



A **non-partisan** resource to give Nebraska voters the **information they need** to make an informed decision when voting. A non-edited opportunity for candidates to state their position **in their own words**, online for **free**.

LINCOLN CITY COUNCIL – District 1

Cyndi Lamm

Party: Republican

Website:

<https://www.facebook.com/cyndiforthecity> also www.cyndiforthecity.com

Meg Mikolajczyk

Party: Democrat

Website:

<https://www.facebook.com/megforcouncil>, also <http://www.megforcouncil.com>

Note: Order of responses is generally alphabetical, but is changed sometimes for better use of space.

Questions Key:

Contact Information
Biographical
Motivation/Qualifications
Roads
Development Taxes
Property taxes

Gambling-city
Police
Accountability
Ordinances
Electric power
Sustainable Development

Eminent Domain
Abortion-City
Personal story
Decision making
Anything else

(Contact Information) - Details of when we inputted the candidate's responses, including attempts to establish contact and other communication.

Cyndi Lamm Tue, 17 Mar 2015, trying for Friday. Reminder call mid-week, 3-28-15, 2pm, left phone message at work number. Answers copied from email response received Sat 3/28/15 10:20pm

Meg Mikolajczyk Facebook messages back and forth 3/17, 3/22, 3/25, 3/28/15. Answers copied from Facebook message received 3-28-15, 9:12pm.

(Biographical) - Please include biographical information , e.g. family members, church affiliation, employment, etc. you consider important for voters to know and/or reference your website. (continued next page)

Cyndi Lamm My name is Cyndi Lamm and I am running for City Council for the Northeast District (District 1) in Lincoln.
My husband Tim Lamm and I will be married 36 years in May. We have lived in Northeast Lincoln for over 15 years.
I have 2 grown children, 8 grandchildren; with 7 of 8 being raised in Northeast Lincoln. We attend church at Christ's Place Church. I am an attorney in solo practice. My campaign has a Facebook page and a web address: www.cyndiforthecity.com

(Biographical) - Please include biographical information , e.g. family members, church affiliation, employment, etc. you consider important for voters to know and/or reference your website. (continued from previous page)

**Meg
Mikolajczyk**

I am an advocate by nature and a lawyer by trade. I am happiest and at my best when working to make positive change in my community, helping give strong voice to underrepresented groups, and exchanging ideas with diverse leaders and groups to ensure creative and inclusive problem solving strategies are used. Bringing this skill set and passion to the City Council motivates me to run in this contested race. The only reason to run is to be a good public servant – not to gain political accolades for a future race or win favor with certain other interests. I want to be a good public servant.

Doug Emery, like the leaders who served before him, was and will continue to be a strong advocate for the District. I have worked with Councilman Emery when we were board members for Community Action Partnership together and would want to emulate his leadership style while on the Council. I know the work he has done to make sure our part of town was well represented and got what it needed – he was dedicated to keeping our libraries and pools open, ensuring our streets and sidewalks were fixed, and got funding for other items needing attention in the District. I want to continue these efforts.

I love Northeast Lincoln. I moved here several years ago when I became a Nebraskan; it is the first place I independently called “home” and is where I truly grew up. My husband and I purchased our home near East Campus two years ago to be in the area of town I love most and to raise our family. We are fully committed and invested in this area. We are raising his six-year-old daughter here and are eagerly anticipating the arrival of our first daughter in August. We want to ensure the success of the District and the City as a whole for our children’s future.

My husband Aaron and I both volunteer time at North Star High School in our district because we are both passionate about education and the success of young people in our community. Prior to this, I coached at Lincoln Lutheran and volunteered as a Big Sister with the Big Brothers Big Sisters program in Havelock.

I learned how to be a lawyer while clerking for two years at a firm in Havelock. My entire life happens in University Place, from business meetings to Christmas shopping. We frequent the Bethany and Anderson Library branches, work out at the Northeast YMCA, enjoy cheering on the Rockets, utilize the MoPac and Mahoney trails, and share the values of our neighbors. This is my home and I want to continue to ensure strong and independent leadership for my home and for my neighbors on the Council.

