



**Coachella – Imperial Strategies Group
Political Action Committee
Candidate Questionnaire – Aug 2020**

Name: **Linda Evans**

Office Sought: **Mayor**

City/County/District: **La Quinta, Riverside County, California**

Employer/Occupation: **City of La Quinta, Mayor & Desert Care Network, Healthcare Executive**

Do you currently hold office: **Yes – Mayor, City of La Quinta December 2014 to present;
La Quinta Council Member June 2009 – November 2014**

Please describe your background:

Please refer to the attached resume for my work experience and education.

I also serve on a number of Boards, Commissions, and entities that relate to either my Mayor role, my Chief Strategy Officer of Community Advocacy position for the Desert Care Network (DRMC, JFK, HDMC hospitals), or because I have a passion to serve and a make a difference in my community. In these positions, I provide experience and guidance for decision-making, support advocacy, fundraising efforts, financial sustainability, and environmental preservation. In my hospital role, I also serve as the Government Relations Liaison, when advocacy is needed for healthcare related legislation. I am active on the event committees of these organizations, and recruit volunteers to help, serve, and donate to the various causes as needed.

- **Mayor** – City of La Quinta – November 2014 to present
- **Chair**, Joint Powers Authority – Convention & Visitors Bureau – December 2012 to present
- **Chair**, Coachella Valley Association of Governments – Energy & Environmental Commission - 2014 to present
- **Chair**, Coachella Valley Association of Governments – Conservation Commission - 2012 to present
- **Member**, Coachella Valley Association of Governments – Executive Committee – 2014 to present
- **Board Director**, Coachella Valley Volunteers in Medicine – 2018 – present
- **Board Director**, Phil Mickelson Foundation – AMEX Golf Tournament, LQ – 2019 to present
- **Chair**, La Quinta Commercial Owners Association - 2011 to present (JFK designee)
- **Member**, League of California Cities, Riverside Division, City of La Quinta - 2009 to present
- **Member**, La Quinta Rotary Club
- **Member**, East Valley Republican Women Federation - 2009 to present
- **Member**, Women Leaders Forum
- **City Council Member** - City of La Quinta (June 2009 – Nov 2014)

- **Board of Directors**, FIND Food Bank (2011-2016)
- **Chair**, Board of Directors, Arthritis Foundation Coachella Valley (2009 – 2012)
- **Chair**, Board of Directors, La Quinta Chamber of Commerce (Chair 7/2006-2008; Board 2003-2009; 5 of 6 years on Executive Committee)
- **Board of Directors**, American Heart Association & American Diabetes Association, Coachella Valley (2003 – 2008)
- **Board of Directors**, Santa Rosa del Valle, Inc.- Medical Clinic (2003-2007)

Why are you seeking this office?

I'm honored to have served as LQ Mayor since 2014, and as a Council Member 5 years prior to that. We are still undergoing effects from COVID-19 and several tough decisions have been made to weather the storm and develop a plan for recovery. I am seeking re-election to continue the work that needs to be done to regain our strength for our residents, businesses, and tourism industry to ensure we remain the 'Gem of the Desert, La Quinta'. Projects underway that require further attention include the following:

- SilverRock Hotels – Montage & Pendry, along with the homes and retail on that site (event venue in process; vertical for hotels and homes in fall of 2020)
- Storm Drain / Flood Control Enhancements – started, but not yet finished
- X-Park – Competition skate/bike/scooter park near LQ High School – to begin in early 2021
- Dune Palms Bridge – our last low-water crossing section in LQ for north/south travel
- CV Link – La Quinta's 2-mile portion – to begin in late 2020 or early 2021
- Highway 111 Vision & Re-Purpose – Study completed; Form Based Code underway; implementation to follow (over years)
- North La Quinta Perimeter Landscaping – Using Measure G Funds – 4 year project – in its final 1.5 years!

