

Citizens Union Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Lindsey Boylan

Running for: Democratic nomination for Manhattan Borough President

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Affirmations

Have you completed the required campaign finance filings? Yes.

Have you qualified to receive matching campaign finance funds from the CFB? Yes.

Are you willing to be interviewed by Citizens Union's Local Candidates Committee? Yes.

1. The role of borough presidents often changes depending on the office holder. How would you use the office of the borough president to impact city policies affecting the borough? What is the vision of your office?

My vision for the Borough President's office is to be an advocate for those in the City that frequently go unheard by elected officials. Through my appointment powers, I will seek to increase the voice of marginalized communities and people who are not typically given a voice in Manhattan. As we recover from the coronavirus, helping to create a civic life that works for all people.

2. The city charter was recently amended to establish an independent, minimum budget for borough presidents. If elected, how will you utilize this new protected status to better serve your borough?

I will use the minimum budget to help make my office a hub for constituent services that will truly connect Manhattanites to the City that should be serving them. I want my capital budget to help create a livable, walkable City, and I want my office to be open, responsive, and helpful to constituents as we create that future.

3. The charter requires borough presidents to directly engage with city agencies through a borough service cabinet to coordinate service delivery and issues. Yet the nature, level, and quality of collaboration with agencies varies. How will you work with city agencies to ensure meaningful engagement?

I have spent my career coordinating across multiple agencies and among many stakeholders in order to ensure the best outcomes for the State and previously for the Bryant Park Corporation. I will bring those skills to the Office of the Borough President to facilitate such cooperation. I believe of all the candidates in this race, I am best suited to facilitate interagency cooperation and engagement.

4. Do you support empowering borough presidents to require the appearance of borough commissioner of city agencies for the monthly interagency "cabinet" meetings led by the borough presidents?

Yes.

5. Borough presidents can hold hearings on any matter of public interest and are charged with establishing a borough-wide complaint program to report public

complaints to better service delivery by agencies. How would you use these powers and the position of the office to amplify the concerns of borough residents? What issues might you focus on to improve agency performance or draw public attention?

The complaint program is an essential part of gathering firsthand accounts from New Yorkers to document the shortcomings and abuses of city authority. That documentation helps form a critical basis for demanding action to reform widely (and rightly) criticized areas of our government, such as the MTA and NYPD. However, I feel strongly that administering the reporting program carries with it a responsibility to elevate localized concerns too often ignored by the broader public.

Frequently, both the cause of the complaint and the public's negligence are direct products of the marginalization of the community where it originates. In particular, wide disparities in localized environmental quality, such as the concentration of air pollutants, are frequently overlooked in a perpetuation of systemic environmental racism. As Borough President, I will instruct my program officers to apply a holistic approach in evaluating Manhattanites' reports of issues facing their neighborhood, encourage them to consider the source, hire a multilingual team reflective of Manhattan's linguistic diversity, and require staff to receive training in racial justice issues.

When complaints highlight potentially serious negligence or public endangerment that requires corroboration, I will use the public platforms of my office - from social media to culturally competent outreach on the streets - to solicit more input and feedback from community members and ensure all credible complaints are investigated and addressed regardless of the ZIP code's average income or demographics.

6. The borough presidents have the authority to introduce legislation yet few borough presidents in recent years have exercised this authority. Would you utilize this power, and, if so, what legislation would you introduce?

While I believe the primary duty of the Borough President should be carrying out the office's core executive responsibilities, I feel the introduction of legislation is an important tool that should be used strategically to provide pressure for and a model for policy goals that would better Manhattan as a whole. To that end, I would strongly consider introducing legislation to revise the ULURP process so that applications approved by the Council with a modification automatically receive additional environmental review rather than leave additional review to the discretion of the City Planning Commission, which is the existing process. This revision would guard against unintended and often irreparable environmental consequences of land development that could slip through otherwise.

7. Developers argue ULURP should be streamlined while community groups and advocates believe more opportunities for input should be provided or that voting

thresholds should be changed for application approval. The pandemic has cast further disruption to the process. What reforms to ULURP do you support?

