

# **Greater Denton/Wise County Association of REALTORS®**

February 27, 2023

Dear Ms. Johnson,

On behalf of Texas REALTORS® and the Greater Denton/Wise County Association of REALTORS®, I commend you for seeking public office.

If you would like to be considered for Texas REALTORS® and TREPAC (Texas Association of REALTORS® Political Action Committee) support, please complete the Texas REALTORS® candidate questionnaire by **Friday, March 10<sup>th</sup>**.

If you do not return your questionnaire by this date, we will assume you do not want to be considered for TREPAC support.

This questionnaire serves as your introduction to our group, so answer all questions as you would in person, best reflecting your position on the issues. Your answers remain private, as all volunteers must sign a confidentiality agreement prior to reviewing candidate questionnaires.

The Greater Denton/Wise County Association of REALTORS® would also like to meet with you for an in-person interview. We would like to meet with you **Friday, March 17<sup>th</sup>** at 3805 W. University Dr. Denton at 9:30 -9:55 a.m.

After interviewing all candidates, the interview panel submits recommendations to the Greater Denton/Wise County Association of REALTORS® Board of Directors for approval. That board's decision will be sent to Texas REALTORS® and TREPAC Trustees for official consideration.

You will be notified as soon as the state association makes its final decisions.

We look forward to meeting you and working with you to ensure Texas remains a great place to buy, sell, and lease real estate.

Sincerely,

*Lisa McEntire*  
*Governmental Affairs Chair*  
[lisamcrealty@gmail.com](mailto:lisamcrealty@gmail.com)  
940.230.0780

# Greater Denton/Wise County Association of REALTORS® City Council Candidate Questionnaire

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On behalf of more than 1300 members of the Greater Denton/Wise County Association of REALTORS®, we commend you for seeking office and appreciate you taking time to complete this questionnaire.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to establish an issue-based dialog between you and your local REALTOR® partners, as well as our clients who buy and sell real estate in our community.

Your responses to the questionnaire will not be made public, nor are they a litmus test for campaign support.

**The Greater Denton/Wise County Association of REALTORS® appreciates your attention to this candidate questionnaire and is available to answer any questions. Feel free to contact us at 940-387-8212 or Nancy@gdwcar.com**

**We also work in strong partnership with the Texas REALTORS®, our state-level professional association. You may contact the Texas REALTORS® Governmental Affairs Department at 800-873-9155.**

**Candidate Information**

Name of candidate: Birdia Johnson

Office sought: District 1 City Council

Political party (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: 1212 autumn oak dr

Phone number: 940-735-6311 Mobile number: N/A

Email address: birdiajohnson@gmail.com

Website: N/A

Facebook: Birdia Johnson for Denton City Council

Twitter: N/A

Why are you running for office?  
In order to be a part of the creation of a greater and safer Denton.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are your three top priority issues?

1) For Denton to be safe and clean as we grow

2) Government transparency

3) To maintain as low a tax rate as possible

Briefly describe any current or previous community engagement or service you have done.

I am a community leader as a housing commissioner, a member of the Juneteenth Committee  
a volunteer for Hope kitchen, ALH senior citizen volunteer

**Campaign Information**

How much do you expect to spend in this race? \$25,000

How much have you raised so far? \$600

Campaign manager: Robert Rodriguez

Campaign treasurer: Toya Stevenson

Campaign consultant(s): Robert Rodriguez

Professional fundraiser: N/A

**Campaign Information, cont.**

Please briefly describe your plan to win this election, including your plans for fundraising, communicating, and identifying/turning out your voters.

To engage in neighborhood meetings, interact with community leaders, and accumulate donations from organizations, groups, and constituents.

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What is your prior professional or community engagement with local REALTORS®?

I have not had any engagements with any realtors, although, local realtors were very instrumental in my first election as Council woman.

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If the <Local Association> decides to support your campaign, would you accept funds from our Texas Association of REALTORS® Political Action Committee (TREPAC)?

Answer:     Yes             No

Additional Comments:

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REALTORS® are committed to our communities, our clients, and the public. We work to ensure private property rights are protected, and that Texans can buy, sell, lease, and enjoy real property. To accomplish those goals, we monitor and advocate on a wide variety of local, state, and federal policy issues. The following questions seek to understand your position as a candidate and potential lawmaker on issues that will impact housing and real estate within your jurisdiction.

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### **Issue: Rental Registration**

**Background:** Several cities across Texas have undertaken excessively restrictive measures on rental property in their communities in an effort to monitor landlords and generate local fee-driven revenues through rental property. Some of these actions are registration of rental property and the inspection of rental property, with permitting and other subsequent fees associated with these measures.

**Question 1:** Would you support or oppose proposals to enact a rental registration or rental property inspection fee?

**Answer:**        **Support**                      **X Oppose**

Explanation of Position:

There are already safe guards set in place

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### **Issue: Short-term Rentals**

**Background:** Short-term rentals, or vacation rentals, are typically defined as those rented for less than 30 consecutive days. These are typically single-family homes in neighborhoods of cities that are desirable to visitors.

