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Page 1: With responses published for community leaders throughout your district

Q1

About Candidates

Candidate Name	Carissa Johnson
District	Cary Town Council, At-Large
Party Affiliation	Democrat
Campaign Website	www.electcarissa.com

Q2

Q1. Please tell us about your personal experiences with nonprofits. These may include experiences with any organizations that have served you and/or fellow residents of your community, or specific nonprofits for which you've served as a board member, staff person, volunteer, or donor. How do these experiences shape your policy positions? (Limit: 300 words)

I am proud to be a volunteer Guardian ad Litem (GAL) with Wake County District 10 in North Carolina. I am in my second year of service, and of all the volunteering I have done, this is by far the most challenging as well as the most rewarding. While dealing with children who have been removed from their homes for neglect or abuse can cause a very heavy heart, I have never felt such satisfaction as I have after my first case, with 4 siblings, was adjudicated and all 4 of the children were permanently in safe, loving, nurturing environments. As I run for office, my role as a GAL is the one thing I am not stepping away from as it is the most important thing I do.

Q3

Q2. If elected, what would be your top three policy priorities? (Limit: 250 words)

When elected, I am committed to:

- Work to build private-public-nonprofit partnerships to build capacity to ease the housing affordability crisis: As a person who once experienced the stress of housing insecurity, I know what it feels like to lie in bed worrying about where your child(ren) will be laying their heads at night. I'm fortunate to have friends and family with the resources to help when I needed it. Not everyone is as lucky, and if I will work to help people who are housing cost-burdened.
- Create equity opportunities and better municipal access for all, including an NDO: I believe our council can work with our town staff to get a better diversity of citizen input and participation, and I have seen firsthand that it is often the same people interacting with the town. Also, it is past time for Cary to adopt LGBTQ+ and minority protections as a Non-Discrimination ordinance.
- Champion opportunities for Cary to adopt greener practices and renewable energy: I believe we need to move beyond coal for our electric needs, and strengthen environmental protections. I want to be a part of a council that prioritizes solar and green building standards in our town projects.

Q4

The Center advocates on public policy issues that affect North Carolina's nonprofit sector and works with the NC General Assembly and North Carolina's members of Congress to develop laws and policies that save nonprofits time and money, help nonprofits operate more effectively, and preserve the public's trust in North Carolina's nonprofit sector. Our policy agenda includes:· Ensuring that all 501(c)(3) nonprofits are fully exempt from federal, state, and local taxes.· Promoting new and expanded tax deductions and credits that encourage individuals and businesses to give generously to support their communities through the work of charitable nonprofits.· Supporting policy solutions that will address the nonprofit workforce shortage, including increased funding to support jobs in the nonprofit sector and investment in accessible and affordable child care.· Seeking solutions to long-standing challenges that nonprofits face when they provide public services through government grants and contracts, including late contracts, late payments, overly complicated application and reporting requirements, and underpayment for indirect costs.· Promoting laws that will help nonprofits and businesses alike to provide affordable and high-quality health care and other benefits to their employees.Q3. If elected, which of these policy goals would you support most enthusiastically, and why? (Limit: 250 words)

Cary is facing a significant housing affordability crisis, and many Seniors, young families, and much of our workforce that serves Cary simply cannot afford to rent or own a home here. Measures to address affordable housing run the gamut of what we see in the public and private sectors, and there is no silver bullet. Instead, this crisis requires a comprehensive approach that combines a wide array of funding sources and applied plans with real benchmarking to curb the rise in housing cost-burdened citizens.

In November, Cary adopted a comprehensive Housing Plan. From my meetings with the team, I can confidently say that the town's staff has great ideas and excellent plans. What they need is a Council that will adequately fund those plans.

At the municipal level, the first challenge to tackle is capacity. Working with public companies, builders, non-profits, and our county and state governments to gain capacity quickly will be critical. Addressing housing affordability challenges will require council members to do some out-of-the-box thinking. I will champion critical examination of how our municipality has always done things and work with our staff to be the best possible steward of grants and funding to ensure additional funding in the future.