tradeoffs between the affordable housing that new construction can bring against the impact of potential overdevelopment?

As a Member of the City Council, I will listen to and represent my constituents. Sometimes, the Members of the Community Board may have different views, than other residents. I will listen to all concerned, to help and to fight for the people I represent. There are legitimately different opinions about development. With regard to protecting the environment, providing for the homeless, and other needs, zoning changes may be needed.

Affordable and Senior Housing: A private developer seeks to build in a way, that will make a profit for the investors. (For several years, I did real estate accounting for NY properties.)

Tax and other incentives are and have been incorporated into how this is done, through the use of depreciation, and other offsets of expense. There is not only one way to build affordable housing, either structurally or financially.

For ex, the recent project, that was proposed for Austin Street and 63rd Drive, did not provide for how seniors would be accommodated in the building. The proposed entrance on Austin St, might not leave room for Access A Ride and wheelchairs to maneuver. Fully accessible facilities in the building, were not



discussed. (I realize that a CB Member asked about some of this.) Seniors are sometimes pushed out of their homes, because of the lack of accessibility.

We need to renew our housing stock, as it ages, and build in a way to protect our environment. We do not need to over-develop any further. This is Central Queens, not Manhattan.

14. What is your long-term plan for the Kew Gardens jail?

I have been opposed to the proposed jail in Kew Gardens, and testified against it, at Queens Borough Hall and at City Hall. Whether or not to close Riker's Island, is a different question from whether to build a large jail in Kew Gardens. A number of other policy concerns are involved, with how and whether to house defendants. Bail reform legislation should give judges more discretion, especially for violent offenses and other serious crimes. We should reform police, retrain police, not defund the police. The mentally ill and the homeless should be given proper housing and services, and not be merely warehoused in the community. The plan for the jail is too vague, and too expensive, and does not address the problems. It merely transfers bodies in an expensive way, from one building to another.

15. What are your three priority budget items for our Council district?

1. Helping people through this Pandemic, including health care, small businesses, seniors. 2. Education, for all ages, is the key for many people and families. We must increase educational opportunities for all students. We should continue to seek excellence in the Specialized High Schools, while raising all students to a higher level. Adult Education and Retraining: Many people, including Seniors, PWDs (People With Disabilities) and others, should continue to be productive, and help to expand our economy. 3. Housing, and affordable housing, while protecting our environment.

16. How would you propose closing the City's budget gap?

We should be thinking about growing the economy, rather than reducing the expenses and services, that we need to grow. We should be thinking about ways to reduce waste: For ex., green roofs may reduce energy costs; use of more digital applications should reduce the costs of transportation and paper; some City employees may be interested in a buy out. (This may require NYS legislation to alter when employees can collect on their pensions.)

I will also explore increasing taxes for some successful business interests, especially those that have benefitted from the Pandemic.

Homeowners deserve a break. They should not only be taxed more, during our current circumstances; and there should be deferrals permitted for real estate taxes and water bills.

17. How will you use your position to initiate a district-wide conversation about race and racial injustice? I will organize meetings on Zoom and in other ways, so that people can have dialogues about their concerns. I have created dialogues on FB, on controversial topics, for several years. There should also be discussions and other educational programs in schools.

18. When filling out your ranked choice ballot, which candidate will you rank second and why?

I want to elect a Council Member who will listen to and represent me, and the other people in the 29th Council District. I want to elect someone who will speak up and fight for the needs of the people of this District. When trying to solve any problems, government proposals should consider and include the needs and concerns of residents and small businesses, and how they will be affected. The agenda



shouldn't come first from on high, but problems should be solved, including the needs of the local people.

I will listen to and represent my constituents. I will consider which other candidate(s) will also do this.