

## Twinbrook Community Association Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

Name RICHARD GOTTFRIED, TCA PAST PRESIDENT and 12-YEAR TCA BOARD MEMBER AS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OUTREACH CHAIR AND TREASURER.

---

Neighborhood of

Residence TWINBROOK

---

Office

Seeking COUNCIL

---

**TCA does not and will not endorse any candidates, and solely acts as a clearinghouse for information to assist the community in making a decision on which candidates they will vote for.** Answers to the following questions will be presented in their entirety to the entire Twinbrook community. It will be posted on the TCA website at [www.twinbrookcommunity.org](http://www.twinbrookcommunity.org), and the link will be shared on the TCA Facebook page and Twitter feed.

Please send your completed questionnaire to Marissa Valeri at [Twinbrook.President@gmail.com](mailto:Twinbrook.President@gmail.com) by October 1, 2019.

---

1. What do you identify as the number one challenge facing Rockville today and how do you propose to address it?

The number-one challenge facing Rockville today is located in the City's budget, where our business-type activities, which includes our funds for water, sewer, refuse, parking, stormwater management, amount to a NET DEFICIT in the amount of \$11.6 million. However, the City shows a NET SURPLUS of \$7 million corresponding to the City's property and income taxes collected from taxpayers in the amount of \$18.7 million. Hence, the City's dilemma. The City would need to raise property taxes in order to cover increasing deficits in our business-type activities caused by increased development. Rockville residents may be questioning: **How can there be a budget deficit when every year the City**

**raises these business-type activities fees, i.e., water (an increase of 4.9%), sewer (an increase of 9.7%) and stormwater management fees (an increase of 3.4%).** Therefore, my question to Rockville residents is, **Why are we not in a budget surplus for these business-type activities?** My response to this question is: If elected, I will advocate for research with regard to which parties are not paying for these essential services that the City is providing. If we do not identify these parties, Rockville residents will incur increased fees year-after-year for these services.

2. What is the role of City government in addressing housing affordability issues in Rockville and what would you do to encourage the production of more affordable homes for working families?

Rockville plays an important role with regard to addressing affordable housing, and Rockville does this very well through the City's Rockville Housing Enterprise, which offers several options for affordable housing in the city. The Rockville Housing Enterprise:

- Owns and operates 105 Public Housing units.
- Administers 414 units in its Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program.
- Owns and operates 56 units of Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) in the King Farm and Fallsgrove neighborhoods
- Owns and operates 4 other affordable housing units in King Farm and Fallsgrove neighborhoods
- Owns 236 units at Fireside Park, of which 118 units are affordable.

Rockville already utilizes the Housing Trust funds as a source of offering affordable housing units. The biggest incentive that developers had in their tool chest was the 20% rehabilitation tax credit for building affordable housing buildings; however, this credit was eliminated under the new Tax Act of 2018.

Due to the elimination of this tax credit, I will be advocating for the City to utilize the new Opportunity Zone legislation under the new Tax Act of 2018 so that developers can utilize this new law to invest in new affordable housing buildings.

If elected, I will introduce legislation requiring an additional type of affordable housing currently trending on the West Coast for young adults and seniors known as "dormitory-style units."

How do you feel about the transportation options currently available in our city?

The Transportation options currently available in Rockville are limited.

Do we have enough options?

No, we need more options.

How would you mitigate those concerns or change the situation?

I would advocate for increased use of the MARC trains with additional trains running during the rush-hour commute times. I would research the bus schedules and ridership usage statistics and suggest reorganizing the bus routes that are not at full capacity so that they become near to or at full capacity. I would advocate for more transportation services oriented toward the senior population to service their unique needs.

3. Do you believe Rockville's APFO (Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance) is working as intended?

YES, I do!

Why or why not?

The question is not whether the APFO is working, it is! The problem is that our current Mayor and Council continue to ignoring the APFO standards corresponding to infrastructure (such as water, sewer, stormwater management, schools and traffic) by granting waivers or exemptions to the APFO standards for developers.

This is why Rockville residents have and will continue to have more traffic, why our infrastructure costs for water, sewer, and stormwater management continue to show a budget deficit in the amount of \$11.6 million despite annual increases in fees to residents, and why are schools continue to be overcrowded.

What changes would you propose?

1. Maintain school capacity at 120%.
2. Research which parties are not paying for their fair share of costs for water, sewer and stormwater management.
3. I will be advocating to create a sustainable plan for the increased traffic and increase in infrastructure costs to support our growth over the next 5, 10 and 15-year period.

