

2009 Candidate Questionnaire

SECTION I

BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot

First Name	Middle Initial or Nickname	Last Name
Karen		Tennyson

2. Office sought (include office, jurisdiction, position/district number):

City Council, Kirkland, Position 5

3. Are you the incumbent? Yes X No

4. How long have you resided in this district/city?

17 years

5. How long have you resided in King County?

30 years

6. Is the office sought partisan or nonpartisan? Partisan X Nonpartisan

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: Friends of Karen Tennyson

Address: 12617 N. E. 87th Place

City/State/Zip: Kirkland, WA 98033

Campaign Phone: 425-822-7765

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Campaign E-mail: Karen@Karentennyson.com

Campaign Website: Karentennyson@karentennyson.com

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

1. Beginning with the most recent position, please list public offices you have held. Include positions on appointive boards or commissions.

Public Office	Elective or Appointive?	Dates Held	Leadership Role (if any)
Planning Commission	Appointive	2004 – Present	Former Chair

2. If you ran for public office but were not elected, please list those races below:

Office Title	Year of Run

SECTION II

In this section, we are seeking responses that reflect the four ratings criteria: involvement, effectiveness, character, and knowledge. These are defined as follows:

- **Involvement:** What has the candidate done previously in family, neighborhood, community, volunteer work, employment or public life to suggest readiness to accomplish challenging objectives? How do these activities demonstrate readiness for the challenges unique to the office sought?
 - **Effectiveness:** Has the candidate demonstrated promise of being productive in the office sought? Has the candidate shown the ability to work with other people?
 - **Character:** Do the candidate's personal traits show the ability to take on the responsibilities of campaigning for and holding the public office she or he is seeking? Is the candidate a leader, participant or observer? Is the candidate trustworthy, reliable and candid?
 - **Knowledge:** Has the candidate demonstrated the willingness and ability to learn and adapt? Does the candidate understand the duties and challenges of the office sought? Does the candidate have a firm grasp of the issues important to his or her constituency and their potential effects?
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1. In one page or less, why are you running for this office? (Note: the interview committee will be given a copy of this statement before your interview; at the beginning of your interview you will have the opportunity to expand on this statement in any way you wish.)

Running for Kirkland City Council is a natural progression of my positive activism and leadership. Being involved in the city's processes for over 10 years has given me insight into the importance of listening to the citizens' views on all sides of an issue. Keeping an open mind until all of the evidence is presented, is a skill that I diligently adhere to, allowing me to fairly represent all citizens. As a Neighborhood chair, I appreciated having opposing views as part of the decision making process. This brings better outcomes and makes all participants feel they have been heard and their input valued.

As a Kirkland small business owner, I am aware of the challenges that face the business community and the city due to the economic downturn. The ability to recognize trends early and adjust to a changing environment is important to the success of any business or city. My experience as a business owner has given me the skills to be able to address the budget process within the city and to communicate with other council members the need for the city to live within its means. The city has made a major investment in its employees, we need to look at alternatives to layoffs.

Kirkland has been my home for the past 17 years. As an active member of my neighborhood association and a member of its board, I stay in touch with local issues and help others in the neighborhood develop their voices. Helping shape the direction of my neighborhood and the business community within the neighborhood boundary through the revision of the Comprehensive Plan was a most rewarding experience.

2. Describe your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek.

The key attribute of a successful community leader is integrity. To be honest and truthful on all issues is a necessary part of and defines anyone who desires to lead effectively. It takes courage to be a truth teller, especially when your audience does not want to hear it. Fairness is another characteristic that is essential to having integrity. Integrity and fairness are elements that help one gain the trust of others.

Communicating effectively with others is crucial to the success of a leader. Being an active listener allows one to hear new ideas or discover new information. Gaining an understanding of what is being said is necessary to be able to transmit this information to others. The ability to adapt ones communication style to accommodate ones audience is important to make oneself be heard, as well. The willingness to listen to points of view that differ from your own and to join in a dialogue is an important part of communication.

3. Please describe, in sufficient detail, one to three accomplishments or contributions of which you are most proud. These examples should illustrate skills and capabilities you think apply to the office you are seeking. These accomplishments may have occurred at any time in your personal, professional, or public life.

Working to create and pass the small/historic lot housing ordinance as the chair of the Planning Commission, was an idea I fought hard to accomplish. This strategy was created to address the issue of redevelopment of lots in two of our older neighborhoods who were facing significant redevelopment of small and/or historic houses on small lots being demolished and large homes being built as replacement. This was rapidly changing the character of the two neighborhoods and causing a loss of relatively affordable housing that limited the opportunity for families. Also, a number of older residents who had significant, large lots wanted to be able to stay in their homes and yet be able to recognize some of the value that was locked in their land. The City of Kirkland won a Governor's award for innovative ideas in housing. I was asked to present this concept to the Seattle Planning Commission at the annual retreat.

