

ACTION



—St. Louis—

#WokeVoterSTL



BOARD OF ALDERMEN VOTER GUIDE

WARD

20

Paid for by Action St. Louis, Kayla Reed, President
Not coordinated with any candidate or any candidate's committee.
2859 Sidney St. St. Louis, MO 63104

ELECTION TIMELINE

FILING ENDS

01/04/19

**#WOKEVOTERSTL BOA
PRESIDENT DEBATE**

01/26/19

**LAST DAY TO REGISTER
FOR THIS ELECTION**

01/26/19

#WOKEVOTERSTL BRUNCH

02/23

**LAST DAY TO REQUEST
AN ABSENTEE BALLOT**

02/27/19

GOTV TEXT&TOAST

3/4/2019

ELECTION DAY

3/5/2019

WARD 20 CANDIDATES

CARA SPENCER (INCUMBENT)
SATIA [SUNNI] HUTTON



Map of Ward 20
Candidates in bold are those that completed the questionnaire.

Question 1: What do you believe to be the most important role(s) of a member of the Board of Alderman?

CARA SPENCER

As the legislative branch, our most important role is to pass equitable and just laws and to serve as a check on the executive branch of city government. Secondly, our role is to be a leader in our local community, helping connect residents to services and encouraging sustainable business and development practices.

SATIA "SUNNI" HUTTON

Since we lack a city manager, I think it is the role of the Board of Alderman to ensure our city's basic services operate for all residents, our budgets are balanced and that we are seeking to improve the quality of life for some of our most impacted residents--for workers, renters, the unhoused and those who have been marginalized. We act as a voice for our communities and as a mediator to ensure that despite the differences we get things done. All of which can be done through listening and legislating.

Question 2: What are your top legislative priorities for the city of St. Louis?

CARA SPENCER

My platform is based around Good Government and Transparency; Equitable Development; and Safer Neighborhoods. In this capacity I intend to continue to fight for incentive reform, reduce vacancy, implement traffic calming measures, and advocate for transparency and integrity regarding the airport privatization and city/county merger proposals.

SATIA "SUNNI" HUTTON

Our city must determine what's important to us. I am a believer in my freedom being tied to the freedom of others. I can't be free until my brothers and sisters are that includes the unhoused, renters in poor quality housing, homeowners burdened with rising property taxes, students plagued by lead poisoning, those incarcerated, and more. St. Louis is doomed to repeat the steps of Detroit if we continue to side with private interests over the interests of the most impacted people. We will have large fight against private interests with city-county merger and airport privatization. However, I still intend to focus on the immediate needs of the people with service delivery, safety (i.e. vacancy, re-investing in public safety, close the work house), and equitable development (i.e. TIF reform, renters' rights). Too many Black neighborhoods are dealing with overflowing toxic waste and unserviced parks. Too many families are roped into the cycle of poverty perpetuated by the "arrest and incarcerate " model. And too many people are pushed out for being poor. We can drastically improve the lives of our most impacted neighbors and balance our city budget when we provide our neighbors with healthier and just living environments where they thrive.

Question 3: In what ways will you create ongoing feedback and collaboration structures between constituents and your office to ensure responsive policies, decisions and accountability?

CARA SPENCER

In my term I've implemented a series of open and informative Ward Meetings. I'm available via social media, maintain an active email list, and regularly share my personal cell phone number with constituents.

SATIA "SUNNI" HUTTON

Making my neighbors a part of the decision-making process with participatory budgeting, development review committee, and meeting them where they are and collaborating with organizations who already do the work in the community. Participatory budgeting allows my neighbors to facilitate informative sessions about ward capital and vote on the use of ward capital. A development review committee is comprised of neighbors who host informative public meetings about development, tax abatement and TIFS, receive public input and have the power to negotiate community benefits agreements. Meeting people where they are means activating multiple multi-lingual avenues for neighbors to get involved and stay involved through social media, email, mailers, canvassing, and visiting the places they frequent and service them.

Question 4: Displacement has taken place in countless neighborhoods across the city, with the Black population decreasing by 60 percent in some of the most severe cases. What do you attribute to this decline and if elected how would you combat displacement?