Some cities have banned short-term rental use in their local development or zoning codes and others have limited the use under specific parameters or guidelines. Registration programs may be required for all short-term-rental owners or may be limited to those owners who exclusively rent their properties as an investment.

**Question 2:** Would you support or oppose banning short-term rental use in your city?



**Answer:**      **Support**                       **Oppose**

**Explanation of Position:**

I beleive the short term rentals could create additional safety issues

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**Question 3:** Would you support or oppose requiring a registration process for owners of these properties?

**Answer:**       **Support**                      **Oppose**

**Explanation of Position:**

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### **Issue: Property Taxes**

**Background:** Creating a budget and adopting a property tax rate to support that budget are major functions of locally elected officials in Texas.

In simple terms, the Texas property tax system is based on an equation that multiplies a property’s appraised value by locally adopted tax rates. In recent years, Texans have seen skyrocketing property tax bills due to rapid increases in appraised value and little or no change in their tax rates. In addition, over the last decade, many local taxing jurisdictions have seen their budgets increase over 60%, far outpacing the rate of inflation and population growth.

When appraisal values increase, taxing jurisdictions can hold the line by adopting a tax rate that guarantees no new revenue will be realized from existing properties, instead relying on new or improved properties to generate new revenue. (Formerly known as the “effective tax rate,” new property tax laws resulting from Senate Bill 2 from the 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature will rename this the “no-new-revenue maintenance and operations rate.”)

Some taxing entities assert that if they do not change or even lower tax rates, but taxpayers’ overall bills go up due to an increase in the appraised value of the property, this does not constitute a property tax increase.

**Question 4:** If a property owner's tax bill goes up, does that constitute a tax increase?

**Answer:**     **Yes**                       **No**

Explanation of Position:

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**Question 5:** Do you support increased transparency measures, including (but not limited to) better notifications and explanations of terms, to ensure property owners fully understand why their property tax bill increases or decreases, and would you work to implement such changes in your city?

**Answer:**     **Yes**                       **No**

Explanation of Position:

Transparency is one of my top priorities and complete notice is always best.

This is a state driven process.

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**Question 6:** While considering the relationship between local taxing jurisdictions (city, county, or school district) and the Central Appraisal District, what role do you feel the Chief Appraiser/Central Appraisal District should play in the budgeting process for your city?

Chief Appraiser/Central Appraisal District should not play a role as they are an independent body.

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**Issue: Local Homestead Exemption**

**Question 7:** Currently, local taxing jurisdictions have the ability to grant local property owners an exemption for their homesteads. Do you favor the local homestead exemption for your taxing jurisdiction as a way of providing property tax relief?

**Answer:**  **Yes**                       **No**

Explanation of Position:

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It provides a tax relief and protects from a large increase.

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**Issue: Appraisal Caps**

**Background:** Currently, Texas has a 10% cap on the increase in assessed values for residential homesteads. Several proposals in the Texas Legislature would artificially cap property appraisals at 3% or 5% annually or extend the appraisal cap to commercial and industrial property. Further, some of these proposals would allow local-option elections that would allow for appraisal caps on a local level.

**Question 8:** Would you support efforts to lower the appraisal cap at the local level and/or extend the appraisal cap to commercial and industrial property?

**Answer:**  **Yes**                       **No**

Explanation of Position:

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It provides property tax relief and gives protection from large increases.

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**Issue: Eminent Domain**

**Question 9:** What is your opinion on the use of eminent domain and in what instances should a local government utilize the power of eminent domain?

Eminent domain should only be considered when it is the last resort.

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**Issue: Taxes and the Economy**

**Question 10:** In times of economic downturn, what measures do you propose for your city (i.e., tax rate increase, specific cuts in services, etc.)?

Each situation should be evaluated on a case by case basis to lessen the impact and hardship.

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**Issue: Energy-Efficiency Standards at Point of Sale**

**Background:** Some city councils have proposed to mandate certain energy-efficiency upgrades in residential properties which must be completed and certified prior to the sale of the property. These mandates would require all properties to be retrofitted to meet the standards of the mandates, costing sellers thousands of dollars.

**Question 11:** If elected, would you support efforts to impose mandatory energy-efficiency upgrades in existing housing?

**Answer:**      **Yes**       **No**

Explanation of Position:

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**Candidate Comments**

Please use the space below to provide any other comments you would like the local REALTOR® community to know about you, your campaign, priorities, and/or positions on important issues.

We appreciate your willingness to serve our city and your participation in this process.

I believe that Denton is at a crossroad. As we grow we must work with integrity and transparency. We must work together to foster positive change so that we leave our communities safer, cleaner, thriving, and beautiful. I want Denton to be known not only for our contributions to the arts, but our efforts to promote sustainable environments as well.

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