

2009 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

New Paltz Green Party
PO Box 834
New Paltz, NY, 12561
newpaltzgreens.org

Name: Mike Nielson

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Thank you for filling out the New Paltz Green Party Candidate Questionnaire. The primary purpose of this questionnaire is voter education. Your responses will provide our community with detailed information on your position on local issues and the Green Party's 10 Key Values. Your participation in the questionnaire process also creates a unique opportunity to share views and open a dialogue about the most pressing concerns facing New Paltz.

If your race is partisan and you are seeking the Green Party's endorsement, congratulations! Our endorsement carries with it not only the stamp of approval from the most politically-engaged, truly progressive leftist party in New Paltz, NY, but volunteer campaign help with petitioning and GOTV efforts (minimum 8 hours), including fundraising support, phone banking and canvassing volunteers, as well as promoting campaign events and positions on our two listserves.

If you are running a non-partisan campaign, your participation is also valuable and welcome. Support may still be available, if desired, and the New Paltz Green Party will assist with voter education on the issues discussed.

Completed draft questionnaires will be distributed to our listserv. After our members have had an opportunity to review the responses, you will be invited to a meeting with New Paltz Green Party members. The purpose of this meeting will

be to discuss, clarify and educate each other about our positions. After the meeting, you will have an opportunity to modify any answers to the questionnaire. After any modifications are made, your responses will be made available on the New Paltz Green Party website: www.newpaltzgreens.org.

Please indicate what you are seeking from the NPGP (check one):

- Support (Please elaborate below in question #15) Yes, Please!

Campaign slogan: i like mike

Please list names and contact information for key staff members (Campaign manager, treasurer, webmaster, etc.)

Campaign Manager/ Treasurer: Nikki Koenig Nielson, 845.853.9945, nikki@arcadysolutions.com

Staff: KT Tobin-Flusser - ktobinf@gmail.com, Erica Chase-Salerno - erica@wyldacres.com

Webmaster: Mike Chase-Salerno - mike@chasal.net

RESUME

Please attach a copy of your resume, including all offices you have run for, all offices held, and all employment and other affiliations, such as volunteer work or work on Boards of Directors, etc. See attached

QUESTIONS

- Why are you running?

I am running because there are inefficiencies in the current highway department that cost taxpayers both money and service. I have always been a problem solver, I see something that is not quite right and I cannot help but to try and fix it. A few years ago, I was approached about running for the position I am now seeking. After much consideration I decided that I could be a benefit in that role, and there were (and are) inefficiencies that really need to be remedied. With all due diligence in place, I have studied the system and understand what I can do to address them and am now ready to seek this position.

- What are the goals of your campaign?

To successfully be elected in order to bring more efficient, effective and sustainable operations and management practices to one of the largest departments in our community.

- Do you foresee any conflict of interest between the office you are seeking and any current position, paid or unpaid? If so, how would you handle this conflict? Please explain.

There is a conflict between being NP Highway Superintendent and running a private business that offers excavation services. When sworn in, I will put my business on hiatus for the duration of my term.

- What resources are available to you, both financially and otherwise, to fund your campaign?

We are currently soliciting donations and fundraising. We are recruiting volunteers to get out the vote and demonstrate support through letters to the editor and community events.

- Will your campaign accept contributions from corporate entities, PAC's, etc.?

I don't anticipate that there would be such contributions. I am seeking support from the union membership.

- What other political party lines are you seeking and why?

I have been endorsed by the Working Families Party and the Independence Party. I am seeking the Democratic Party line in New Paltz as I am a registered Democrat.

- What endorsements are you actively seeking?

The Democratic Party endorsement. I have interviewed with the committee, which at this point has declined to endorse any candidate for office. As such, we anticipate that the endorsement will be decided at the September 14th caucus.

- How much time are you personally willing/planning to spend on your campaign?

I am working on this campaign, as is my wife and our team, on a constant and consistent basis. If I have to estimate, I've been putting in 10-15 hours per week for a while, and anticipate that will be 20-25 hours a week from now onwards throughout the campaign season.

- Are any members of your staff paid?

No. Nor will they be.

- Have you ever attended a Green Party Meeting?

No.

- Once elected, how often will you meet with the Green Party, and what role will the Green Party have in your administration? Please be specific.

I would love to have an ongoing liasion relationship with the Green Party to assist with research and policy development particularly as it pertains to environmental and ecological sustainability. I am open to new ideas and recognize that having the input of others can only facilitate understanding and discussion of such ideas and develop them to be the most implementable and effective as possible.

- Do you disagree with any of the Green Party Ten Key Values (which you can read about at newpaltzgreens.org)?

No.

13. GREEN VALUES

Listed below are the Green Party's four defining characteristics. Please explain briefly how your campaign will embody each of these values, or how you have been working for a strengthening of these values in our community.

