
132nd District City Council Questionnaire

(Attach additional pages as needed)

1. Name: Reverend Sara D. Smith, Esq.

2. Party Affiliation: Democrat- 132nd District

3. Address: 1032 Laurel Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604

Cell: 203-450-1185

4. Please state your interest in the Office of City Council for the 132nd District. Why do you want to be on the City Council?

I am honored to be considered for the vacancy on the Bridgeport City Council for the 132nd District. Thank you for this opportunity.

Over the past almost 14 years, I have served as the Senior Minister of the oldest institution in Bridgeport: 327-year-old United Congregational Church of Bridgeport; and since 2010, I have served as President/CEO of one of the City's most vital non-profits, nOURish BRIDGEPORT, Inc. Both organizations are committed to the welfare of this City and its residents, as am I.

Now that the church I serve has purchased the former "Bessemer Center" on North Avenue, and nOURish BRIDGEPORT has its home there as well, I not only live in the 132nd District, but I work there too. I am invested in this City, in this District, in this neighborhood. I care about Bridgeport and its people, and I want to help address its challenges and celebrate its successes. It is with that commitment to this City, its people, and their prosperity that I submit this application.

To bring my mind, my energy, my passion to any task at hand is my lifelong practice. To make a difference wherever I am has been my lifelong driving force. I welcome this opportunity to do both in the place where I work and live.

5. Please tell us about your qualifications for the Office of City Council, with a focus on your past civic/community involvement.

Growing up in a small farming community in central Kentucky (1 mile from Abraham Lincoln’s birthplace), my mother and father instilled in me the value of community service and civic duty from a young age. We were taught that our community is only as good as the people make it – and that we are each to invest in making our community thrive. At each stage of my career and education, I have sought to live out this lesson and contribute in whatever ways I can to my community.

I believe my resume attests to my leadership and organizational skills. My involvement in the Bridgeport community is both wide and deep. I am known as a person who works hard and goes above and beyond for others. As a preacher and a lawyer, I am often called upon as a public speaker to amplify moments of sadness and celebration. As the CEO of a non-profit that feeds thousands of people each week, I seek to care for and about the people who struggle just to get through the day. As a proud member of the LGBTQ+ community, I am also known for my passion for diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging for all.

I would welcome the opportunity to bring those same leadership, oratory, and advocacy skills to the important work of the Bridgeport City Council.

6. As a City Councilperson, what would be your priorities for the 132nd District and for Bridgeport as a whole?

Several issues stand out as ones I hope to focus on as a member of City Council:

- 1. Education:** To support our Bridgeport City Schools through increased educational funding from both the City of Bridgeport, as well as the Education Cost Share (ECS) formula; and to advocate for the forthcoming state legislation to increase ECS funds for Bridgeport Schools.
- 2. Economic Development:** To support growing the tax base by developing city owner properties; to seek funding for remediation of brownfields; and to pursue supermarket companies to invest their stores in Bridgeport neighborhoods.
- 3. Quality of Life:** To improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods by increasing efforts to address blight and illegal dumping; to increase funding for street paving; and to promote the 50/50 sidewalk program for homeowners.
- 4. Lowering Taxes:** To work with our state delegation to secure more PILOT funding and increase the tax base in order to reduce property taxes, thereby easing the burden on current homeowners in the City, and attracting new homeowners.
- 5. City Charter:** To support the formation of a commission to begin the process of updating our City’s Charter.
(Please see next page.)

My personal goals as a City Councilperson would be:

- to invest my time, effort and energy to understand the complex issues affecting our City;
- to listen to and learn from the people of the 132nd district about their needs;
- to work together with the other City Councilperson from the 132nd District;
- to give voice to the people I represent;
- to be available and accessible to my constituents;
- to continue the tradition of great representation in the footsteps of Marcus Brown, Reverend John Olson, and the many others before me;
- to leave the District and the City a better place because of my leadership and service.

7. Please attach a resume. Attached