(Motivation/Qualifications) - What has motivated you to seek this office? What do you hope to accomplish? What three qualifications do you bring to this office? . (continued next page)

Cyndi Lamm I believe in Northeast Lincoln and feel passionately that it needs an experienced representative who will view each decision through the lens of what is best for the residents and businesses in the area. Northeast Lincoln has an amazing mix of multi-generation residents and young families who find homeownership in Northeast Lincoln affordable. It is imperative that Northeast Lincoln’s next City Council member be able to advocate for the needs of both. I am the person qualified to do that.

Becoming the representative for Northeast Lincoln is not about what I want to accomplish or my agenda. It is Not about knowing how city government works—rather, it is about being able to advocate for how the residents and businesses of Northeast Lincoln WANT and NEED city government to work in order for those residents and businesses to realize their goals and maximize their opportunities.

My three most important qualifications center on Experience:

Experience in Life – I was a homeless teenage drop out who knows about hard work, personal responsibility, and reaching for dreams. Through my climb out of homelessness to attend college and law school, I experienced times of extreme financial difficulty and times with too much month at the end of the money, but I later pursued an education second to none right here in Lincoln. I am a first generation college graduate-my mother did factory work, even working at Russell Stover’s for a time while I was very young. My father did concrete work, owned his own business for a while, and worked in corrections here in Lincoln for the last 20 years or so of his life. I know the challenges and the opportunities available to everyone who lives here in Lincoln.

Experience in Leadership – I currently sit on the People’s City Mission Board and have served in organizational and leadership capacity with scouting, with my church, and with independent organizations that serve families, individuals, and organizations. I have stood toe to toe with business owners, professionals, and lay persons to advocate for and organize programs and resources.

Experience in the Law – How laws are made, interpreted, and their impact on individuals and businesses. I am an attorney and past Legislative Aide and Law Clerk to the Nebraska Supreme Court

Meg Mikolajczyk First, the things I most want to accomplish are specific to my District, as this is a District race for a seat representing only 25% of the City. More generally, I would like to see the City continue to reinvest in our core neighborhoods and work to curb the current rate of sprawl, focus on bringing impact fees to their appropriate level (so we stop having our oldest neighborhoods, often in my district, subsidize new development elsewhere), add additional public safety personnel and equipment to meet the demands of the City, and implement sustainable practices, policies and instrumentalities wherever possible, both because it is good for the earth and because it makes economic sense.

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(Motivation/Qualifications) - What has motivated you to seek this office? What do you hope to accomplish? What three qualifications do you bring to this office? . (continued from previous page and continued next page)

Meg Mikolajczyk

DISTRICT SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

1. I want to see the intersections of Cornhusker/33rd Street/Adams/35th Street reconstructed to address the congestion issues caused by the lack of bypass for the railroad tracks, like we have at the 48th and Cornhusker intersection. This was promised to my district long before the South Beltway was an idea with traction. The intersection is presently not a reliable means of crossing or getting on/off Cornhusker highway. There are other similar infrastructure goals I have for the City and my district specifically. Several arterials, including 48th street from Cornhusker to O Street, need more extensive work than pothole repairs; we need to repave and completely repave the road with quality materials so we are not constantly repairing potholes every winter.
2. Northeast Lincoln needs to expand, reinvest in and/or potentially add more square footage to the libraries presently within the district. The potential to partner with the YMCA or a local school exists and should be explored. I want to be part of that effort. Libraries are not just where people check out books – they are where people come to meet and discuss ideas, kids spend their after school hours studying and staying out of trouble, low income families access the internet and apply for jobs, community events are celebrated, etc. etc. The YMCA in Northeast Lincoln, also in need of reinvestment and expansion, would make an interesting and exciting partner for this project. The Northeast YMCA lacks amenities present in the other YMCAs around town. Promotion of health and fitness for my district is important and updating our YMCA to be equal to the others in the City is important.
3. Fixing public transportation in this city seems like an insurmountable task, but I have been up for this challenge since I ran two years ago for the Council. We continue to be a city proud of its achievements, its rise to notoriety. We cannot continue to grow and succeed if we do not fix public transportation, particularly in my district. When Hy-Vee vacated University Place earlier this winter, University Place neighborhood confronted a food desert. Many senior citizens and students relied on that store to purchase nutritious food, often because these individuals lack reliable transportation. Without quality, easy-to-use public transportation, many of my constituents will be relegated to purchase food from gas stations or the Walgreens in the area. Public transportation makes sense to ensure all people in our city, regardless of income level, have maximized employment and educational opportunities. It is also a sustainable means for people to traverse the city and also helps relieve congestion on main roads. (See point #1).

