Highland Park Community Council Candidate Night

April 18, 2019

In Pennsylvania, local and judicial elections are held in odd numbered years. This year, the primary election will be held on May 21st; the general election will be on November 5th. In primary elections, registered voters choose from between candidates within their own party to determine who will represent their party in the general election. In the primary election, you can only vote for candidates in the party in which you are registered. In the general election, you can vote for any of the candidates.

Tonight we will be hearing from Democratic candidates running in the primary election for City Council, District 7; the County Council at-large seat; and Pittsburgh Public Schools’ School Board, District 2. These districts all include Highland Park. One School Board candidate is also running on the Republican ticket; in that race, candidates are allowed to “cross-file”, or run on both the Democratic and Republican ticket. There are no other candidates running as Republicans in these races. The candidate descriptions below were provided by the candidates.

City Council, District 7

Deb Gross (D)
Councilwoman Deb Gross is a lifelong progressive activist. In a time when so many elected officials are afraid to challenge growing corporate power, Deb always fights for people over profits.

Deirdre Kane (D)
A life-long resident of District 7, active volunteer, former Board President of Lawrenceville United, and small business owner in the district, Deirdre believes she has unique perspective on the challenges and needs of the communities within District 7. She looks forward to discussing these issues with community members throughout the District.

County Council, At-Large

John DeFazio (D)  Mr. DeFazio did not respond to our invitation.

Bethany Hallum (D)
Bethany has lived in Allegheny County for her entire life and sees county council failing to address the threats to our livelihood. Whether it be dirty air, undrinkable water, or an ineffective criminal justice system, she knows we can do so much better and is ready to put in the work to make progress happen for everyone.
School Board, District 2

David Atkinson (D)
David is a PPS Dad who has a track record of working with schools and community partners to get things done. David believes that through collaboration we will build the innovative, inclusive and equitable schools our students and City need.

Nosakhere Griffin-El (D)
Dr. Nosakhere Griffin-EL Sr., a Ph.D. graduate of University Pittsburgh School of Education, is an educator committed to transforming educational institutions to be spaces that meet students at their learning needs and personal dreams. He is the husband of an amazing wife, Dr. Eliada Griffin-EL and the father of two energetic sons.

Kirk Rys (D & R)
Kirk is running for District 2 School Board; if elected, he intends to hold the school district accountable for driving student achievement and building a school system that serves all Pittsburgh families. Kirk and his family reside in Morningside, and he is employed as managing counsel at BNY Mellon.

Devon Taliaferro (D)
Devon L. Taliaferro is a native of Pittsburgh, PA currently living in the East Allegheny (Deutschtown) section of the North Side. With a background in event planning and community organizing, Devon seeks to use her natural gifts and talents to make an impact on the communities throughout the City of Pittsburgh.

Other elections for which Highland Park residents will be making choices in the primary election include judicial candidates for Superior Court (a statewide race) and Court of Common Pleas (a county-wide race), and for County District Attorney. Information on these candidates is available on-line.

NOTE: Monday, April 22 is the last day you can register to vote before the primary. For information on how to register, visit https://www.votespa.com/Register-to-Vote/Pages/How-to-Register-to-Vote.aspx or call the County Elections Division at (412) 350-4500.