

Candidate Questionnaire on Austin Energy Issues

Participating Organizations:

- Public Citizen
- SEED Coalition
- Sierra Club
- Solar Austin
- Texas ROSE (Ratepayers' Organization to Save Energy)
- Clean Water Action
- Austin Climate Action Network
- Texas Drought Project
- First Unitarian Universalist Green Sanctuary Ministry
- Wildflower Unitarian Universalist Church

Candidate Name: Ann Kitchen

District: 5

Point of Contact: Kristin Fine

Email: votekitchen@gmail.com

Phone: 512-774-7454

- 1. The mission of the Austin Energy Department is to deliver clean, affordable reliable energy and excellent customer service. During your term, what will be the most important challenge for the city in regard to Austin Energy?**

I believe the central challenge will be to build a broader base of support among the public and key stakeholders to support the transition from fossil fuels to renewables while retaining the 2% affordability goals. An additional challenge is the need to create a more effective working relationship between the new Council and Austin Energy.

- 2. From a citywide and district perspective, briefly describe your vision for managing and improving Austin Energy?**

From a district point of view I would look at developing metrics to better understand and track the distribution of program services and financial impacts for District 5 including customer assistance, residential and commercial renewables, and other programs. My citywide perspective for managing AE is described in Question 5.

- 3. What is your position on climate change?**

Climate change is an urgent threat to mankind and is due to widespread use of fossil fuels, which produce greenhouse gases. Because Climate Change represents a significant threat to our future it needs to be addressed at all levels from individual action to international cooperation. I support the goals of the Climate Protection Plan.

- 4. Do you support implementation of the recommendations in the report developed by the [Austin Generation Resource Planning Task Force](#) and are there any other specific changes you would like made to the [Austin Energy Resource, Generation and Climate Protection Plan to 2020](#)? What would you change and how?**

I support the transition from fossil fuels to renewables to move Austin into a cleaner energy future. The Austin Generation Resource Planning Task Force recommendations point the way forward with clear acknowledgement that during this transition we will maintain the affordability goals for Austin ratepayers. West Texas solar, coastal wind, and distributed solar offer Austin an opportunity as technology progresses to replace our older polluting fossil fuel plants. I look forward to an economic assessment of plant closures and options for proceeding.

5. City Council serves as the board of directors for Austin Energy. As a council member, what do you consider your role to be in regard to Austin Energy's governance?

Austin Energy is one of the most important assets owned by the people of Austin. I believe the role of a Council member is to oversee the budget and delivery of services by the department, to set policy on the range of issues impacted by the department, and to protect the asset for future generations. Council members also choose appointees to the important community boards and commissions, which impact the utility and its programs.

6. What renewable energy resources and programs should be incorporated into the Austin Energy generation resource mix?

Resources and programs could include the development of shared energy storage facilities, implementation of PACE, creation of an on-bill charging program, and developing "community shared" or neighborhood solar. All of these programs could increase the share of renewables in AE's generation mix.

7. How and to what extent should Austin Energy provide customer energy efficiency programs?

I strongly support customer assistance programs. AE is a public asset that has a clear responsibility to all its residents especially to those residents most in need. The program should be reviewed to identify opportunities for collaboration with other social service programs in order to better leverage AE resources and improve effectiveness for ratepayers.

8. What are your thoughts on whether Austin Energy should invest in more nuclear reactors and whether the utility should remain involved in the existing South Texas Project reactors after their currently scheduled retirement dates of 2027 and 2028 if they get relicensed for 20 additional years?

I do not support additional nuclear generation capacity for Austin. I am not aware what options and agreements the city currently has regarding participation in the plant after the scheduled retirement date. I look forward to learning more about this issue and would welcome further discussion.