I am qualified for this position because I am a lawyer; I am highly trained and skilled in working with diverse, and often adverse, parties and stakeholders to help solve challenging problems with solutions that meet the needs of everyone. I have experience working on some of the most challenging legal problems the state of Nebraska has faced in recent years; these issues were complex, often involving technicalities and nuances that required extensive research, and were often controversial. I am comfortable working with the law and finding ways to improve it.

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(Motivation/Qualifications) - What has motivated you to seek this office? What do you hope to accomplish? What three qualifications do you bring to this office? . (continued from previous page)

Meg Mikolajczyk As an involved community leader and homeowner, I am also the most qualified because I am in touch with and passionate about my district. I am fully invested in the district I will serve, particularly because I am raising my family here and the future success of the city directly impacts my kids' future successes.

I am action oriented and have real goals I want to accomplish. I have a working relationship with nearly every current member of the council and am confident I will be able to work with the various stake holders in Lincoln to make positive change for my district and the city.

(Roads) – Discuss your view on the Bypass potential. If you favor it, say why and what you would recommend for paying for it. If you are against it, what would you recommend for traffic control?? (continued next page)

Cyndi Lamm I support seeing the South Beltway Project completed as soon as possible and the East Beltway considered. The conflict between interstate traffic and local travel increasingly impacts road safety. The number one role of government is the safety and protection of its citizens and the purpose of Beltway projects is to reduce conflict between interstate traffic and local travel to achieve that purpose. The beltway was put on hold for a number of years due to funding concerns under the Build Nebraska Act. Now that the project potential has been reopened, we should re-visit priorities in advancing the project.

Meg Mikolajczyk I am not sure what this question is asking – if it is referring to the potential for the South Beltway, I support the South Beltway if and when the intersections of Cornhusker Hwy, Adams Street, 33rd Street and 35th Street are redesigned or addressed in some other fashion that remedies the traffic and safety problems currently plaguing that area. That intersection has been a problem in my district for quite some time and the district was promised a solution a long time ago. Once we get that traffic problem fixed, we certainly can and will support the South Beltway.

(Development Taxes) – What ideas do you have for pursuing development without increasing taxes? On balance, do you perceive tax increment financing net positive or net negative for Lincoln? Describe.

Cyndi Lamm Economic development that attracts higher paying jobs to the Lincoln market can effectively expand the tax base through business profits and added employees, thus accomplishing growth without increasing taxes. We need to be creative in working with city and business leaders to accomplish this type of growth. On balance, tax increment financing is a net positive for the residents if the process is utilized properly and with the residents themselves in mind. The process should be more transparent so that city residents know how the process works, what projects are being considered and/or implemented, and how each project will bring a benefit to the local community, both short term, and long term.

Meg Mikolajczyk I appreciate the need to incentivize redevelopment and reinvestment in core neighborhoods and support TIF projects that truly rehabilitate a blighted area. I would like to focus more on core neighborhood TIF projects and less so on the outer area projects on the edges of the city. Transparency and thoughtfulness in taking on TIF projects is crucial to their success. I will encourage incentivizing smart reinvestment into the core of our city.

(Property taxes) - The overwhelming sentiment during the governor’s race was that property taxes in Nebraska are too high. Yet there is little to nothing a governor or the state can do about high property taxes. Do you think the office you are running for could manage a property tax cut? If so, what items?

