

**California Apartment Association
Apartment Association Greater Inland Empire
Candidate Questionnaire
August 2020**

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Candidate Name: Linda Evans

Candidate for the office of: Mayor

District: City of La Quinta, Riverside County, California

Website: www.LindaforMayor.org

Campaign ID#: 1365647

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

1) What made you decide to run for political office?

I was appointed to the La Quinta City Council in June 2009, to fill a vacancy. I had served as Chair of the Chamber of Commerce, as well as served on other non-profit boards. After completing the remaining 18-month term as Council Member, I campaigned for a 4-year Council term in 2010 and was successful. La Quinta needed new energy to garner momentum to ensure financial viability for the future, hence my desire to run for Mayor in 2014. I out-seated a long-term incumbent and have won my 2-year terms elections ever since. My reason for seeking public office is largely due to my love for my city. I work full time for a hospital company, and have found that my service as Mayor has been as rewarding as my healthcare career. I collaborate well, engage our residents, and work tirelessly to ensure quality of life and financial stability and growth for our community.

2) Please list key individuals and/or organizations (including: business, labor, etc.) supporting your candidacy that would be of interest to AAGIE.

I have submitted questionnaires to Coachella-Imperial Valley Strategies PAC (interview is 8/26/2020), and California Desert Association of Realtors. I was endorsed by the Republican Party of Riverside County and have support from East Valley Republican Women Federation – the nation’s largest female Republican Club, with headquarters located in La Quinta.

3) In your own words, please tell us about your position on rent control for residential rental properties?

I do not support rent control for residential rental properties.

4) Do you believe that local government has a role in regulating private property rights? Please explain your position in detail.

No, I do not believe local government should play a role in regulating private property rights. Government should not have the right to control personal property of individuals for use of the greater good of a community. It's a control mechanism that should not be held by local government. California continues to move in this direction (affordable housing, homelessness, etc.) and I do not support it. There needs to be a balanced process to ensure the needs of all are met.

5) What is your position on mandatory rental inspections by a government agency for residential rental properties?

I do not support mandatory rental inspections by a government agency for residential rental properties. Inspections that are performed to ensure the health and safety of residents are appropriate if there is cause for concern. This process by government would simply add to the bureaucracy of our already over-regulated State.

6) What is your position on requiring rental owners to obtain a license to own rental housing?

I support requiring rental owners to obtain a Business License in the operating jurisdiction if they will be functioning like a management company through their rental housing program. Example: La Quinta requires a Business License and Permit to operate a short-term vacation rental property within our city limits.

7) Do you support increasing property taxes to pay for additional public services such as code enforcement or law enforcement? Please explain your position.

No, I do not support increasing property taxes to pay for additional public service such as code enforcement or law enforcement. If additional revenue is needed, cities need to consider a sales tax increase and economic development efforts to increase sales tax and/or transient occupancy tax for hotel stays.

8) Do you support establishing energy conservation mandates on rental properties, such as replacing windows, light bulbs and insulation? Please explain your position.

No, I do not support establishing energy conservation mandates on rental properties (or owner properties) because they can be cost prohibitive for the property owner and/or builder. I would encourage energy efficiencies, such as windows, light bulbs, solar, and even water conservation efforts, because they are good for the environment, but I would not support mandating them.

9) Would you support an ordinance that requires rental properties to prohibit residents from smoking tobacco products?

Smoking tobacco products causes cancer. As a healthcare executive, I see the effects on patients who smoke, their declining health condition, the increase in healthcare costs to care for smokers, and the impact on access to care as a result of those choosing NOT to care for themselves by choosing to smoke. In La Quinta, we did support and adopt an ordinance that prohibits smoking tobacco products in all of the city parks. We are a Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) city. Personally, I think smoking should be banned in any public place or business. That being said, I would not support an ordinance to require rental properties to prohibit residents from smoking tobacco products. This would be tantamount to local government interfering and controlling a private business transaction between property owners and renters.

10) Please explain how the region can best restore economic growth and create jobs in your City/County?

