

Questions for Pittsburgh City Council District candidates:

1. HUMANE ACTION Pittsburgh is seeking to shape Pittsburgh into ‘America’s Model Humane City’. This means participating in an open dialogue on animal protection, working to end animal cruelty for all animals and passing protective legislation where needed.

What are your plans to protect animals and can you support our goals to make Pittsburgh America’s Model Humane City?

Answer:

*I support Humane Action Pittsburgh’s goal of making Pittsburgh “America’s Model Humane City,” and will support common-sense, locally-focused legislation, utilizing the model used in our 2015 ordinance banning puppy mills, to protect all animals from abuse.*

2. The resilience strategy “ONEPgh” calls for a 50% reduction of the meat consumed in our city by 2030. This is in keeping with the United Nations recommendation to combat climate change, which states: The #1 corrective action is to greatly reduce or give up meat entirely. This is more impactful to the environment than discontinuing the use of cars and airplanes altogether.

What are your plans to protect animals and the environment through meat reduction?

Answer:

*In 2017, I was proud to take the “Meatless Mondays” pledge, along with other Council colleagues, as a part of our city’s “Live Well Pittsburgh” Program. This commitment to eliminate meat from at least one day’s worth of weekly meals was a firm first step on the path to meeting ONEPGH’s aggressive goal of a 50% reduction in meat consumption by 2030. I will continue to support this necessary program and will encourage the development of other compassionate living initiatives that promote public awareness of healthy, sustainable, and humane dietary choices.*

3. Plastic pollution is a growing problem worldwide, and in the city of Pittsburgh. HAP’s “no plastic please” campaign works to end single-use plastic wherever possible. We also encourage people to examine their dietary choices as approximately half of the plastic in the ocean is from commercial fishing.

What are your plans to reduce or eliminate plastic use in the City of Pittsburgh?

*Moving forward, we must be intentional regarding the reduction of single-use plastics within city limits. While the complete elimination of these plastics may be our ultimate goal, we should work to develop incremental objectives and intermediary benchmarks along the way to measure success.*

*One possibility would include working with private businesses to develop incentivizing programs designed to reduce plastic consumption. These initiatives could even be spearheaded in public buildings like the City-County Building itself, where strategies aimed at - for example - utilizing sustainable utensils, straws, and other single-use materials could be piloted before introduction city-wide.*

Answer:

4. Our city has one of the worst wildlife trapping policies, meaning highest kill rate, for a city of our size in the United States. Residents have become used to calling Animal Care & Control to trap groundhogs, raccoons and skunks which must then be euthanized at tax payer expense. For the most part, trapping is a temporary solution as other animals will fill the void, leading a cycle of trapping and killing.

Will you prioritize an education campaign for Pittsburgh residents that separates wildlife myth from reality and support a policy change to reduce the amount of needless trapping?

Answer:

*I would recommend a public education campaign that encourages humane animal care and control procedures and focuses on the alarming facts surrounding live-trapping and subsequent animal mortality rates. I would also support city ordinance that prioritizes safe and humane responses to wildlife concerns rather than catch-all trapping.*

5. The Pittsburgh Zoo is currently ranked the #2 Worst Zoo in the County for elephants. They are in violation of their lease with the City of Pittsburgh for failing to maintain AZA accreditation. Further, no satisfactory answer has been received from the Zoo or the City as to whether the Zoo is following city law, which bans the use of bullhooks and other instruments of pain on elephants.

What are your plans to ensure the Pittsburgh Zoo follows city law and regains their AZA accreditation?

Answer:

*I was proud to vote in favor of City Council's 2017 ordinance to ban the use of bullhooks, bats, and other weapons on elephants. I stand by that measure and will work to ensure the Pittsburgh Zoo follows not only that law but all other applicable statutes.*

6. Please let our members know what you have done in the past to protect animals.

*As a dog owner, I've always considered myself a strong advocate for the humane treatment and protection of all animals. I've been pleased to support City Council's ban on bullhooks as a means of controlling elephants in the Pittsburgh Zoo or with visiting circuses, was proud to pass 2015 legislation cracking down on area puppy mills, and have stood against the development of the bald eagle habitat in Hays Woods.*