Cyndi Lamm Property taxes are an appropriate concern of homeowners and business owners in Lincoln. The city budget consists of only a small percentage of those taxes; however, I believe city government can keep those taxes in check by 1) doing a better job of using taxpayer dollars it already receives, 2) doing a better job of properly prioritizing what the CITIZENS need and want; and 3) planning for growth that has a net increase in the tax base so that as the need for services increase, there are more taxpayers to bear the burden without raising taxes on those

Meg Mikolajczyk No.
Is Lincoln currently able to pay for all of its infrastructure needs? Are we currently operating a fire department with enough staffing to meet OSHA standards? Is public transportation available to people in the community during the evening hours so that second or third shift individuals are able to get to and from their jobs without vehicles, or carless families are able to fulfill errands like grocery shopping? Is the city of Lincoln able to adequately expand the library system in Northeast Lincoln to bring it up to the square footage of library space the other parts of the city possess? Are we able to fully fund our police or fire department pension funds? Until the answers to these questions are “yes”, we can’t discuss cutting taxes.

(Gambling-city) – Discuss the pros and cons of government having more revenue from gambling.

Cyndi Lamm I am opposed to expanded gambling. I understand the desire of many to reap revenue from gambling profits but am concerned because that the revenue is provided by those least able to actually afford to gamble and am further concerned about the effect gambling has on those with a propensity to gambling addictions.

Meg Mikolajczyk Revenue from gambling is not as high as people anticipate, which is a drawback.
My district has a great opportunity that was scrapped in favor of a similar idea now going into effect in south Lincoln; my district My district hoped a horseracing track would be placed in the Northeast corner of the district near the Lancaster County Event Center. We lost an opportunity to generate revenue for local businesses and positively grow our part of town because this project was reprioritized south of O Street. We need to prioritize ways to stimulate the economies and bring new opportunities to all parts of town, particularly my district.

(Ordinances) – What city ordinances would you like to change? What should the city do about the sexual orientation ordinance the people overturned with a referendum in 2012?

Cyndi Lamm Ambiguously worded and/or outdated ordinances should be changed or eliminated. For instance, there is no longer a need to “protect” downtown Lincoln with the ordinance prohibiting multi-plex theatres outside of the downtown area. The sexual orientation ordinance the people overturned with a referendum in 2012 should either be put to a vote of the people or be withdrawn by the city council as soon as possible.

Meg Mikolajczyk I would like to see the anti-discrimination ordinance be put on the ballot. I think the people of Lincoln can make this decision and will ultimately support the ordinance. The City of Lincoln has lost opportunities for job growth and development by not having ordinances in place that protect workers; businesses are leery of opening additional branches or relocating to our city when their workers may be discriminated against in employment and housing.

(Police) – Is the police force adequate? If not, what would you recommend to ensure that there is complete police protection?

Cyndi Lamm No. We need more law enforcement officers on the streets of Lincoln. The number one responsibility of government is safety and protection of the citizens. As Lincoln grows, the need for law enforcement presence also grows. An increased gang presence is troubling and heralds the need for increased law enforcement, for protection both reactive and proactive. Although reported figures show a lower crime rate in the city, those figures do not include drug crimes. Drug use often leads to theft and property crimes, and sometimes violence. We must have a force adequate to deal with the growing problems a growing city may encounter.

The city should develop a plan to add to the police force and ensure a safe and healthy city. City government must be more efficient with the taxpayer dollars it has and properly prioritize for the costs necessary to keep the citizens safe.

Meg Mikolajczyk Crime is presently at an all time low in Lincoln. We added two new police officers to the forces last year. Public safety is a top priority for me, but until I see real data evidencing a greater need for more officers, and where we need them and for what purposes, I cannot support adding more staffing to the forces when our budget cannot support it and the proponents of adding more officers have not offered a realistic and reasonable solution for how the city will sustain the additional budgetary burden.

We need to address staffing needs for our Fire and Rescue folks – they have not had an additional staffer added in almost 20 years and the city has grown enormously in that time.

(Accountability) – What would you recommend for measures of accountability and transparency in city government? Please be specific and list examples.

Cyndi Lamm As a city council member, I will be accountable to every citizen for the positions I take and for the oversight of city issues for which the council is responsible. As I have done during my candidacy, I will have an open door policy, respond directly to residents, and work to expand access by the citizens. In addition, for decades the council member representing Northeast Lincoln has held a monthly meeting at the Anderson Library. I will continue to hold that meeting, which enables citizens to voice concerns and ask questions about what their city government is doing. I will work with Neighborhood Associations throughout the district to increase attendance by representatives of other community members. I also intend to periodically attend each Neighborhood and Business Association meeting in Northeast Lincoln with the same purpose in mind.

