



**Delaware County Council Candidate Interview**  
**Jayne Young**

**1. Why are you running as a candidate for the Delaware County Council?**

I am currently in my third term as the Mayor of Lansdowne Borough. I have experienced firsthand what a successful government can accomplish and I want to take all I have learned to county government. There are 49 municipalities in Delaware County; some municipalities have more challenges than others. I believe county support can have a tremendous influence on the success of all these communities. County Government should be a participating partner with and not a bystander to local government.

**2. What are the most pressing issues facing the county and what are your plans to address them?**

My number one issue concerns economic revitalization in our struggling communities. Even in the more successful or prosperous towns there are problems with the loss of open space and poorly planned development. I am a strong proponent of re-development versus new development. I believe in farm land conservation and protecting open space. Towns and boroughs across the county are competing for residents. We all have our share of homes for sale and Delaware County is not immune to the foreclosure crisis facing this country. Even in Lansdowne where home prices are modest we have our share of empty homes. This has the unfortunate negative effect on property values across the borough. As long as Pennsylvania uses real estate value as the basis for tax rates it is vital that county and local government be mindful of development and re-development decisions that affect property value both commercial and residential. It's not enough to build new properties to increase rateable's. Re-development must also be encouraged and maintenance of existing infrastructure should be supported financially. Investment in infrastructure, roads, sewers, bridges, is a deterrent to blight. Absence of blight is attractive to investors of both commercial and residential properties.

**3. In terms of the 2012 county budget, how should the County Council address the issue of falling revenue and increased demand for services caused by the slow economy?**

My opinion is that there should be a greater partnership with the 49 municipalities. Problems are not exclusively municipal or county issues Often the problems facing Delaware County are shared and the better way to solve them is for all stakeholders to cooperate. Strong partnerships can have a positive impact on the finances of each municipality in the county. Here is an example of how cooperation could have helped all Delaware county communities: for years solid waste disposal was underwritten by the county for all municipalities. Legislation was written that mandates the use, by municipal governments, of the trash to steam plant. This was done to guarantee the tonnage of trash delivered to make sure the plant was profitable. Over time the cost of dealing with solid waste went up and recently the county made the decision to



discontinue their financial support. Now each municipality carries the burden of dealing with their own solid waste. This sounds fair in theory but the reality is that each town went from a \$500.00 yearly tipping fee to a budget line item of tens of thousands. So the fee structure changed but the legislation that mandates the use of the Trash to Steam plant remains. Each town is denied the opportunity to shop around for better tipping rates. This put a sizable burden on already financially stressed communities across the county. Municipal taxes went up substantially. Had the county assumed some of the burden and made the hard decision of raising their taxes the cost to individual tax payer would have benefitted by the economy of scale.

**4. Would you support property tax reform in Pennsylvania that gives greater authority to the commonwealth to mandate more regular county-wide tax assessments?**

When Delaware County mandated county wide reassessments they did so with a built in discount to previous year's rates. If the purpose of assessments is to manage local and county tax bases then regular real value assessments would benefit the county.

**5. REALTORS® are very knowledgeable about their communities and the real estate industry. As a member of the Council, how would you utilize this expertise? Would you consider appointing individuals recommended by our organization to real estate related boards and commissions at the county level?**

We do in Lansdowne. We have taken advantage of the local REALTORS. We have appointed them to our HARB, Historical Architectural Review Board and our Zoning Hearing Board. Neighborhood realtors are very active in Lansdowne and we value their input.

**6. Access to accurate real estate records is an important issue for our REALTOR® members. Would you support funding to the Recorder of Deeds and Assessment offices to ensure availability and accuracy of this information?**

Yes. Transparency is key in government. Anything managed with taxpayer dollars should be open and available to everyone.

**7. Suburban Philadelphia is currently one of the fastest growing regions in Pennsylvania, how do you plan to manage projected population shifts at the county level? How does housing fit into this plan?**

Major train and bus routes exit throughout the county. These provide an opportunity for re-development specific to transit called Transit Oriented Design. TOD has become more and more popular as the cost of car travel has increased. In Lansdowne this has been a significant tool used for revitalization. The Multi Municipal Baltimore Ave Project, which includes Clifton Heights, Upper Darby, Lansdowne, East Lansdowne, Yeadon and Philadelphia, includes TOD as a design model to encourage pedestrian travel. Having pedestrian friendly roads and a town center is a marketing selling point. This model was created for developers interested in working on projects in the inner ring suburbs. Planned revitalization can be very successful.



Redevelopment is about more than development for development's sake. Economic revitalization should measure assets in the community and add or improve them: mixed housing, parks, access to transit, shopping, schools are all building blocks for successful communities. I am involved in the First Suburbs Project, and these are some ideas that are in line with that group.

**8. Have you been endorsed by any political party or organization?**

Sierra Club, Pennsylvania State Education Association PSEA, Gov. Ed Rendell, Sen. Anthony Williams.

**9. Why should a REALTOR® vote for you?**

During my time as Mayor I have taken time to learn things about revitalization and development. I have not just looked at my borough I have educated myself about my whole region. I have also taken every opportunity to work on multi municipal projects. My county view is broader for that experience. I served two terms as a member of the Governor's Local Government Advisory Board, which took a local voice to Harrisburg. My time has been well spent as a member of the 1<sup>st</sup> Suburbs. It has been important work cooperating with towns and boroughs across the county on ways to affect positive change. This model of cooperation should be emulated by the county government. I believe I bring a level of experience to this job that will make me a valuable member of Delaware County's Council.