I am driven by the support, participation, and engagement of our residents – it makes the job to serve our community so much more enjoyable. It's a team effort – and I am grateful and humbled to be part of our La Quinta team. My work in La Quinta is not done. I love La Quinta, plan to retire in La Quinta, and I want to ensure its financial success and high standards for generations to follow. For this reason, I want to serve another term as Mayor and be a role model for other women and the younger generation to become involved in local government and politics.

If elected, what are your goals?

PRIORITIES:

- **CONTINUED FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY** – Our Council successfully passed a balanced budget – during the coronavirus pandemic – and still maintains strong

reserves. While this impacted some of our services and staff, it was necessary to appropriately alter our operations where State/County restrictions were put in place. Essential services, such as fire and police, remain fully funded but are under evaluation for cost saving measures that will be implemented during the 2020/2021 budget year. Our reserves remain strong, which allowed us to financially assist our small businesses. Our financial stability is a direct result of fiscally responsible practices, pursuing sensible economic growth, developing new revenue opportunities, and managing our expenses prudently. Our budget remains conservative for the coming year with a gradual revenue recovery process in place.

- **PUBLIC SAFETY** – My number one priority is to ensure strong law enforcement and fire service protection, while managing contract service costs and annual increases effectively. Public Safety comes at a price, and our service and protection will not be compromised. Exploring support services to complement our law enforcement team may assist in ensuring additional outreach and safety, in a fair and equitable manner for all residents. We live in a safe city because of the decisions and commitment made by our City Council to protect our residents.
- **ECONOMIC GROWTH** – SilverRock is still a key factor to ensuring our cities financial future. Keeping that vision, even during these challenging times, is critical for our cities future. We are developing one of the ultimate destination resorts in our valley that will produce hotel, retail and property tax revenue for years to come. The Montage & Pendry Hotels are exceptional additions to an already diverse travel and resort destination in the Coachella Valley. Hospitality trends are indicating that resorts with open space and less density will recover faster than big city travel. La Quinta is well-positioned for this projected recovery. Vision Highway 111 - The City's Highway 111 corridor plan will begin a restructuring with businesses and transportation options that will attract new experiences for consumers to our economy. And, with the completion of the Complete Streets Project (roundabouts), the aesthetics in the Village and Old Town area will allow for safer, slower, more pedestrian-friendly travel, with an artistic component for residents and visitors to enjoy. Roundabouts improve traffic flow, reduce car emissions, reduce maintenance demands on the roads, eliminate traffic signals, and provide the ability to display public art.
- **QUALITY OF LIFE** - Preservation of parks, trails, dark skies and open space will enable La Quinta to preserve its charm while promoting a healthy community. As a hiker, I appreciate all that La Quinta offers and I'm proud to support La Quinta as a Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) city. We added an outdoor National Fitness Court in North La Quinta near La Quinta High School, providing the ability for free exercise to everyone. The North La Quinta X-Park construction will be starting soon, and will provide a state-of-the-art experience for all ages. In late 2020 and 2021, La Quinta's segment of CV Link will begin construction, providing

alternative, safe transportation and additional access to our commercial corridor along Highway 111, the cities primary source for sales tax. The Short Term Vacation Rental Ad Hoc Committee was also formed over the past year to review the current program and offer recommendations to the City Council to ensure proper enforcement to address non-compliant operators. It's essential to find a balance between maintaining our neighborhoods in a peaceful manner while retaining a vital revenue source for our city's tourism and hospitality segment.

Are you currently a homeowner: Yes

Have you ever done real estate development or other related work in this area? No

Do you support or disapprove of NEW development (of any type – residential, commercial, industrial, renewal energy as example) in the jurisdiction you would represent, and why?

I support new development in La Quinta for residential and commercial, based on the land available and the current zoning under our General Plan. La Quinta has an opportunity to explore both industrial and renewal energy options in our southeast corridor, and within our Sphere of Influence (SOI). The challenge with expanding our LQ boundaries in the SOI is the County's rule of remaining 'revenue neutral' through annexation. The City would be responsible for all improvements, public safety, maintenance, etc – without the benefit of receiving property tax from the annexed area. This is clearly not an affordable or good business model for La Quinta.

