

Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce Alderperson Candidate Questionnaire

Please tell us about yourself.

Your Name: *

Tag Evers

Aldermanic District: *

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Current Home Address: *

2329 Keyes Avenue, Madison WI 53711

Email: *

[REDACTED]

Phone: *

[REDACTED]

Campaign website, if any:

www.tagevers.com

Social media (Twitter, Instagram, etc.) handles, if any:

Facebook: tageversformadison; Twitter: @TagEvers, Insty: @everstag

Past education and work history (question optional; alternately you may send résumé to brett@madisonbiz.com)

B.A. (Honors) Economics - Wright State University 1987, M.A. Agricultural & Applied Economics
- UW Madison 1995

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Instructions: Please state your position on the following issues. Please limit answers to 100 words. Any answers exceeding the word count limitations will be cut after 100 words.

If you have filled out this questionnaire before, you may skip starred** questions or modify previous answers to those questions. If you skip starred answers on this questionnaire, we will re-publish your 2017 answers.

****1. Why are you seeking this office?**

I started my own business promoting concerts in the early 1990's. In the years since, I've organized over 2500 events in Madison, working with artists of all sorts and programming for diverse audiences. My business helped build community in Madison and raised tens of thousands of dollars for local non-profits. I have experience navigating big egos, learning from others and finding common ground. Having spent the last 25 years bringing people together around music, I'm running for city council to bring people together around the ideas and policies that will improve the lives of all who call Madison home.

****2. What in your background or experiences qualifies you to understand the unique needs facing small businesses?**

I started painting houses when I was 14 years old. By the time I was 18, I had five guys working for me. Entrepreneurial by nature, I had always worked for myself up until the time I joined Frank Productions in 2012. I know the burden of making payroll when money's tight, and the grit it takes to push on when you're dog tired. I also know the joy in success, realizing the hard work has paid off and clients and customers are happy. Having sold my company, I now know what it means to be part of a team.

****3. What are the most important issues the businesses in your district face?**

By 2040, if estimates prove correct, Madison will become home to 70,000 additional residents. South Park is targeted for significant development. The redevelopment of the Triangle brings enormous challenges to the vulnerable populations who live there. The tarnished legacy of our city's failed "urban renewal" of the 'Bush demands we not make the same mistakes again. Workforce housing, transit-oriented development, climate preparedness, and protecting our lakes and natural resources are issues facing businesses and residents alike in the district. Business opportunity must be measured by social responsibility to ensure the district's development benefits the many, and not just the few.

****4. What is your perception of Madison’s business brand? How do you think business in Madison is perceived locally, statewide, and nationally?**

Madison's brand is very strong locally, but there's room for improvement once we get beyond our borders. The ongoing conflicts between city and county government reflect poorly on both sides and weaken our ability to tackle big issues. Madison's reputation in other parts of the state are partly a function of politics, but we've been less than winsome in the past in terms of engaging our critics. Nationally, our reputation as a hip, progressive and innovative city is solid. Those of us who have lived here for a long time know the story is more complex.

****5. How can the City of Madison best attract and retain a diverse and talented workforce?**

Richard Florida's insights from 15 years ago still apply. Talent is drawn to talent. The creative types that are the foundation of the new economy thrive on rich cultural experiences – a vibrant music scene, tantalizing restaurants, innovative design and collaborative workspaces. But it's not enough. Housing affordability on the isthmus is an issue for entry-level professionals. Our transit system is woefully inadequate. Our bike paths are incomplete. Our lakes suffer algal blooms with increasing regularity. And our ongoing struggles over equity tell us we are not one city, but two, that we have failed to live up to our promise.

6. How can the City of Madison build an inclusive economy and ensure the advanced industries accelerating here provide opportunity for all?

Microsoft announced last month that it was pledging \$500 million to address Seattle's housing crisis. A thriving tech hub has many upsides, but it's equally true that rapid growth in the tech sector creates negative spillover effects including rising inequality. Microsoft realized it has an obligation to help those left behind, that workforce housing for Seattle's teachers and firefighters is of critical importance. Microsoft was founded in 1974. Epic was founded in 1979. It's not too early to start a conversation about a consortium of Dane County tech firms forming a public-private partnership to definitively address Madison's housing crisis.

7. With Madison's economic momentum, a continued focus must be placed on infrastructure improvements. What strategies would you recommend for the city to meet the diverse needs of worker mobility and housing?

Madison has for the last five years embraced a more creative view of TIF, shifting from a focus dominated by bricks and mortar to more qualitative criteria emphasizing family-supporting, full-time jobs with benefits. Madison should push the envelope further, exploring how TIF and other financial instruments can address needed improvements in Madison Metro and the greening of our infrastructure. Social Impact Bonds are being used in other states as a means of leveraging private-sector investments to address targeted goals of housing access and transit alternatives. We must think outside the box and envision a pathway to a carbon-free future.

8. How do you define economic development? Please elaborate.

The etymology of the word "economics" links back to the Greek word "oikonomia," translated in today's vernacular as "household management." The root word, "oikos" means "home" and is connected to our understanding of ecology, "oikos - ology." Economics, rightfully understood, was never about growth, but about sustainability. When competitive enterprises shift costs off the books onto the backs of labor, the environment, the poor and future generations, they may experience growth, but we do not develop as a society. An enlightened private sector has a moral responsibility to use its power and privilege to further human connection and environmental integrity.

9. The 115th Fighter Wing of the Air National Guard is an important driver of the Madison economy, providing an annual economic impact of over \$100 million, emergency and fire services for the Dane County Regional Airport, and over \$1 million in tuition assistance to area student guardsmen. Do you support the Wing as it seeks to continue its mission by acquiring next-generation F-35A jets? Please explain your answer.

I have not studied this issue. My father fought in the South Pacific during WWII. He came out of his war experience a pacifist. It was a Republican president, Dwight Eisenhower, who warned of the "military-industrial complex." If the argument is that next-generation weapons of war are vital to Madison's economy, I have my doubts. I'd need to see the data. Meanwhile, I'd rather we discuss how we might go about eliminating racial disparities in our schools by the year 2030, how we can move toward a carbon-free future, and how we can build a Madison that works for everyone.

10. If offered an endorsement from the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce, would you accept it? *

Yes

No

By submitting this candidate questionnaire, you agree that the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce may publish it with the intent of sharing it with its membership and the general public. *

I acknowledge that the Chamber will publish my answers to this questionnaire

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