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“Townhall style government – that is what we had here tonight”

CINCINNATI, OH – That was one participant’s summary of the September 14, 2017 Conversations with Candidates event at the Community Action Agency on conversation with eighteen of the 23 candidates who are running for Cincinnati City Council this November.

While there are many forums and opportunities to hear from candidates, Conversations with Candidates offered a unique experience. Candidates and citizens sat together in small circles having twenty minute conversations about their visions for a better Cincinnati. Over the course of the night, citizens had personal interactions with nine to twelve candidates.

“This was such a great format. I really felt empowered here to be part of the conversation, instead of just someone that the candidate was talking to. I could see how candidates are just people too” was how one community participant described her experience. Another noted she was surprised to hear honest and appreciative agreement between candidates.

The evening started with candidates being introduced and naming their political role models--ranging from Jerry Springer, to Martin Luther King, David Crowley and others. Then, in small groups, candidates and citizens were asked to discuss: “What do great neighborhoods look like?” and “What does good government look like?” They were also asked to address the tradeoffs that would be required to get there. Facilitators in each group guided the conversation to ensure everyone had chances to ask questions, offer feedback, and participate meaningfully.

If you want to attend a session like this, you haven’t missed your only chance. There will be another forum Saturday, October 7th from 9:00 to 11:00 at the American Red Cross, 2111 Dana Ave, Evanston. The topics at this forum will be: Race, Inclusion, Equity; and Economic Development, Jobs, and Transportation. Child care and refreshments will be offered.

On Thursday, October 12th from 5:30-8:30 another interactive forum being held at Niehoff Urban Design Studio, 2728 Vine St., Corryville, will engage candidates in discussion with area experts and citizens to solve hypothetical policy scenarios. The forum is sponsored by the Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council and Interact for Health. It will include a light refreshments.

“These forums were designed to give citizens an opportunity to meet and learn from the candidates and see on a more personal level how they think about and approach policy issues.” Said Jeff Stec, a representative of Cincinnatus and the MC for the evening. “We feel these are important events to our electoral process because they encourage deeper dialogue and citizen engagement with the candidates.”

The forums are part of a larger series of electoral events that have been organized and cross-promoted by a collaborative of non-partisan civic organization in Cincinnati, including League of Women Voters, Woman’s City Club, Urban League, Cincinnatus Association, Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council, Urban Appalachian Community Coalition, Citizens for Civic Renewal and others. For more information on candidate discussion forums, and other events this electoral season, see http://lwvcincinnati.org/2017Election.html or contact rookwoodcivic@gmail.com.

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