As for city government itself, I would like to see citizens have online access to information showing where each taxpayer dollar is actually spent and have input into new city government positions being considered and the proposed purpose and pay of those positions.

Meg Mikolajczyk [not answered]

(Electric power) – Other communities in the state have an elected board for the power utilities. Do you oppose or support Lincoln continuing with a mayor-appointed board? Why?

Cyndi Lamm The mayor-appointed board requires city council approval. As long as there is transparency in the process and the voice of the citizens is given proper consideration, the board provides an efficient and cost-effective process for Lincoln at this stage of growth .

Meg Mikolajczyk I support Lincoln continuing with a mayor-appointed board. People with real expertise and diversity may be selected for appointment and are able to make decisions without feeling political pressure from those who elected them. Keeping politics out of our public power as much as possible and making sure our board members have some freedom to make thoughtful decisions without consideration of running for reelection are all reasons I support continuing this approach.

(Sustainable Development) – Officially Lincoln has dropped its association with ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives.) Do you agree or disagree with that decision? Should initiatives begun under that former authority be maintained or discontinued? (continued next page)

Cyndi Lamm I support discontinuing the association in favor of the sovereignty of the city and direction of its citizens. As with any initiatives developed under the authority of outside influences, I believe periodic audit of long-term plans is warranted to evaluate the relevance of the initiatives and the will of the local community in order to determine whether the plans should be maintained, modified, or discontinued.

Meg Mikolajczyk We cannot succeed as neighborhoods, business owners, or a city if we are not trying to live sustainably. Green policies are not just good for our future; they make economic sense as well. While I respect the rights of property owners and, as a property owner want some autonomy to make decisions without too much government intervention and regulation, I am also cognizant that people act in self-interest and not necessarily for the greater good. ICLEI helped ensure people were making wiser long-term choices for the future of our city and our children. I support decision-making that looks at the long term effects on our environment and seeks to be as sustainable and low (zero) carbon as possible.

(Eminent Domain) - Describe your thinking on eminent domain and private property rights

Cyndi Lamm I strongly support the right of citizens to acquire and own private property. Eminent domain is available to government only where it is necessary for a great public good. In those instances where Eminent Domain may be appropriate, the intrusion should be as minimally invasive to the property owner’s rights as possible and the property owner should be fully informed about the necessity of the intended use.

Meg Mikolajczyk I support the City’s recently enacted problem property ordinances and heightened penalties, which includes the right to use eminent domain in the most dire of situations.

(Abortion-city) - Even though many voters would like to know your personal position on the abortion issue, for this race, would you support the city funding Planned Parenthood?

Cyndi Lamm No.

Meg Mikolajczyk I do not have enough information to answer this question. In what capacity is the City funding Planned Parenthood? How much money is being used? Are moneys from other services being cut? Without these answers, I cannot answer this question.

(Personal story) - Please briefly describe a situation where you had to stand alone for what you thought was right when the momentum was pushing the other way. What was the result? (continued next page)

Cyndi Lamm I have had the privilege of being part of a number of event organizational committees. There was one event where the influence of a single event participant began to strongly influence a change in the committee’s planning as a whole. It was my opinion that the change was inconsistent with the character of the organization’s focus and standing in the community. I voiced my opposition and invited open discussion of the matter among the now somewhat tense group. It became apparent that, although I seemed to stand alone in the beginning, there were others that shared my concerns but were hesitant to voice those concerns. As a group, we re-visited the basic tenets of the organization and formulated agreed upon, worthwhile goals, after which we set about implementing all ideas with those goals in mind. The result was a well-planned, successful event that was well received by the organization and by the community participants.

(Personal story) - Please briefly describe a situation where you had to stand alone for what you thought was right when the momentum was pushing the other way. What was the result? (continued from previous page)

Meg Mikolajczyk

My husband had just started his cancer treatment and had undergone a lumpectomy. He was not feeling well and was convinced it was simply the flu. I watched his fever continue to soar and encouraged him to go get checked by his general care doctor. I was worried he had an infection at the surgical site.