CARA SPENCER

Neighbors of limited means move because of crime, vacancy, inability to finance loans, and rising rents. We can combat this by implementing safe neighborhood practices (such as street calming measures and reliable 911 services), helping small-scale rehabs and grassroots incentive programs, and cracking down on slumlords and absentee landlords.

SATIA "SUNNI" HUTTON

This activity of deprived communities, segregated communities, rising property values, and displaced populations is a cyclical and systemic process to drive economic growth, revitalize capitalism which ultimately leads to profits. Now, in the 30s in an effort to revitalize the American economy, the federal government resorted to America's pastime--the buying and selling of land. Through the National Housing Act of 1934 and the programs that followed the viability of an area depended on the racial demographics of its inhabitants. In the suburbs land could be bought cheap and sold for more. With a tax base rushing to the suburbs, cities were left to fend for themselves resulting in communities with less investment, vacancy, a diminishing tax base. After the suburbs became less profitable, the cycle simply circled back this time in the urban areas, where land was now cheap, because capital follows profit. What we see in our neighborhoods like Central West End, Shaw, Botanical Heights, Tower Grove, and Forest Park Southeast is an influx of investment initially attracted by cheap land and high incentives. The influx floods the housing market with market rate and above market rate developments which increases property taxes on homeowners who can't afford it, entices landlords to evict renters and raise the rents, and the dreaded "we buy houses" signs/calls start. This isn't something that just happens overnight, but is the collaboration of public policy and private interests. Since we as aldermen play a part in the rise of neighborhoods we can play a part in combating displacement. As alderwoman of the 20th ward, I plan to step back and allow my neighbors to negotiate CBAs, work diligently to incorporate CBAs in the tax abatement/TIF approval process, provide tax abatements to residents who wish to do work on their homes, research inclusionary zoning policy, support grassroots efforts to hold landlords accountable, form renter co-ops and community land trust, and lastly incorporate tax abatements/TIFs as a line item in the budget so we can see the direct impact development incentives have on our revenue.

Question 5: Do you support the upcoming city ward reduction? What will you do to ensure a just and equitable process?

CARA SPENCER

I respect the vote that the public participated in. Currently I am co-sponsoring legislation that will look at the two issues I believe are most important when discussing ward reduction. 1. How to give aldermen the staff and support they need to legislate and meet constituent needs and 2. Engage the public and analytics in the process of drawing ward boundaries.

SATIA "SUNNI" HUTTON

Ward reduction took to a public vote multiple times. Another public vote if petitioned by the voters is a part of the democratic process. However if a successful ward reduction starts, it starts with a vision chartered by the constituents in public meetings, public engagement and online engagement. Residents will have the opportunity to set criterion for ward reduction, and provide feedback on how they think the process should go. A successful reduction will be conducted by a nonpartisan group and informed by:

Legal requirements

Historic redistricting

Recent examples of similar cities who underwent redistricting

And constituent input

Question 6: What is your stance on the privatization of Lambert Airport?

CARA SPENCER

Not only am I opposed to the privatization of our airport, I have been leading the public discussion on the issue and am the lead sponsor on the bill (BB93) to require a public vote in the event we do move forward with a privatization proposal. I encourage anyone really interested in this issue to read my op-ed in the Post Dispatch or watch the hearings in the Transportation and Commerce Committee; there are some really well researched reasons to oppose this proposal, starting with the proposal itself.

SATIA "SUNNI" HUTTON

I do not support of airport privatization. Privatization is detrimental to workers and the city budget. Our workers are our greatest asset and we put their wages, benefits, and working conditions at risk with privatization. Our airport is fiscally viable and operationally sound and we as a city are able to reap the benefits of this profit for public good. If we allow privatization we strip ourselves of one of our most profitable assets. And yet again put ourselves at the hands of the private market when we are cash strapped.

Question 7: What is your position on the use of TIFs and other tax incentives in the city of St. Louis?