4. How do you plan on maintaining a balance between environmental sustainability and economic development?

I will be advocating for a long-range plan to require all City of Rockville buildings to have solar panels and for our police cars to be electric or hybrid. Also, I will be advocating to increase in electric car charging stations.

5. How will you implement the City's commitment to Vision Zero?

I will be advocating for a Pedestrian Master Plan and a Sightline Master Plan. These plans would try to increase the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists and scooters. I will also be advocating for timing of the City's traffic lights and crosswalks to facilitate better traffic flow.

What strategies will you use to effectively partner with the County and State to ensure that Vision Zero is a reality?

Having recently run for Montgomery County Council At-Large in 2018, I have developed relationships and partnerships with our County Executive and Council members as well as our state legislators representing in all districts in Montgomery County, not just District 17.

When the County proposed to build an unnecessary multimillion-dollar office building adjacent to Broome Middle School, I led the Twinbrook Parkway Collation in partnership with other Rockville Twinbrook neighbors to stop this County office building from being built, which saved the Rockville taxpayers over \$14 million. I accomplished this goal by partnering with other civic leaders and with four of the County Council members.

6. As Rockville's population continues to grow and diversify, do you support increasing the size of the City Council to offer more opportunities for representation?

YES, I do!

District council members may be necessary to better represent our distinct neighborhoods in the City of Rockville as the City grows.

8. How do you plan to involve residents from all corners of Rockville in the decision making process if you are elected?

I already have 12 years of experience involving residents from all neighborhoods of Rockville in the decision-making process:

- ✓ As Past President of the TCA, I re-gained the trust and re-established relationships that were severed in previous years by the Twinbrook and Meadow Hall Elementary schools PTA's, the Twinbrook Pool, Richard Montgomery High School PTA and the Twinbrook Library.
- ✓ Regarding zoning ordinances, I re-wrote the zoning ordinance for home-based businesses and formed the Home-Based Action Team, an advocacy group for home-based businesses.
- ✓ Advocated for neighborhood input regarding the long-range Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan
- ✓ As a past president of the TCA, I collaborated with other civic leaders, on a quarterly basis, who represented neighborhood associations in the West End, Lincoln Park, East Rockville, Hungerford, Montrose communities.
- ✓ I worked with different civic groups that formed the Twinbrook Parkway Collation in order to prevent the County from building an unnecessary \$14-million office building from being built for only 20 County employees, when approximately 15% of the County's office space was vacant and could reasonably accommodate these 20 additional employees.
- ✓ I partnered with "CCARD" in order to stop the Bus Depot located in the Shady Grove Metro station being moved to Carver Education Center, Lincoln Park Neighborhood and to Avery Road. I partnered with the following neighborhoods, such as, Aspen Hill Civic Association, Norbeck Road Association, Manor Lake Association, Flower Valley Association, etc.
- ✓ I worked with the senior community that are on a fixed income to help them save money on their real estate tax bill by presenting a seminar on How to qualify for the homeowner property tax credit and senior tax credit. I also started the conversation on Twinbrook having a Twinbrook Village.

Finally, I am an advocate for inclusivity in the decision-making process. This means soliciting input from all Rockville residents.

7. Are you satisfied with Rockville's city-manager form of government?

Currently, YES, I am. The Mayor and Council are part-time positions, which allow council members to hold full-time jobs. With the size of our City it makes sense that Rockville has a City Manager who carries out the day-to-day administrative operations.

If not, how would you propose changing it?

The City of Rockville could considered implementing alternative forms of government such as the Mayor-Council form of government as described in the National League of Cities.

Characteristics include:

- Mayor is elected separately from the council, is often full-time and paid, with significant administrative and budgetary authority
  - Depending on the [municipal charter](#), the mayor could have [weak or strong powers](#)
  - Council is elected and maintains legislative powers
  - Some cities appoint a professional manager who maintains limited administrative authority
8. Do you support protecting equal rights for all individuals in Rockville, regardless of gender, race, age, religion, ethnic origin, disability, immigration status, sexual orientation or gender identity?

YES, I do support protecting equal rights for all individuals in Rockville regardless of gender, race, age, religion, ethnic origin, disability, immigration status, sexual orientation or gender identity.

I support Rockville's decision on the Fostering Community Trust ordinance and

I support the Diversity and inclusion initiative by the City of Rockville.

9. If you received a \$1 million grant to use for the city any way you wanted, what would you do with it and why?
- ✓ Fund more senior services.
  - ✓ Fund more care-givers.
  - ✓ Create a sustainable plan for the increase in traffic.
  - ✓ Research ways to reduce our deficit for the business-type activities such as our water, sewer, and parking deficit in the amount of \$11.6 million.
  - ✓ Create a Rockville Trolley.