At the doctor's office they tried to tell my husband it was likely just the flu or a stomach bug. I persisted that he needed to be seen and that it was not the flu. A flu test was performed and came back negative. I insisted that the doctor look at the surgical site, which was hot to the touch. My husband was not feeling well enough to advocate for himself by this point and the doctor had not known about the surgical wound. Quickly after examining the wound, they agreed that Aaron had a major infection; we were sent to the hospital for immediate treatment.

Upon arriving at the hospital, we were told that Aaron would have to wait to receive any medication, including Tylenol, until a doctor came and they could not tell us when a doctor would be by. At this point, Aaron's fever had spiked to 104. I paged nurses and roamed the halls requesting something be done immediately. A nurse did come and provided some basic pain medications. Despite being in a hospital full of surgeons, we were told that the infection could not be cleaned out until about 17 hours later since our surgeon would need to be the one to reopen the wound. The policy made no sense given the circumstances. Aaron was in pain and his symptoms were progressively getting worse. I advocated for him to the nurses, called our oncologist and the oncology nurse and had them help me get our surgeon on the phone. I called our surgeon myself as well, feeling a little guilty for interrupting his evening but knowing I had to try to get help for my husband. I persisted with the hospital staff and our team of health care professionals and was able to reach our surgeon who came to perform the infection clean out that evening.

I tell you this example because it illustrates that when the odds are against me, or someone I am advocating for, I continue to push and fight until that person gets what they need and are taken care of. I look forward to bringing my tenacity to the Council and advocating for Northeast Lincoln. I do not give up.

(Decision making) - To whom/what will you go for counsel in decision-making?
(continued next page)

Cyndi Lamm

In Lincoln we have a wealth of knowledgeable citizens, business and community leaders, developers, builders, and educators. I intend to seek counsel from the citizens always, and recognizing that I may not always have the knowledge needed on a certain issue, I will do research and seek counsel from individuals in these other areas as the need arises.

(Decision making) - To whom/what will you go for counsel in decision-making? continued from previous page)

Meg Mikolajczyk First and foremost, the people that I represent – I will be available to them, will encourage public dialogues on topics of interest to the community, and promise to continue the Anderson Library monthly meetings to ensure people have full access to me. This position is about representing a district – you cannot effectively represent that district if you don’t meet with the people living in it regularly.

I have an incredible brain trust and group of mentors I will lean on when making decisions and researching policy topics. These include, but are not limited to: Kathy Danek, School Board Member; Katie McLeese Stephenson, School Board Member; Barb Baier, School Board Member; Don Mayhew, School Board Member; Marian Price, Former State Senator and School Board Member; Mary Harding, NPPD Board; Jan Gauger, Former County Commissioner; Patte Newman, Former City Council member; Margrethe Ahlschewede, Former City Council member; Shawn Ryba, Neighborworks; Chris Callahan, IBEW; Doug Evans, Former School Board; Lloyd Hinkley, businessman and former City Council member; Dave Domina, Former US Senate Candidate and Lawyer; Mike Nolan, Former City Manager of Norfolk; Harland Johnson, Rotary; Abby Swatsworth, Centerpointe; Cinnamon Dokken, entrepreneur; Brian Wilson, Engineer; Russell Miller, community member. This list is by no means exhaustive but is meant to illustrate the variety of individuals I will seek out to make sure I get as many perspectives on issues as possible before making my decisions.

(Anything Else) Declare anything else you want voters to know about you.

Cyndi Lamm Hard work and commitment has been the hallmark of my journey from homeless high school drop out to small business owner. My journey has been at times extremely difficult but I have learned and held onto the concepts of personal responsibility, creativity, commitment, and opportunity.

I share the values of my friends and neighbors in Northeast Lincoln and know that the area has the potential of a bright and exciting future that will be the pride of all of Lincoln. There is a multi-generational base of families in Northeast Lincoln, along with an influx of young families. Together they form a vibrant community deserving of strong economic development, high paying jobs, and fun, safe neighborhoods. My goal is to help lead Northeast Lincoln in this direction once elected to represent the district on the City Council. My life journey has prepared me for a time such as this.

Meg Mikolajczyk I would love to earn your votes April 7 and again on May 5!