

## **WHAT TO DO**

If you are a registered Republican or a registered Democrat interested in putting me on State College Borough Council for the 2020-2023 term to pursue the goals outlined below...

Please **write in Katherine Watt for State College Borough Council** on your primary ballot on **May 21, 2019**.

It's possible that primary electors could get my name printed on the general election ballot for November that way, making it easier for party and non-party voters to put me on Borough Council in November.

Alternatively...

If party voters in May don't put me into a pre-printed spot on the November ballot - please **write in Katherine Watt for State College Borough Council** on your general election ballot on **Nov. 5, 2019**.

## **WHY I WANT TO HAVE A VOTE ON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

I would like to be elected by voters who usually don't vote because they believe government is the servant of corporations, doing corporate bidding on behalf of corporate donors and lobbyists, and screwing individuals, families, small businesses and communities in the process.

If elected, I intend to cast my one vote on Borough Council and at the Centre Region Council of Governments General Forum to disrupt business-as-usual: redistribute political power by increasing the power of individual human citizens and communities and disempowering corporate "persons," including corporate Penn State and local government bureaucracies.

I will use my voice and my votes to represent the people who elected me, to decentralize power as much as possible, and to withhold consent to unjust systems that can't be changed right now because majorities on elected boards choose to uphold those unjust systems.

If elected, I won't participate in standard training programs offered to newly-elected municipal legislators, which are designed to indoctrinate legislators to act as discretion-free administrators of corporate-state tyranny, subordinating the will of the electorate to the will of corporate-controlled state and federal legislatures and courts.

## **SPECIFICS**

If elected by write-in voters, I will work and vote to:

- Increase local sovereignty and reduce the preemptive power of the state and federal governments to block local efforts to improve local quality of life.
- Replace Borough Solicitor Terry Williams with a municipal solicitor with expertise and interest in advancing local sovereignty over state and federal preemption.

- Use the authority granted to Borough Council, by voters, through the Community Bill of Rights, to override state preemption of local land use planning exercised through the Pa. Municipalities Planning Code.
- Protect and expand the property rights of individuals and families who own or are paying off the homes, businesses and land in State College in which they actually live and work.
- Protect and support privately-owned and operated urban farms, orchards and in-home food processing businesses in the Borough, by lifting restrictions on home-based food production and direct-to-consumer sales among the population.
- Protect and expand the property rights of owners to demolish and/or renovate of existing building stock for new agricultural/ecological restoration, residential, commercial or light industrial purposes (redevelopment) so long as the projects are population/bed neutral, not increasing the net number of residential beds in the Borough above 2019 levels.
- Stop land use planning and zoning policies in the Centre Region that allow corporate developers to engage in vertical or horizontal sprawl; increase the net number of beds in the Centre Region; and convert small-town scale structures and undeveloped land (farm fields and forests) to urbanized residential, commercial or light industrial structures and road networks.
- Withdraw State College from the Centre Region Council of Governments, which I view as a highly-manipulated tool used by corporate Penn State, through managerial elites, to control and disempower the voters within each constituent municipality.
- Dissolve State College and COG authorities, boards, commissions and committees restricted to “advisory” power, which sideline and waste the time of citizens who would otherwise petition actual decision-makers, or seek actual decision-making power themselves, and which also strip accountability from elected representatives who cite advisory committees as the basis for their refusal to conduct and participate in contentious open deliberations on issues of public importance.
- Help State College lead a comprehensive overhaul of the regional Act 537 Plan (governing sewage management) to cap the total population served by UAJA’s sewage treatment plant at current levels based on per capita nitrogen load; bar all new groundbreaking land development projects within the Sewer Service Area to curtail vertical and horizontal sprawl; require redevelopment projects to be population-neutral; and establish a framework to use human and animal solid waste streams for energy generation in addition to the fertilizer/compost production UAJA already does. More info on manure-to-energy: <https://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Bulletins/Clean-Energy-Farming/Text-Version/Capture-Fuel-from-Animal-Manure-and-Plant-Waste>
- Revoke government-granted property privileges from large, non-family, investor-owned corporations that own buildings and land on which they collect rent, plan to develop into rent-generating properties, or leave overpriced and vacant for tax-break purposes.
- Revoke permanent corporate charters, and replace them with time-limited corporate charters intended to allow corporate privileges for certain time frames, to accomplish specific public goals, followed by expiration and dissolution of corporations and dispersal of their assets. For more on the history of corporate charters. <http://reclaimdemocracy.org/corporate-accountability-history-corporations-us/>

