

Candidate Questionnaire – David Friedman

Why are you interested in serving on the Hillsdale Neighborhood Association Board?

My family and I love Hillsdale. We love our neighbors, we love the business community and local shops, we love the public spaces—we love the way we can be close to the city center, but feel like we have our own distinct community here.

Why serve? I strongly believe that the HNA must be a welcoming institution, where people feel happy and excited to attend meetings and participate in other activities. Our neighbors should feel comfortable that they will leave meetings satisfied that their concerns have been heard, that they have learned something, made a few friends, and perhaps even had.... fun!

What strengths and perspectives would you bring to the HNA Board?

The perspective that I bring comes from my Connecticut-native values. Our town agencies and governing bodies did not shy away from conflict—they embraced it—and the product of real, inclusive dialogue brought more people into the process and produced better results.

I'm also the parent of an elementary student at Portland Jewish Academy.

For the past twelve years, I have been a law professor, which means that my primary responsibility involves researching and writing about complex policy issues—as well as teaching students tort law and corporate governance. I taught a nonprofit clinic for a few years, too. Before that, in the private sector, I advised for-profits on issues of corporate strategy.

What neighborhood issues and topics do you feel strongly about and why?

1. **Inclusion**. The HNA should knit the neighborhood together, not divide it. Nobody should leave our meetings in tears or anger because they felt like they weren't heard.
2. **Representation**. With external constituencies, like SWNI and the City, our representatives should advance the interests and points-of-view of their neighbors—putting them above their own perspectives.
3. **Engagement**. If we apply our rules fairly, and welcome new people who want to be heard, we will grow.

How will you ensure that the HNA reflects the views of the neighborhood as a whole? *

The Board should communicate to the neighborhood about significant matters in a timely and accessible manner. When controversial issues arise, we should afford proper time and a forum for neighbors to offer their views.

Every board member has an independent, fiduciary duty to serve the neighborhood, and I think every board member should pledge to honor that principle. If board members follow their duty to listen, as laid out in the bylaws, the views of the whole neighborhood will be reflected and our vision will become that much stronger and clearer.

What would you like to accomplish as a Board Member? What would be your priorities?

I would like many more people to attend HNA meetings for the first time and then *return* to meetings because they felt that the conversation was relevant, that they learned something important, and that their opinion was heard.

I would also like the HNA to speak as loudly as our adjacent neighborhood associations in forums like SWNI, so that conspicuous silence on key issues of the day will not be misread as a rubber stamp for City policies.

My priority will be to advance the priorities of my *neighbors*. I come to the board without a policy agenda to promote. My opinions on local issues should matter no more than any other neighborhood resident and all neighborhood residents should be considered HNA Members.

Which Board committees and activities would you like to participate in? (Options include: parks, schools, land use, watershed, etc)

We need a governance committee, to reform bylaws and create new rules for how meetings are conducted, first and foremost. Without such a committee, our work in the other areas will not reflect our community priorities. Outreach will be futile until we make our meetings better.

Neighborhood associations in Portland are afforded a special role in land use, one which we have not embraced as fully as we should. Too often, silence from the HNA is viewed as assent with City policies and decisions. We should speak when the neighborhood has something to say, positive, negative or in-between!

What is your prior volunteer experience? Have you previously served in a board or leadership role? How have you interacted with local government around land-use or public policy issues?

I have served as counsel to many non-profit organizations, local and national. I have also served on the boards of several alumni organizations, and currently sit on the board of an educational nonprofit.

Locally, I have been engaged with the process of modifying the Hillsdale Heights Covenants, which included eliminating discriminatory covenants, and clearing the way for new development with the support of surrounding neighbors.

The HNA is concerned with issues relating to public resources, such as land use, housing, education, and transportation. Please describe your existing and prospective personal, political, financial, and business or professional interests that shape your points of view in these areas.

I have no personal, financial, business, or professional interests in any foreseeable controversy that may come before the HNA. I have no plans to seek public office in my lifetime.

Furthermore, I think that all Board Members and presenters who come before the Board and its Members should be required to answer this question so that we may assess their interests and evaluate the potential for conflicts.

How will you work with Board Members and residents who do not share your views? *

If we apply our meeting rules fairly, and allocate proper time for discussion, we can learn to embrace civil and respectful conflict, rather than fearing it and avoiding it.

My professional CV can be found here:

<http://willamette.edu/law/pdf/faculty/friedman-david-cv.pdf>