We can best restore economic growth and create jobs in our City/County through regional alignment. Our region of East Riverside County, known as the Coachella Valley, needs to continue its efforts to work collaboratively as a region versus nine different cities to restore economic growth and sustainability for the future, especially during a pandemic. Through entities such as Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, our cities have come together to create iHub centers for innovative business prospects, and Workforce Excellence programs that create a skilled workforce for either the top industries in our area (hospitality and movie production), or industries that we desire to strengthen (medical, hospitality, agriculture) to ensure we have a skilled workforce to attract and retain businesses. In addition to CVEP, the Greater Palm Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau (I serve as Vice Chair of the Joint Powers Authority of the CVB) has redesigned its marketing focus to create desire to visit our "destination" of the Greater Palm Springs area. Once we have captured the desire to visit or convention in our valley, we further define the unique communities that comprise the Coachella Valley to best suit the consumers/entities needs.

Without working together, individual cities are limited on their ability to create growth experienced prior to the recession. A City is only as strong as its neighboring City, and working together yields more favorable results for the region as a whole over time. Now, more than ever, as we collectively work to recover from the economic devastation of

COVID-19, it's critical to join forces and become stronger together as a community to ensure growth and jobs into the future.

11) Do you support updating the City/County's General Plan to create more opportunities to develop Workforce Housing?

Yes. La Quinta updated its General Plan in 2013 and I was involved in that process as a Council Member. Our General Plan includes a Housing Element & Plan component. La Quinta has done an outstanding job at building Affordable Housing units over the years (1,800) that serve children/families and seniors. We also have funding from the former Redevelopment Agency dedicated to Housing to explore future projects. Workforce Housing is of interest, as is housing for Veterans and disabled adults.

12) Please list your top three issues if elected to office.

My top priorities (issues sound negative to me) include:

- **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 (city owned land that includes a golf course and space for hotels, retail and housing) 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.

13) What is your vision for the City and/or County?

My vision for La Quinta is to create revenue sources that will sustain our city for generations to follow. We have redefined how we do local government, through restructuring our employee base, compensation, and benefits to streamlining processes for new development of businesses and homes to make it easier to live, work and play in La Quinta. We have reviewed and continue to make revisions to our regulations and ordinances. This effort is to consistently evaluate their purpose and effectiveness in our ability to grow and be more creative and flexible. Retaining standards of quality is important, however, updating the processes, workflow, and restrictions will foster new ideas and create new business opportunities to meet the consumer demands of the future.

Key areas of development and vision include:

- 1. SilverRock** – A resort destination that will include: hotel, residential, retail, convention, recreation, and golf which will produce property, sales, and hotel tax revenue for years to come.
- 2. Old Town/Village La Quinta** – A retail/hospitality area of the community with expansion options currently under review. Opportunities include housing, jobs and sales tax revenue as well as increased retail and tourism related businesses in a pedestrian friendly, alternative transportation environment.
- 3. Vision Highway 111 Corridor Plan** – A plan that repurposes and transforms big box stores and businesses to a “retail-tainment” destination. This includes transportation options that will attract new experiences for consumers to our economy. This retail corridor derives 75% of the cities sales tax and is a critical area to retain and grow given online shopping trends and declining sales tax for cities.

Another element that is paramount to preserve and enhance in La Quinta is:

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.

14) What do you see as your city's or counties most pressing environmental concern? How would you work on this as an elected official?

La Quinta's most pressing environmental concern is Bighorn Sheep. Bighorn Sheep flock to our golf courses, country clubs and streets/residential neighborhoods to seek food and water. As a result, Fish and Game mandated that the City take action to protect the safety of the Bighorn Sheep. The mandate required the City to build a fence at the base of the mountains in order to prevent the Bighorn Sheep from entering "developed areas" in La Quinta. Unfortunately, the boundaries required by Fish and Game include PGA West, The Quarry, The Tradition - all privately owned, gated and HOA developments of which the City owns no land nor has jurisdiction over the land acquisition near the base of the mountains. The City has built a portion of the fence at the base of the city-owned golf course property at the amount of nearly \$1 million. The fence is extensive and expensive and we are working with the housing developments and the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission on a solution that meets the mandates in a cost-effective manner.

15) Have you signed any pledge or made any commitment that would constrain the free exercise of your judgment while in office? If so, please specify.

No, I have not signed any pledge or commitment that would constrain the free exercise of my judgment while I have served as a Council Member or while currently serving as Mayor.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. By signing below, you are acknowledging that you have answered all of the above questions honestly and to the best of your knowledge.

Candidate Signature:  Date: August 25, 2020
Linda Evans

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a candidate questionnaire for your consideration, endorsement, and potential donation to my mayoral campaign. And, thank you for the work that you do to provide housing for the residents in our community.

Linda