- Draft and adopt a local Right to Know Law, modeled on the Pennsylvania Right to Know Law of 2008, but fully applicable to Penn State and any other “state-related university” located within the State College municipal boundaries, requiring transparency and disclosure of all records that must be disclosed by municipal and state government entities under the state law, from which Penn State and the other state-related universities are almost entirely exempt.
- Draft and adopt a local Ethics Act, modeled on the Pennsylvania State Public Official and Employees Ethics Act of 1978, but fully applicable to Penn State trustees and administrators, requiring full public disclosure of financial interests, from which Penn State administrators and trustees are currently exempt.
- Renegotiate the 2004 PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) agreement between Penn State and the Borough of State College, which expires in 2024, using the authority of the Community Bill of Rights in the Home Rule Charter to assess property taxes on corporate Penn State for the full value of its property holdings within the Borough, generating an additional \$3.2 million in annual tax revenue per year to support public services such as community policing, a paid fire department, community-based alcohol addiction treatment programs, road maintenance and water and sewer pipeline maintenance.<sup>1</sup>
- Merge the privately-operated Penn State police force (49 officers as of 2018) with the public State College police department (61 officers), to create a single public police department of 110 officers under the control of the State College Police Chief, that protects public safety and enforces criminal laws uniformly across the entire State College jurisdiction, on-campus and off-campus.
- Increase the power of Penn State faculty, staff and students to convert PSU from a closely-held private corporation governed by unelected trustees, to a worker-owned corporation governed by a board of directors comprised of elected representatives of faculty, staff and students. More information on democratic syndicalism (political economies based on worker-owned enterprises): <https://www.ecosophia.net/introduction-political-economy/> and <https://www.ecosophia.net/systems-suck-less/>
- Reduce the power or eliminate the positions of Penn State’s unaccountable Board of Trustees and bloated ranks of overpaid/profitteering upper-level administrators (Assistant Deans, Deans, Vice-Presidents, Provost, President) and trustees.

## **WILL THERE BE AN IMPACT ON BAILIWICK NEWS?**

During 2019 election year, I will not be campaigning, apart from offering this information on the *Bailiwick News* website.

I’ll continue documenting government action and inaction, public corruption and ecological resilience through investigative reporting.

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<sup>1</sup> Under the 2004 PILOT agreement, Penn State annually contributes about \$642,000 to the Capital fund. Penn State’s property within Borough boundaries was assessed at about \$262.9 million in 2015. According to a Frequently Asked Question page at the Borough’s website, if that property were taxable, the resulting 2015 real estate tax payment would have been about \$3.8 million. Thus, corporate Penn State enjoys a tax savings of \$3.2 million per year by classifying itself – for property tax purposes at least – as a public institution. <http://www.statecollegepa.us/Faq.aspx?TID=38>,

If write-in voters elect me to a Borough Council seat, I'll figure out what to do with *Bailiwick News* while I serve, whether writing less frequently, or suspending the newspaper for the duration of my term.

If I don't win a seat, I'll carry on with *Bailiwick News*.

## **MORE ABOUT MY VIEWS ON POLITICAL ECONOMY, WITH LINKS**

I think the federal and Pennsylvania Constitutions are pretty good.

I think the executive, legislative and judicial branches pretending to respect those Constitutional limits on government, and on government-facilitated concentrations of economic wealth and political power known as corporations, are completely out of citizen control; have done horrific damage to American life and liberty; and are deepening the harms with each passing year.

