



THE VILLAGE REFORM DEMOCRATIC CLUB

Questions for 2021 Manhattan Borough President Candidates

Responses for Candidate (name): Lindsey Boylan

1. Why are you running for Manhattan Borough President and what experience do you have that prepares you for this job?

I am running for Manhattan because I believe I am the right person with the right experience to lead Manhattan through this post-pandemic recovery. The Borough President is first and foremost a job about land use, and about envisioning the future of Manhattan. I spent almost a decade in urban planning and management. I oversaw several of Manhattan's parks including Bryant Park, and Herald and Greeley Squares. I was responsible for pedestrianizing major segments of Broadway Boulevard and several other public spaces in Manhattan. After that, I went to work as deputy secretary for Economic Development and Housing for the State of New York, the state's chief economic development agency. While there, I helped bring a \$334 million investment from General Motors into upstate New York, bringing 1,200 jobs to the region. I secured millions of dollars for underfunded public housing. I led the state's efforts to provide assistance for the people of Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, working with labor to help rebuild the island. I helped to lead the push to enact a \$15 minimum wage and Paid Family Leave policy for New Yorkers.

Simply put, this is the job I have been working towards my entire adult life, and I am running to create a more equitable, sustainable and livable city for all New Yorkers. I have lived in and loved this City since I moved here nearly 15 years ago, and I want to make it the best version of itself it can be.

To that end, I'm building a campaign that will engage communities across Manhattan with support that reflects our borough's trademark diversity and tenacity. Communicating my vision for the city and my credentials to deliver on it to Manhattan's voters will require considerable resources, but I'm grateful to have received generous support from New Yorkers all over Manhattan and the rest of the city to qualify our campaign for New York City's matching funds program. I expect to continue our grassroots fundraising success and reach the requirement for maximum matching funds over the course of a competitive campaign.

2. What do you believe are the most important responsibilities of the Borough President?

I believe the economic impact of our continuing public health crisis is the number one issue facing Manhattanites today. With the central business district empty, Broadway closed, tourism stopped, and indoor dining shut down, Manhattan has been ravaged economically by this

pandemic. I will use my platform to advocate for immediate economic relief to impacted workers and small businesses throughout Manhattan.

Manhattan's housing supply and affordability struggles, a key part of longer term economic recovery, is an urgent and long-neglected issue in its own right. I will use the full extent of the Borough President's authority to ensure that every opportunity to expand Manhattan's supply of deeply affordable housing is explored, and that we reform the archaic ULURP process so that communities are finally empowered. Last but far from least is the rapidly worsening wealth inequality across our city, acutely apparent in Manhattan, and unconscionably accompanied by the deterioration of public services. I support a tax on New York's ultra-wealthy, including a tax on pied-à-terre properties, to generate the vital revenue necessary to restore our existing public services - first and foremost our subways - and dream beyond them as we address the unmet need for things like expanded green spaces, climate resiliency, and widely accessible mental health services.

3. What issues do you feel will merit your attention and why?

While the list of issues that will merit attention is unfortunately endless, the following will be my focus:

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4. What will you do differently from your predecessors to represent the voices of Manhattan residents more equitably and effectively?

I will focus more on the intersection of public space, environment, and racial justice than my predecessors. Racial justice must permeate every decision we make. I appoint a member to the Solid Waste Advisory Board, and I will ensure that the member considers racial justice in trash collection and disposal. I will ensure that racial justice impact is considered in any rezoning, and I will ensure that Community Boards and Community Education Councils actually look like our community.

5. Regarding the Borough President's role in the Community Board system:

- How will you make the appointment and reappointment process fair and transparent?

- What is your plan to educate new and existing Community Board members on such matters as conflict-of-interest avoidance, land use education, parliamentary procedure, how to effectively use their collective voice, etc.?

My office will invest resources in community board recruitment and public education, seeking to broaden the pool of applicants for appointment. I will seek to create applicant pools reflective across race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, language fluency, occupation, and housing type and status. I will also use my social media presence to educate on the role of the board and encourage New Yorkers to apply. I will also seek to provide for community board member training at the beginning of each year to enhance the quality of public meetings.

My office will also seek to make community boards better resourced and provide them with the tools they need, such as child care, in addition to allowing members to participate electronically, which will allow a greater gender and economic diversity of members. We must consider and understand why people do not participate in order to facilitate participation. I will collect and publish demographic data as required by the City Charter, but seek to go beyond what is required so that our communities are fully informed regarding their representatives on community boards.

- How will you help Community Boards do their work?

My office will seek to make community boards better resourced and provide them with the tools they need, such as child care, in addition to allowing members to participate electronically, which will allow a greater gender and economic diversity of members. We must consider and understand why people do not participate in order to facilitate participation. Our community boards desperately need to reflect the communities they represent, and term limits will help to create space for new members that reflect their communities to become part of the board. I support staggering community board term appointments so we can best balance retaining institutional knowledge with creating space for new voices.

- Will you seek to be supportive of Community Board recommendations?

Yes.

6. What land use policies do you support to increase the supply of truly affordable housing in Manhattan below 14th Street?

- How would you determine affordability, AMI bands etc.?

I will split affordable housing into two groups: affordable housing and deeply affordable. The latter will be necessarily for people from 50% and below of AMI. Affordable housing will be for people between 50% and 100% of AMI.

- Do you support adaptive reuse/conversion of existing offices and hotels (all or in part) to achieve affordable housing? If so, how would you implement and fund this?

Yes. If working patterns have truly changed, we will have a large amount of unused building stock that could greatly increase our housing stock. I will demand that a certain amount of the units be affordable in order to obtain the zoning rights. To the extent funding is needed, I will look to past programs, like those after 9/11, that used government bonds to fund remodeling.

- Do you support using MIH with FAR incentives to increase affordable housing stock? If so, where and how would this be implemented? If not, why and what programs would you seek to implement?

Yes. I believe we need to increase the FAR bonus on a sliding scale with increases in the amount of affordable housing stock provided in the MIH program. I also believe that we need to make it easier to obtain rezoning for any project that has over 50% affordable housing in the building, or over 33% deeply affordable housing.

- What are your thoughts about zoning changes in historic districts?

The historic nature of a district will receive considerable attention from my office. But if we're honest with ourselves, we must acknowledge that historic districts are predominantly white districts.

With that in mind, I will be producing a housing plan that calls for a fundamental change to ULURP. Namely, I believe that every neighborhood must meet community-wide housing needs, but I propose allowing every community to determine how to best meet those housing needs from within their own community.

7. Please provide contact for additional information, if our members wish to get involved with your campaign, etc.

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