The ULURP process is in fundamental need of reform. The current ULURP process is developer-driven and takes a neighborhood-by-neighborhood approach to a problem that must be dealt with holistically city-wide. When a land use change does or does not happen in the Upper East Side, that decision affects East Harlem and Washington Heights, not just the Upper East Side. Worse, the ULURP process prioritizes the most resourced people in the City at the expense of all others. REBNY and developers organize to streamline development before community members are able to galvanize their community. As a result, far too often wealthy NIMBY activists and landowners prevent affordable housing from being built in their neighborhoods. Meanwhile, renters, laborers, and caregivers who are most impacted by the supply of housing, the provision of public space, and transit access are left with the least input. These problems are exacerbated in communities of color, which has led to our present predicament: the only neighborhoods forced to bear the brunt of new development are those on the gentrification frontier; nine out of the last ten proposed rezonings have been in low income communities of color.

To reform this process, I would seek to take at least the following steps: Create a comprehensive citywide planning framework that ensures the responsibility for new development is shared equally across districts; require that any upzoning affecting districts and zip codes with below average incomes be paired with upzoning in districts and zip codes with above average incomes, such that developers can no longer prey on low income communities of color; increase city resources to engage with and get input from communities proactively, such that all people have input in the planning process and not just the loudest and most resourced; ensure representativeness of community boards by race, income, gender, sexuality, gender identity, disability, employment type, and transit use, so that our community boards reflect the true will of the people; and make all community board meetings available on easily accessible video-conferencing platforms, and allow pre-recorded comments to be played and submitted by members of the community, so that workers and caregivers unable to attend can still participate in community board meetings during the ULURP process.

8. The borough presidents make recommendations to the mayor on capital projects as part of the budget process. All of the boroughs combined additionally receive 5 percent of the appropriations in the mayor's capital budget divided between the boroughs based on formulas related to land size and population. What would be your priorities for capital projects in the borough?

I will use my capital budget to prioritize projects that match my vision for Manhattan: one that is inclusive, sustainable, and vibrant. That means supporting capital programs that make our

streets and public spaces safer, greener, and more pedestrianized to help revive Manhattan's civic life after the pandemic ends.

9. If elected, would you post on your website all applications received by your office for capital and expense discretionary funds, as well as groups which ultimately received funding?

Yes.

10. Borough presidents are charged with establishing a planning office that, among other functions, provides training and technical assistance to community boards on land use issues. The recently formed Civic Engagement Commission is also tasked with providing professional assistance to community boards, in consultation and coordination with borough presidents. Using the planning resources available, how would you use the office to help community boards fulfill their charter mandated responsibilities to provide feedback on land use proposals, while enabling the boards to make decisions independent of the borough president's office?

I would bring my ten-plus years in urban planning and economic development to the Office of the Borough President and build a robust staff that provides training and technical assistance. I am the only person in this race that can provide personal guidance to community boards in addition to building the right staff to do the job.

11. Borough presidents are charged with making hundreds of appointments. What criteria would you use for appointments to positions appointed by the borough president (the Panel on Educational Policy, City Planning Commission, community boards, etc.)? What processes would you put in place for advertising open positions and recruiting qualified candidates that represent the diversity of New York City, and how would you assure that appointments represent the diversity of the borough's neighborhoods?

My office will invest resources in 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 roles of the boards and encourage New Yorkers to apply. 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. Finally, 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.

My office will seek to make 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 appointments desperately need to reflect the communities they represent.

12. Do you support granting the borough presidents the ability to make an additional appointment to the Board of Standards and Appeals, who would only vote on matters affecting that borough?

Yes.

13. Do you support establishing independent budgeting for community boards?

Yes.

14. What experience have you had, if any, with good government and reform issues? (e.g. voting and elections, campaign finance, ethics, police accountability, government transparency and oversight). If you've worked to advance these goals, we'd love to hear about it.

I have not had governmental experience working on voting and elections reform, but I think the last six months have shown that I am second to none in this race at upholding ethics and transparency - at large personal cost - in our State government.

15. What are the top three campaign promises or goals, and what action will you take to achieve them if elected? Feel free to reference an answer above rather than restate it.

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 not least is the rapidly worsening wealth inequity 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.

16. If you have not addressed this already, in what major ways would your priorities as borough president differ from the incumbent?

I have tremendous respect for Gale Brewer and I hope to continue to make Manhattan better as she has. I believe my focus may differ from her by focusing more on racial justice and livability and accessibility in my role as Borough President.

What else would you like us to know about yourself?

I believe that my willingness to call out elected Democrats where they have failed to live up to progressive values is vital in a City like New York. There are very few elected Republicans in the City and so fights must be had between Democrats. I believe we must have Democrats who are willing to be progressive and not fear retribution for speaking out, particularly as Borough President, where voice and representation is vital.