Does the jurisdiction in which you are seeking office have an adequate housing supply?

Yes, La Quinta has done an outstanding job providing affordable housing units (1800+) for our community. We recently completed Washington Street Apartments (affordable housing) and will be exploring other affordable housing options because of the funds we have available. There is always room for additional housing within our city limits that will promote jobs, economic revenues, and will bring further value to our already affluent community. The State needs to develop a more affordable way to build housing so we can continue our positive efforts to offer housing to all levels of income in our community. We need CEQA reform and fast-tracking for affordable and market rate homes.

How would you alter the balance to benefit your community?

High-End/Market Rate

La Quinta continues to experience residential growth in both tract home developments and custom homes within gated communities. We have several large developments under construction, with the SilverRock Resort FINALLY coming in the near future. SilverRock will combine hotel and residential living, with commercial and retail opportunities to compliment golf and other recreational activities. The city has approved other projects as well, and progress is dependent upon market demand.

Affordable

We have opportunities in La Quinta to expand our affordable housing units. We completed our Washington Street Apartments project within the past year, refurbishing the existing 72 units and constructing 68 new units for seniors and adults with disabilities and Veterans. This was a CVHC collaboration with La Quinta. We have funds available for housing, but are limited in the land available owned by the city. We are exploring options for Veterans housing as well.

Another potential area of improvement, probably the last “eye-sore” in La Quinta, is a run-down mobile home park near La Quinta High School (Dune Palms Mobile Homes). This park does not meet the quality standards of La Quinta. We have much of the housing funding to cover a project of this magnitude, but we currently do not own the property. We are evaluating other options to get this project done. This location is part of our Housing Plan.

Do you believe that the new development/construction industry adequately provides necessary infrastructure to sustain local agencies for police, fire, streets, parks, libraries and schools? If so, how has the industry been successful?

If not, how would you go about changing this?

Yes, I believe the industry, working collaboratively with cities (I’m speaking for La Quinta), has provided the necessary infrastructure to sustain local agencies for police, fire, streets, parks, libraries, and schools. I do NOT think our utility providers (electricity and sometimes water) are in alignment with us (city and building industry) from a service or growth perspective, and this concerns me. The Compromise Agreement between CVWD and IID is of serious concern to the Coachella Valley cities covered under the IID component. The investment in infrastructure (IID) is unstable, the service and maintenance is sub-par, and the future is unknown. We welcome collaboration to find solutions for continued service of existing and future residents in LQ and other IID cities. We do enjoy low rates, but they are likely not sustainable given the direction and near expiration of the Compromise Agreement (2033).

Should your City or County aid in funding or producing affordable housing for those of moderate, low, or low-low income? If so, how? If not, why? What are the alternatives?

Yes. La Quinta has and will continue to support and fund, when possible, efforts to produce additional affordable housing for residents of all income levels. We also need to consider units for rapid re-housing to PREVENT and assist with the homeless crisis. We are doing our part in La Quinta, and other Coachella Valley cities need to do the same.

What are your ideas on mitigating the continued financial challenges local agencies face with the needs for the cities or other agencies? Example – unfunded pension plans?

Our Council and staff continue to mitigate the financial impacts that cities continue to face.

- Over the years, our mitigation efforts included a reduction in workforce, class and compensation restructure with our employees, increase in fees for development and services, reduction in expenses, economic development efforts to attract businesses for new tax revenues, participation in TUMF through CVAG, and streamlining the processes for doing business in La Quinta.

- In 2016, Measure G, a 1% sales tax measure, was passed by our residents. While I don't support increased taxes, this was a critical need for our financial demands and increased costs and to preserve the quality of life in La Quinta.
- Police costs continue to climb, and we are in early discussions with other contract cities to potentially merge our efforts for coverage to hopefully reduce costs for each city.
- We are actively funding our "unfunded pension"; however, it is a moving target. We have altered the PERS levels for staff and have 3 levels based on tenure with the city. This has reduced our contribution and has placed the responsibility on the employee.
- We have strengthened our technology within the city to better manage our finances and city operating budgets. We have engaged residents to serve on a Financial Advisory Commission to provide transparent oversight, management, and review of revenues and expenses, as well as revenue and expenses related specifically to Measure G.

