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***GREATER LAS CRUCES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
ELECTION 2023
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LAS CRUCES MAYORAL & COUNCIL CANDIDATES***

To inform our membership & business community, we invite you to complete this questionnaire below. Your completed questionnaire, along with your resume, will be emailed to our list serve, along with posting on our website (lascruces.org). **Please submit this completed questionnaire & photo to dmoore@lascruces.org no later than Thursday, October 19th.**

DISCLAIMER: The Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce does not endorse candidates, but provides our members materials & resources to make informed decisions. Additionally, we provide general election information on the municipal elections & encourage voter participation.



CANDIDATE NAME (as it appears on ballot): Eugenia (Gina) Montoya Ortega

PHONE: (575) 644-7863 EMAIL: Gina4Mayor24@gmail.com

Election/Candidate Website: N/A

Please circle or highlight the position of which you are a qualified candidate:

Mayor

Councilor District 1

Councilor District 2

Councilor District 4

Referencing the first 7 questions, we encourage you to present your "Plan of Action" in these areas.

1. Please identify the leadership qualities & experiences you will bring to this position.

Born and raised in Las Cruces I understand our people as LC is not a place it's people, people who have not been listened to. I have been blessed w/skills of listening, understanding/being financially responsible, budgets, public administration, empathy, decision making, communicating, leadership, HR..La Fiesta Bakery co-owner, Assessor, educational asst., cust. svc., AA Acct. Asst., Wife, Mother, Nana, Sister, person w/ desire and dedication to make a difference in the lives of all people.

2. Ensuring all voices are heard & considered can be daunting, what is your plan to actively engage citizens & businesses in the decision-making process for city policies & projects, while maintaining civility and decorum between all interested parties?

Actually listening to people when they attend city council meetings, giving them 100% of all council's attention, encouraging the public to communicate with myself and all council members. After listening to people we need to reach back out to them and see how we can work together and get the city moving in the right direction

3. Economic & business development, along with talent/workforce preparation, in Las Cruces is key to our continued growth & sustainability. Please give us your definition of "business friendly" & describe your economic development plan, including entrepreneurship.

"Business friendly" is a term I coined when I ran for Mayor for the first time back in 2015. The reason I started using this term was because when we (La Fiesta Bakery) was working on trying to get our business established and opened it took us almost two years to do so, and this was even with the building already in place as an empty shell just needing to have all of the inside completed. We would have our contractors do all that they needed to and then call for a Las Cruces city inspection (which takes time for them to come out). Inspector #1 would find issues that needed to be corrected, so now we have to have our contractors come back and correct issues found by inspector #1 (which once again takes time). After our contractors correcting the issues, we would call the city of Las Cruces once again for a re-inspection (which again took more time) and now inspector #2 comes out and now finds issues that inspector #1 didn't find (so now we have to call our contractors out again (which takes more time) to correct the new issues inspector #2 now found.

This to us became a major issue as we did not understand why inspector #1 & #2 were not on the same page, why the waste of our time and our money.

Mind you once again this is something I brought up in 2015, well here we are 2023 and the city of Las Cruces continues to not be "Business Friendly", rather than doing everything possible to assist a new business wanting to come into Las Cruces, they continue to derail the process costing a new business money and time to be wasted rather than being able to open and bringing in revenue for the city.

After many years of this same problem I would ensure that we streamline the situation so that anyone wanting to open up a business in Las Cruces can do this as easily as possible. The minimum wage situation has also affected the residents of Las Cruces (usually people under the age of 18) from being able to find a job as unfortunately businesses are not wanting to pay a first time employee top dollar as they learn the job.

4. Addressing homelessness is a complex issue. What strategies do you propose to provide support and resources for individuals experiencing homelessness while also addressing the concerns of residents and business owners?

Unfortunately many of the homeless choose to be homeless and we cannot force them into a home if they do not want one. We need to look at the city ordinances that allow the homeless to aggressively panhandle as they create a danger to us as well as them. Those who wish not to be homeless need to use the property that the city currently owns and utilize it, as the price of land/real estate is continually rising.

5. Over the past few years, we have experienced a tremendous growth in residential & commercial building. We often hear concerns over the amount of time it takes for permitting, inspection, etc. in order to reach occupancy. It has also been stated that many of the City's policies actually increase the cost of building, which unfortunately, is passed on to the consumer. What is your plan to balance the policies of the City with a timely process from beginning to occupancy?

We met with the Home Builders Association and learned that a home in Hobbs can be built 7 months faster than in Las Cruces, so we need to take a look at what Hobbs is doing that we are not so that we can streamline this process and assist the builders in getting the construction done sooner rather than later which again costs more for all involved.

6. Ensuring the safety of our residents and businesses is paramount. What strategies do you propose to address and reduce crime in Las Cruces, while also building trust between law enforcement and the community?

We need to invest in our youth as they are our future police officers, nurses, etc.... We need to offer city sponsored programs where they are able to participate in sports, music, dance, art, learning to be a police officer/nurse, etc... otherwise they will go to the programs that are currently free - crime, drugs, etc..

We need to ensure that our police officers are fully trained (by retired former police officers), fully funded.

We need to have our law enforcement offices participate in community policing (going into businesses/restaurants, etc.. in the areas they work, so that the public has opportunities to engage with them in a positive encounter not just a bad one.

And we need to encourage the general public to utilize the police non-emergency # 575-526-0795 when they see something that just doesn't look right, as many times this will prevent a crime from possibly happening (making us proactive not reactive).

7. Affordable housing is a concern for many residents and businesses. What steps do you plan to take to promote and facilitate the development of income-aligned housing in Las Cruces through your role on the Las Cruces City Council?

Once again working with the builders in assisting them with getting their projects built ASAP with the least amount of delay as possible, so that they can assist the city build housing on the land that the city currently owns.

Optional “just for fun” questions

- **If you could have any superpower for a day, what would it be and how would you use it to benefit the residents of Las Cruces?**

If I could have any superpower for a day I would want the superpower of providing miracles so that people who feel that there is no hope can see that yes there is always hope.

- **If you had the chance to invite any historical figure, living or dead, to dinner in Las Cruces, who would it be and why? What would you talk about and where would you take them in our city?**

If I had the chance to invite any historical figure to dinner I would invite GOD because with GOD all things are possible. I would want to talk about getting people to believe. I would take him to the schools as the kids/students are the future and need to know there is always hope, even when they might think there is not.

- **If you could choose a theme song to represent your vision for Las Cruces, what song would it be and why?**

Lean on Me by Bill Withers - Because I want all people of Las Cruces to know they can (depend) lean on me.