Purchasing my own home and starting my own business are two significant goals of which I am very proud. These achievements required that I set a goal, develop a plan to achieve my goal and have a long range plan to make sure that I remained successful once I realized my goal. These same skills are needed in developing a sustainable fiscal system in the city. Attaining these targets required that I be receptive to new ideas, keep an open mind, and be able to react quickly to changing circumstances and make tough decisions.

Mentoring other women is an obligation I willingly accept and welcome. Working with women willing to move forward in their careers and giving them an opportunity to be successful gives me a great sense of accomplishment. Whether it is in the civic or the work arena, helping women of all ages reach beyond what they view as their limitations has been as satisfying to me as to them.

4. Please list or describe current and past activities in the community in which you have acquired skills that relate to the office you seek. Include your role in the activity and the year(s) in which you were involved. Involvement consists of many areas such as family, neighborhood, community, employment, or public life.

Planning Commission – 2004 – present

- Championed and helped pass the Tree Ordinance, a controversial issue, that was crafted from an unprecedented amount of community input
- As the chair of the Planning Commission, I dealt with diverse personalities that disrupted the process and created dissention. Through my leadership and management skills, I was able to effectively get the group to work together
- Innovative housing ordinance was finalized and adopted
- Served on subcommittees for 85th Street Action Team and Norkirk Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan Update

North Rose Hill Neighborhood Chair (2 terms) 2002 – 2003

- Dramatically increased membership in the organization by implementing a program for communication and notification of meetings and issues
- Spearheaded the drive for neighborhood acceptance of two innovative housing projects; insured all stakeholders were heard regarding this contentious issue
- Organized two neighborhood cleanup projects, recruiting many first time volunteers and resulting in record setting participation
- wrote request and produced final report for Neighborhood Matching Grant Program, resulting in over \$14,000 being granted to the neighborhood

Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods –

- Neighborhood representative 2003 – Present
- Fostered a change in leadership style and focus of organization, making it more inclusive and willing to identify and address community issues

A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) Citizen Advisory Board – 2007 – present

- Review and recommend funding proposals ranging from several hundred thousand to several million dollars for affordable housing projects throughout the Eastside

Kirkland Economic Partnership 2007 - 2008

- Board member for group investigating economic development opportunities in Kirkland
- Strongly encouraged the city to hire an Economic Development Director
- Played an influential role in keeping the zoning intact for high technology companies to come to Kirkland on the site where Google is currently located

85th Street Action Team – 2007-2008

- Planning Commission representative
- Worked with neighbors and businesses regarding zoning code updates and major construction project makeover for undergrounding utility lines and new sidewalks

Kirkland Sidewalk Bond Exploratory Committee – 2005

- Member of board that investigated the probability of getting a sidewalk bond on the ballot and passed
- Conducted two surveys that indicating people were strongly in favor of sidewalks, but weren't willing to pay for them

Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) 85th Street Comprehensive Plan Update 1999 -2001

- First involvement on a citizen committee
- Learned about the processes of Kirkland and how projects such as this move through the city
- Met other neighborhood representatives and city staff and developed good working relationships

CAC North Rose Hill Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan Update – 2001 – 2003

- First neighborhood to go through comprehensive plan update
- Included innovative housing options and increased height in business district in a trade-off for affordable housing

Market Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan Update 2005 -2007

- Planning Commission representative for neighborhood committee updating comprehensive plan

Washington/Oregon/Alaska Textbook Representatives Association – 1999-Present

- A professional organization of education representatives
- Board member 2008 – Present - Secretary-Treasurer 2009
- Instrumental in changing structure of organization through hiring an executive director, allowing the organization to improve its relationship with the Office of Superintendent Public Instruction (OSPI)

Childhaven Volunteer – 1997-1999

- Interacted with two year olds who had been physically and sexually abused and neglected

CASA – Child Advocate 1997-1998

- Investigated allegations of abuse as the advocate of the child – made reports directly to the courts

Eastside Sexual Assault Center for Children Board Member– 1993-1997

- Served on the board and participated in developing the annual fundraising breakfast
- Manned exhibit booth at conferences that increased education and awareness of the issues to community members
- Contributed to fundraising efforts

5. Please describe the duties of the office you seek. Which are the most important duties and why?

The duties for a Kirkland City Council member include:

- Representing the interests of the citizens of Kirkland
- Developing a sound fiscal policy leading to sustainable budgets
- Responsibly reviewing and adjusting the city budget
- Establish goals and oversight of city operations
- Be prepared for each Council meeting to represent the interests of citizens
- Be available to meet with citizens to answer concern, address issues and discuss ideas