The challenge continues to be uncontrollable increased cost of services that are difficult to project and/or afford with revenues growing at a slower rate. Items of concern are costs for police, fire, insurance, prevailing wages, and pensions. La Quinta remains conservative, from a fiscal perspective, to establish practices and policies to have balanced budgets and strong revenues now and in years to come.

With the dissolution of the Redevelopment Agencies, there has been a great deal of discussion regarding the implementation of [Infrastructure Financing Districts \(IFDs\)](#), [Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts \(EIFDs\)](#), [AB 2 Community Revitalization and Investment Act \(CRIA\)](#), assessment districts and community facilities districts (Mello-Roos) on new development. What are your thoughts on these types of revenue generators? Are they fair and equitable? Can they be manipulated? How, and to what benefit?

I don't support Mello-Roos or developing new assessment districts for new or existing development as a means for others to pay for desired projects. It is difficult in a city like La Quinta that historically provided many services and benefits to its residents at no charge. The most fair and equitable means to generate new revenue is via a sales tax increase, which we did successfully in 2016. This provides the least impact on residents and does not pass down additional costs on developers.

Renewable energy is a very large, emerging industry in the Desert South-West. With the passing of SB100 that mandates 100% renewable energy by 2045; what is your viewpoint on the Zero Net Energy goals that would affect the local jurisdictions for 100% renewable and how would you recommend the city handle the increased cost to housing (affordable & market rate)?

Mandates are often "unfunded" when Sacramento establishes them. And, anything that is a 100% mandate will likely fail because in many areas, it is simply cost prohibitive to achieve. The only thing we can do to assist in controlling the increased cost to housing is to balance our fees with the other mandates that are forced upon all of us. We need CEQA reform at the State level, and a process to fast-track both market rate and affordable housing projects so they are actually affordable to build.

Do you have an opinion regarding the ongoing lawsuit(s) between Tribal interests and various water utility service providers? How would you like to see the lawsuit(s) resolved?

Not really. I respect the rights to possess control, given the land is owned by the tribe. Have the tribes contributed from the financial investment in the infrastructure? Or, have they just benefitted from it and now want control over it? We all pay fees to access what our needs are. Will this set precedence for other avenues, such as electricity/power supply, and transportation / road maintenance on tribal owned land?

Salton Sea restoration continues to be a challenging issue. What do you see as the realities of local assistance versus state and federal assistance? What would “you” propose as a resolution to the issue?

I stand by and prefer the term “revitalization” for the Salton Sea – or a portion of the Salton Sea. It needs to be a priority for cities, counties, state and federal jurisdictions. As a healthcare executive, the health status of our community and state is a priority. We will experience a public health crisis if the Salton Sea continues to recede and/or dries up. This crisis could extend beyond the Coachella Valley through most of Southern California. The vitality and sustainability of our future economy will be greatly jeopardized. Lack of action and repair will also greatly impact our hospitality/tourism and agriculture industries. As an elected official, we must join together with both funding and action to address a plan that is both affordable, and revenue generating based on the business opportunities of renewable energy that can result from harvesting resources from the Salton Sea. There has been progress with funding for the Salton Sea from Governor Brown and Assemblyman Garcia, however, the push for more continues.

I support a revitalization plan that sections out the Salton Sea for both recreation and environmental purposes in renewable energy, lithium harvesting, solar, geothermal, etc. Imagine the opportunity to develop a portion of the Sea as a returning resort destination for people to enjoy. This will stimulate demand for hotels, homes (even short-term rentals), restaurants, fueling stations and other retail/commercial entities. I’m optimistic!

COVID-19 Issues:

The construction industry is one of this State’s leading manufacturing industries with approximately 35% of the labor force directly related to this industry. How is or should your agency be proceeding in supporting this “essential business” in your community?