The vast majority of eligible voters in the United States don't vote because they don't see any evidence that elected representatives can or will represent individual liberty and property interests over the interests of corporate donors purchasing governments on behalf of corporate "persons."

In other words, the bedrock American principle of consent of the governed has been destroyed.

One of the mechanisms for the destruction has been preemption of municipal democratic governance through judicial application of Dillon's interpretation of the supremacy clause of the US Constitution way back in 1872.

Dillon's Rule and its progeny advanced the interests of concentrated capital (corporate persons) and relegated individual human people in the communities where they live to subordinate subjects.

For more on preemption, check out

<https://celdf.org/2017/01/blog-matters-state-concern-tyranny-preemption/>.

However, in 2011, State College voters adopted an amendment to our Borough Constitution – our Home Rule Charter – called the Community Bill of Rights.

The Community Bill of Rights explicitly subordinates corporate interests to individual human interests and ecological community interests as protected by democratically-elected representatives, within the borders of the Borough. Instead of the other way around.

Article XI of the State College Home Rule Charter

<http://www.statecollegepa.us/DocumentCenter/View/3118/Home-Rule-Charter?bidId=>

The most interesting provisions are paragraphs f, g and h:

...f. Right to Self-Government. All residents of State College Borough possess the fundamental and inalienable right to a form of governance where they live which recognizes that all power is inherent in the people, that all free governments are founded on the people's authority and consent, and that corporate entities and their directors and managers shall not enjoy special privileges or powers under the law which make community majorities subordinate to them.

g. People as Sovereign. State College Borough shall be the governing authority responsible to, and governed by, the residents of the Borough. Use of the "Borough of State College" municipal corporation by the sovereign people of the Borough to make law shall not be construed to limit or surrender the sovereign authority or immunities of the people to a municipal corporation that is subordinate to them in all respects at all times. The people at all times enjoy and retain an inalienable and inalienable right to self-governance in the community where they reside.

h. Rights as Self-Executing. All rights delineated and secured by this Charter shall be self-executing and these rights shall be enforceable against corporations and governmental entities...

So, if elected, I plan to participate in Borough Council's exercise of power delegated from the citizenry as if those Home Rule Charter provisions - alongside the Pennsylvania Constitution and the US Constitution - matter. A lot.

I do not plan to participate in Borough Council as simply a local enforcer of state and federal preemption.

I'm offering my public service as a disruptor, to represent on Council the views of those who believe the game is rigged against ordinary people and those who are inspired by worldwide resistance movements of the last few years: Tea Party, Occupy Wall Street, Brexit, the Gilets Jaunes in France, and other citizen campaigns driven by a grassroots hatred of the injustice inherent in legal privileges enjoyed by the corporate few at the expense of the non-corporate many.

I also think America is economically past its prime. I don't endorse the mainstream view that things are good and getting better. I think we've been at the start of a slow, bumpy, irreversible decline in average living standards since roughly 1970, due to poor decisions made in the decades before 1970 about energy systems (dependent on cheap oil), economic policy (debt-driven) and the environment (regarded as a pollution sink).

So I'm very interested in preparing for additional energy, economic and ecological disruptions at the personal, neighborhood and community level, through things like local sovereignty for problem solving, water security, food security, energy security and shelter security.

Sound land use planning is the cornerstone for all of these issues. We need to protect clean water and productive soils, and we need to get better at managing both to support ourselves and those who will live here after we're gone.

For more information about this worldview, check out the Peak Prosperity "Crash Course"

<https://www.peakprosperity.com/crashcourse>

## **VISION**

I would like to help State College become a more economically and ecologically stable and resilient community through the exercise of local sovereignty to protect local water, food, energy, and shelter, and to facilitate local businesses, owned and operated by local people, providing these essential goods and services for each other through local livelihoods.

I believe this requires a careful, thoughtful reduction of systemic complexity and per-capita energy use – especially for supply chains – combined with a renaissance of human- and animal-powered skills and technologies.

For more information about my vision, please see *Retrotopia*, by John Michael Greer.  
<http://wwwFOUNDERSHOUSEpublishing.com/2016/12/retrotopia.html>