- **Ecological Responsibility:** I have been advocating both permeable surfaces for driveways, compost and rainwater retention as part of my business. I intend to extend these principles to my role as highway superintendent, as well as addressing major inefficiencies in facility energy expenditure with energy consumption improvements and alternative energy use. I will make it a department policy and steadfast practice to protect wetlands from untreated storm water runoff through effective use of hay bales and silt fencing

- **Nonviolence:** I believe that nonviolence is an important characteristic in leadership. It must extend as an approach to working with others, the community and most critically, staff. I intend to promote multi-cultural sensitivity and address gender-based discriminatory harassment by training and supervision of highway department personnel.

- **Grassroots Democracy:** My campaign is a good one, but we face a formidable opponent in the fact that he is a multi-term incumbent who is entrenched in not only bureaucracy but the privileges/ advantages of incumbency. Our government should not be one of entitlement. In order to win, we will rely on reaching out to many voters, including new voters for their civic participation.

- **Social and Economic Justice:** The highway department provides a service to the entire community, regardless of gender/ race/ age/ sexual preference or otherwise. We all have a right to safe highways and bikeways. Each staff member has a right to a fair administration. I intend to serve everyone as equitably as possible with the most balanced and judicious use of expenditures possible.

14. MAJOR ISSUES

Please choose two major issues confronting our community, and then list one innovative, Green-friendly idea for dealing with the issue.

- Issue #1:

Crumbling infrastructure. There is a lack of planning for the sustainable use and maintenance of our roadways and bikeways. This can be addressed through proper planning, creating better and more sustainable facilities, and including provisions for adoption of the plan.

- Issue #2:

Poor labor management/ relations are creating high staff turnover, a financially draining and morale-defeating environment for staff. It is incumbent on leadership to provide fair management which will in turn yield high morale and productivity.

15. WHY GREEN?

If applicable, please explain briefly why you are seeking the Green endorsement, and what support you expect for your campaign from the New Paltz Green Party.

I am not seeking the Green party endorsement. I am accepting assistance in writing letters to the editor, raising funds, and getting out the vote.

Thank you for your interest in the New Paltz Green Party. We will contact you about setting up an interview. If you have questions about this form, or about the endorsement process, please email our chairperson, Lagusta Yearwood, at lagusta@lagustasluscious.com.

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS SPECIFIC TO THE POSITION OF HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT AND IS TO BE FILLED OUT IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE GENERAL CANDIDATE'S QUESTIONNAIRE. If you have not received the general questionnaire, please contact us.

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Email to lagusta@lagustasluscious.com

Or Mail To:

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QUESTIONS

Are you in favor of the Ban Pesticides in Ulster County initiative?

I am opposed to unnecessary pesticide use instead of doing the harder but more environmentally and ecologically safer alternatives. We need better outreach and assistance for homeowners, municipal employees and landscape professionals. I'm not quite sure how this will fall into my role. Whenever the use of pesticide (herbicide) is necessary for best management practices (as with poison ivy) it is important that neighbors and the public be notified.

What are your views on alternative winter de-icing strategies (to cut down on salt usage)?

In the interest of reducing impacts to the natural environment, I will refer the policy and practice for de-icing to the New Paltz EnCC for a recommendation.

I would establish a policy to eliminate the idling of town highway department vehicles and equipment whenever practical. I am all for any and all alternatives. I am considering all options.

What concrete steps do you plan to take to reduce carbon emissions and other greenhouse gases in your department?

From what I understand, there is no downside to going to bio-diesel and veggie diesel for our vehicles. There is a monstrosity of a building being heated with fossil fuels. I am interested in using solar and/or geothermal as alternatives. I am also investigating solar-electric. There is the possibility of using wind turbines at the landfill.

Would you agree to only use nonlethal means to control beaver activity?

There has been extensive research into the beaver "problem" in the community. I would work with the DEC and use all due diligence to ensure that beaver activity is not destructive to personal property, but also that the beavers are not treated inhumanely. I would certainly not have spent tens of thousands of dollars on "beaver deceivers" only to then exterminate them.

What are your views on Town union issues?

I believe union relations have been poor, without warrant. Because the Town Board and the union negotiate and approve the contract, the Highway Superintendent is responsible for administering the department in accordance with the contract. I am and have been a union member of both the IATSE and IAFF local 311 and 461 respectively for over 10 years. I am committed to the process of adhering to a contract. More importantly, fair management begins with the leadership of the department, and that starts immediately.

Will you prioritize using recycled and/or permeable materials for grading and paving, even if they cost slightly more? If not, why not?

Switching to permeable surface materials is long overdue. Many of our drainage issues are created by that, resulting in overall higher costs for maintenance and repair. Again, prevention and doing it right the first time is critical. There is a responsibility to the taxpayer that includes the entire budget, not just the immediate issues. I anticipate that with new energy incentives and federal attention to these issues, more innovation and new materials will be increasingly available. It is one of my personality traits to make sure that I stay current and anticipate industry opportunities and trends.

What are your views about using biodiesel in municipal buildings?

Compared to oil/ fossil fuels, biodiesel is great. Compared to other alternatives, it is deficient. I would rather see geothermal and/or solar on all municipal buildings. Most of our municipal buildings are incredibly inefficient as they are

outdated and ill-maintained. In addition to alternative fuel sources, we need to consider drastic energy consumption reduction across the board.

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