



## 2020 Hawai'i Island Candidate Questionnaire

**Candidate Name:** Kelly Greenwell

**Candidate Race:** Hawai'i County Mayor

**Candidate Website:** None Found



**1. In 2018, the Hawaii County Council passed Bill 108 (now Ordinance 2018-114), which regulates un-hosted short-term vacation rentals (STVRs) in Hawaii County. What policies would you implement to further regulate or deregulate short-term vacation rentals on Hawaii Island, whether hosted or un-hosted, and what will be the economic impact(s) of those policies?**

This is a C.C.&R. issue and while there is economic impact, property rights prevail.

**2. In 2019, the Real Property Tax Office implemented policies to assess properties at their “highest and best use”. This changed the real property tax classifications for many residents, mainly those on agricultural-zoned parcels smaller than one-acre in size, increasing their real property tax bill. What are your thoughts on the County real property tax and how revenue may be increased without negative impacts for residents?**

Taxing has been the go-to method of acquiring revenue for both County and State for too long. My reason for being a candidate is to introduce the creative and essential venues for economic stability that could be funded through federal programs (farm bill, recovery act) and would attract private investment by the wealth that visits us.

**3. Hawai'i County residents generate over 200,000 tons of solid waste each year. In 2019, the County closed the Hilo landfill and is now hauling solid waste across the island to a landfill in Pu'uanaulu. Additionally, due to significant decreases in the global market for recyclables, the County of Hawai'i is no longer accepting some of the types of materials collected at the County recycling & transfer stations. What solutions would you propose to resolve the County's solid waste dilemma?**

35 years ago, I proposed a process described as 'in vessel' composting. It is a natural process employed by several states (Washington, Tennessee) Europe and Japan, whereby the entire waste stream is composted, screened, and used in ornamental agriculture. There is a 12-15% residue which is landfilled, however the value of the composted soil amendment derived far exceeds the cost of both collection and process. This method would be of even greater value here in Kona where we have little natural soil and significant need.

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**4. Median home prices in Hawaii County continue to rise with shrinking inventory and increasing demand. Since 2011, the median sales price for a residential home in Hawaii County has increased, year to year, by as little as 0.38% (2015-2016) up to 13.46% (2012-2013) per year. What are your top three (3) actionable items to address housing affordability?**

1. State land/federal money
2. Realistic building codes
3. Federal assistance in developing infrastructure that supports residential development (roads, schools, hospitals).

**5. The Hawai'i state legislature recently proposed legislation that would put the responsibility on the counties to research and provide data on topics such as energy, coastal zone/sea level rise, etc. as they relate to climate change, without addressing funding for any related expenses. What three (3) specific solutions would you propose to address climate change, and how would these proposals be funded?**

To begin with, end the practice of creating that gigantic plume of black, sooty smoke, which is the visual message that the airport fire control people are rehearsing procedures for extinguishing a fire. It is an insensitive display of arrogance in the face of any effort to even look like we care.

**6. In 2015, the state legislature adopted a renewable portfolio standard (RPS) of 100 percent by the year 2045, positioning Hawai'i to become the first U.S. state to produce all its electricity from local renewable energy sources and establishing interim targets of 30 percent by 2020, 40 percent by 2030, and 70 percent by 2040. What is your position on expanding geothermal and/or other forms of renewable energy on Hawai'i Island?**

It will happen.

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**7. What are two (2) things you like about the Community Development Plan (CDP) in your district that are working well? What are two (2) things in your district's CDP that are not working and why? How would you suggest those issues be addressed/fixd?**

Let me address this by saying 1. The 'Old Airport Park, and 2. The Kealakehe Regional Park. These are two elements called for but not being pursued due to lack of incentive – political and economic. These parks are examples of projects that qualify for part of the \$900 billion Federal Farm Bill, of which Hawaii, entitled to perhaps \$2 billion, receives virtually nothing – because we don't ask.

**8. The appearance of COVID-19 has brought the world economy to a halt and has exposed major faults in local government's blatant reliance on tourism for revenue. What are your plans to jump start and/or diversify the island's economy?**

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic will have ushered in a new awareness of what we need to become if we are to survive the next disaster. We cannot rely only on what we look like, particularly if we can't maintain our highways and public facilities and if its OK to fill the air with black smoke every month. What we need to do is begin the process of attracting private sector and federal government investment in public/private partnership to create a sustainable economic future. Hawaii needs to refocus from ourselves to becoming a world player in technology for the tropical world and the planet in general.

**9. Many municipalities across the country are exploring bond sales to raise capital for improvements to infrastructure, like road and wastewater improvements as an example; things that are sorely in need of attention on Hawaii Island. The County Council just this year advanced a \$103 million bond issue for road projects with Bill 145. What is your view on expanding municipal bond issuance to finance infrastructure while interest rates are historically low?**

During my tenure as a councilman the county was exploring a municipal bond issue to fund the building of Ane Keohokalole Highway. I challenged the idea, went to Washington, met with the administrator of the Federal Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus fund) and was assured that if the mayor were to ask for the funding it would be there. It took awhile to convince the mayor and his people, but they asked, and the project was funded forthwith. We can do that again. A recently enlightened view of how economics actually works, confirms it. (Marshall Plan).

Let me leave you with this; the Alii Bypass Highway which has been on the books for thirty years, must be built. The cultural issues, while vital to who we are, cannot become fatal to progress. This is, in fact, an opportunity to reconvene on what works for all of us.

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