Nearly all businesses are essential, in my opinion. La Quinta continues to support the construction industry – with or without a pandemic. We have continued to operate our planning, permitting, building, and inspection departments during the pandemic. This was largely possible due to the technological investments made by the City during the last recession recovery period and our desire to continue operations in a safe and effective manner for our staff and customers. In addition to ensuring work and approvals continue, La Quinta recently chose to HOLD on any DIF fee increases to allow the industry and our residents/developments to proceed without significant cost increases to the process. We enjoy our partnership and

collaboration with DVBA and appreciate their support and input on our decision-making process for construction/development in our city.
Please proceed and build!

Re-igniting the Economy is critical at this time. What are the additional measures in which your respective agency is undertaking or should undertake in order to allow businesses to open or remain open (essential and non-essential)?

RESPONSE to COVID-19: – COVID-19 impacts have taken a toll on our economy and our city budget – for our residents and our businesses. Our City quickly responded to help mitigate the impacts on residents and businesses by taking the following actions:

- Developed a COVID-19 microsite on the city's website with Federal, State, County, Regional, and Local resources for residents, businesses, and visitors;
- Implemented executive orders to ensure enforcement of State/County orders to assist with flattening the curve to avert a surge to our local hospitals;
- Executed a digital marketing and education campaign with various COVID-19 information messages;
- Developed and implemented the COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Economic Relief Programs with an allocation of \$1.5 million to small businesses;
- Developed an Al Fresco Program to provide financial support for restaurants creating additional outdoor space to comply with the State Industry Standards to remain open;
- Established a food distribution partnership and donated \$40,000 to FIND Food Bank to provide food for LQ residents in need;
- Started a friendly caller program to provide a social connection with residents to ensure their needs are met;
- Utilized the La Quinta Museum for childcare (collaboration with the YMCA) for children of essential workers;
- Manufactured face shields at our Creation Station for local hospitals;
- Provided financial support for local homeless shelters and programs;
- Expanded Code Compliance service hours and coverage to better manage short-term vacation rental issues;
- Participated in various Federal, State, County, and Regional emergency management and COVID-19 update calls;
- Served as a leader and advocate amongst Valley Mayors and businesses to County and State officials in providing status on hospital activity/surge to assist in decision-making for local jurisdictions;
- Authored letters to County and State officials (either for LQ, several valley mayors, county-wide Mayors, and local entities (PSAM & The Living Desert) to advocate and support re-opening businesses, request relief/CARES funding, and ensure health and safety (masks, space, distancing);
- In my healthcare position, I assisted the County with the first drive-through COVID-19 testing site in the Coachella Valley by working at the site and facilitating the process for the first few weeks.

How long have you been registered to vote? Since 1982, when I turned 18.

How long have you been in the jurisdiction you are seeking office? April 2003 – 17.5 years

Please write or attach your list of endorsement:

None. I am not actively seeking endorsements in the traditional manner, but I am seeking “supporters”. Why? Given the current state of politics in the state/nation, it appears that “endorsements” are very sensitive and highly scrutinized. My campaign will be more focused on “Celebrating La Quinta” and all of the good our City Council has achieved over the years AND throughout this pandemic. I am requesting “Supporters of Linda” versus “endorsements”. Of course, group endorsements are less controversial than individual endorsements. I would be proud to recognize Coachella – Imperial Strategies Group (PAC) or other entities that desire to endorse me for Mayor. This is a local, non-partisan election – hence my desire for “Supporters of Linda”.

Additional comments:

Thank you for your consideration and the work that you do for our Valley. I would be honored to receive your “support/endorsement” and any contribution to my campaign your PAC is able to provide. I do have an opponent and will need to spend money to distribute facts about my work and La Quinta’s successes. Thank you.

Campaign Information

Campaign #: 1365647 LindaForMayor.org

Elect Linda Evans La Quinta Mayor 2020

P.O. Box 1

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Linda Evans

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August 13, 2020

Date

Thank you!