CARA SPENCER

There is a lot of work that still needs to be done at the board of Aldermen to reform our tax incentive process. As a data person with a math background, I've been pushing for a data-driven approach to incentives, to remove politics from the process and rely instead on instead of political connections, but on real analysis. In order to accomplish this, we need to implement a comprehensive approach to planning and use incentives not to reward those who ask for them, but to bring development to struggling communities who need it.

SATIA "SUNNI" HUTTON

I am a participant member of Equitable STL and we provide education and catalyze organizing in communities for CBAs. Other participating organizations include Team TIF, EHOC, and SEIU. TIFs and tax abatements are exorbitantly used in the city stripping our schools of funds and after the development completion markets are saturated with high-priced housing. When the city does this we subsidize the private market and the wealthy. When a balance needs to be struck to meet the needs of all residents especially those most impacted. CBAs provide a legal way for communities to negotiate with developers infrastructure improvements, a portion of the profit, changes to the development and more! I would like to see BOA make a CBA with between developer and community a requirement for projects who want to receive public funding. TIFs and other tax incentives need not to be used in already thriving neighborhoods, we must also decrease the term on the tax incentives.

Question 8: Do you support the demand to close the Medium Security Institute? Please explain.

CARA SPENCER

There is much room for improvement in our criminal justice system. As a supporter of Wesley Bell, I would like to see our courts align with some of the efforts spearheaded by Bell and his team and will continue to support those efforts. We need to end cash bail and stop unnecessarily incarcerating people for being poor or using drugs. I not only support these measures, but as Alderman, I was the lead sponsor of a City municipal Good Samaritan bill and worked with our Circuit Attorney and Chief of Police to pass this bill which grants immunity to drug possession charges to anyone calling for medical assistance in a drug overdose case.

SATIA "SUNNI" HUTTON

The criminal justice system's arrest and incarcerate model must be critiqued because research shows that violent crime isn't decreasing and people of color are disproportionately incarcerated furthering inequities. The work house must be closed. We need to rethink public safety. Luckily there are stakeholders like CAPCR and others who studied this and had town halls to rethink public safety. Out of that came, a holistic approach to public safety where as a city we balance our budget so that we are using preventative crime methods like resourcing our health and human services, investing in housing for all, nurturing youth and green spaces. All of which mentioned above are in my powers as alderwoman to do so.

Question 9: What is your stance on the city/county reunification, specifically the plan released by Better Together?

CARA SPENCER

I was born in St. Louis City, but grew up in St. Louis County. Our region's economy and population has stagnated since I was a child. In order for us to grow as a region and again be a competitive on an international level, we have to come together and coordinate economic development regionally. I not only value these relationships, but currently serve as the first member of the board of directors of the St. Louis Municipal League from the City of St. Louis in the League's 100 year existence. That said, I have major concerns about the current proposal, its funders, the statewide vote and what appears to be a lack of public involvement. At this point, without any specific details of the proposal I am unable to support or oppose the BT proposal.

SATIA "SUNNI" HUTTON

The city-county merger efforts are being funded by Rex Sinquefield who is also funding airport privatization efforts. We can't allow private interests to sway our decisions. Private interests stand to win big if we move forward with a merger. We have to consider the implications of a decision such as this and the voters must weigh in as well.

Question 10: Did you support Proposition P? Why or why not?

CARA SPENCER

I thought Proposition P deserved to be put before the voters of St Louis, but I had reservations about the details of the proposal and did not campaign in support of it.

SATIA "SUNNI" HUTTON

Prop P allocated more money to the police which was the second allocation in that year. My neighbors and I along with other grassroots organizations canvassed the 20th ward, educating voters on why they should vote no on prop p. The City of St. Louis has more police per capita than metropolitan areas with bigger populations. Our investment in public safety is misplaced and should be reinvested in much needed health and human services. From our canvassing efforts, the 20th ward overwhelming voted no on prop p.

Question 11: Do you support the legalization of recreational marijuana? Explain your answer.

CARA SPENCER

Yes, I would support state legislation to legalize recreational marijuana, and supported Amendment 2 for medical cannabis in Missouri. In the meantime I will support policies to expand our city decriminalization and help encourage the new medical cannabis industry in our city.

SATIA "SUNNI" HUTTON

I support the legalization of recreational marijuana and the decriminalization of marijuana possession. I do have conditions on these policies. Black and Brown populations have been historically disproportionately incarcerated for possession and use. Our people who suffered in prison economically and socially records should be expunged, released, and given ample resources to rejoin the workforce and have a leg up in the new market of recreational marijuana.

Question 12: Do you believe homelessness is an issue in St. Louis. If so, what concrete steps will you take to alleviate homelessness in the City of St. Louis?

CARA SPENCER

Yes I believe homelessness is a crisis in St Louis, especially with no reliable drop-in shelter and further service cuts. I supported a \$1.5 million project to re-house homeless families in the 20th Ward, and am exploring other efforts to address homelessness in our neighborhoods and citywide.

SATIA "SUNNI" HUTTON

I spent much of my time organizing renters and fighting for equitable service delivery in my ward and I've had to lean on my friends who operate pop-up shelters and dedicate their time to caring for our most impacted city residents. What I learned from them is first we must acknowledge that we have a crisis. Then we must allocate resources to pop-up shelters so they can continue to operate especially during extreme weather conditions. There are groups facilitating town halls to create holistic solutions to the problems. We need to create a budget that prioritizes people's.

Question 13: More than 60% of the City's General Fund budget is currently devoted to Public Safety, with the vast majority of those funds allotted to police, prosecution, and jails. Do you agree with this budget allocation? If not, how would your budget priorities differ?

CARA SPENCER

The city budget is a very complex and often misguided process and one that the Aldermen, unfortunately, have limited control over. But I believe we need to increase financial support for education, social and health programs, and fight for more transparency and accountability within public safety programs.

SATIA "SUNNI" HUTTON

I do not agree with the current allocation of funds because they are not the solutions to the problems we face. Our budget must be focused on operating at a high rate as a city in terms of services (waste management, parks, streets) and putting money where people's quality of life change like health and human services. We must also eliminate wasteful spending in areas that damage the life of residents and bring no benefit to the city such as the work house.

Question 14: Given that safe, quality, affordable transit is a lifeline for so many city residents, as well as the mark of a world-class City, and given that federal funding for transit seems to be diminishing, how do you think funds from Prop 1 should be used?

CARA SPENCER

Prop 1 funds should be used to balance between expanding our bus service and exploring a North/South Metrolink or streetcar line. I have been a leader on advocating for North/South Metrolink since before I was an alderman, and was at the forefront of the successful effort to retain Line 73 serving Cherokee Street and its surrounding neighborhoods. I am also a proponent of St Louis first-ever "calm street", a \$1.6 million project customizing Louisiana Avenue as a corridor for pedestrians, bikers and safer family use.

SATIA "SUNNI" HUTTON

Prop 1 funds wanted to raise sales tax, to fund an 8 mile long North-South transit line and there was funds to go to public safety. Sales tax are regressive, hitting low-income households the worst. There needs to be a less regressive tax potentially on income of higher earners.

Question 15: How do you plan to address the issue of crime in the city of St. Louis?

CARA SPENCER

Crime is the result of lack of opportunity. I think we can address this by reducing vacancy, expanding Rec Centers and educational opportunities, and supporting safe neighborhood practices such as beat cops and Shotspotter technology - both of which I have been an advocate for in the 20th Ward. As a result of these efforts, crime is down in our ward and we hope to keep seeing the 20th Ward be a safer home for all its residents.

SATIA "SUNNI" HUTTON

There are groups in our city who conducted research on crime. We must develop a plan that addresses the root causes of crime and not perpetuates the causes of crime. CAPCR's reinvest in public safety campaign demonstrates a holistic approach to addressing crime at its root causes by allocating resources to youth, health and human services, parks, and quality affordable housing for all. There are even tried program from other cities that shows a decrease in crime. One being a program where rehabilitated ex-offenders go out in the streets and communities and talk to youth at-risk. Crime took a dip when this program was in place.

CANDIDATES ANSWERS WERE COPIED VERBATIM.

**VOTE
MARCH
5TH!**