



September 14, 2016

Question 1 Why are you seeking this public office? (Please be brief)	
Natalie Gaudin	I am running because I believe we need someone on council who will be a voice for everyone in District 7, who will focus on the issues facing the district.
Leslie Pool	As the first incumbent for the new District 7, and just 18 months into my public service, I am adapting well to the demands of office and responding comprehensively to the challenges our community faces. The City of Austin is a large employer – 14,000 employees – and we'll be hiring a new City Manager in the next year. My experience since assuming office in January 2015 has been deeply rewarding. We are setting new standards and forging new processes, changing some long-held ways of doing things at the City. There's lots more to do, and the climb up the learning curve is steep, but I am more than ever determined to continue to preserve our neighborhoods, protect our environment, and fight for accountability and transparency in our City's decision-making.
Question 2 Please tell us why you are seeking the endorsement of SDA. Do you have a history of involvement in Democratic politics and/or LGBTQ issues? If so please briefly describe this history.	
Natalie Gaudin	I support LGBTQ rights and the inclusive values of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin. Being a champion of affordable housing I have fought to have cultural diversity throughout the city because in diverse neighborhoods we are much likely to see any type of de facto discrimination.
Leslie Pool	I'm a long-time Democrat – sustaining member of the Travis County Dem Party, and active member of a number of local dem clubs: NXNW, CAD, LAD, Stonewall Dems, AED, CAPD, BAD I've been a precinct chair, served on platform and nominations committees at our county and State conventions, and was honored this July to travel to PHL with our amazing Travis County Delegation to serve as a deputy whip for the Clinton campaign. It was a historic convention and it was humbling to be in the hall for all that happened that week. I'm seeking the Stonewall Dems' endorsement because I believe in your issues, support your mission, and would be honored to have your public support. I received SDA's endorsement in the run-off when I first ran in 2014, and have worked hard to support issues of mutual concern since my election. I promised to support LGBTQ issues then, and I have delivered on that promise. I intend to continue my unstinting support.
Question 3 Do you believe LGBTQ individuals should be protected against discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression?	
Natalie Gaudin	Yes. I support protecting sexual orientation and gender identity/expression as city policy. Discrimination isn't just the big picture items related to hiring, firing, and compensation. It's also about the daily lived experience of LGBTQ workers.
Leslie Pool	Yes.



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Question 4	If elected would you commit to appointing LGBTQ individuals to City Boards and Commissions?
Natalie Gaudin	Yes. In particular young LGBTQ Austinites can struggle with many issues, and providing stability and support should be a priority of the cities and its boards and commissions. I would seek out people in these situations or that have been through them for relevant boards and commissions.
Leslie Pool	Yes. Our boards and commissions are a key component of policy development in the city and it's critical that the lens of the LGBTQ community be part of all of our policies.
Question 5	Do you think that the Austin Police Department is doing everything it can to make its officers aware of and sensitive to the rights and dignity of Austin's LGBTQ citizens?
Natalie Gaudin	Yes. In particular, training around transgender issues is an important topic and could use more awareness and compassion from our police and other city departments.
Leslie Pool	I believe they're making progress. I was impressed at the turnout and speeches APD officers made at the Orlando remembrance march a couple months ago. APD recognizes its gay officers by supporting an official association. The officers' status is respected and that sends a strong message to those in our community who would seek to harm or impugn our LGBTQ brothers and sisters. A goal of mine once elected was to be appointed to the Anti-Defamation League's Hate Crimes Task Force. I thought my background in law enforcement would be a good match for that assignment. It's been my honor to serve, particularly during this time of increased attention on the destructive and unfortunately pervasive nature of hateful language and actions.
Question 6	If elected, would you act to increase recruitment of LGBTQ employees for the police, fire, and emergency medical services? What proposals would you suggest to make coming out on the job safer for LGBTQ employees?
Natalie Gaudin	Yes. Coming out is a significant part of someone with a queer or LGBTQ identity that can be a major source of stress and anxiety for an individual. Training for supervisors around this issue could provide real benefit for all employees of the city.
Leslie Pool	Yes. Demonstrating respect and consideration for employees, for their choices and their opinions, is important in ensuring a safe workplace. I was pleased to co-sponsor MPT Tovo's initiative this spring to support anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies at the City, and was troubled that our employees have felt threatened and harassed by their managers. I want a better workplace for all our employees, and am working toward that goal.



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Question 7	Do you think the City of Austin is doing enough to ensure equality for its LGBTQ employees? For example, how would you address organizational issues such as transgender employees transitioning on the job?
Natalie Gaudin	For the most part, yes, but there is always more to be one. I support policies, such as gender neutral bathrooms, that make it easier for transgender employees who are transitioning on the job, and I think we can do more to proactively make people aware of these issues and accepting of their transitioning coworkers.
Leslie Pool	Yes, Council voted to add coverage for transgender transition procedures in the City's health care benefits for the first time last year. This is a very concrete demonstration of the City's support for LGBTQ employees. I believe all policy issues should be considered through the lens of the LGBTQ community, for example Parental Leave paid time off program applying to same-sex parents. I publicly celebrated SCOTUS decision last June on same-sex marriage – I found and hung a rainbow flag from the dais – and am supportive of unisex bathrooms throughout City Hall (in fact, the two restrooms on the Council office wing were still sex-designated when we arrived in January; by March the designations were removed).
Question 8	If elected, would you continue to uphold the current requirement that a company that receives economic incentives from the City not discriminate against its LGBTQ employees?
Natalie Gaudin	Yes. Companies receiving economic incentives from the city should reflect our progressive and inclusive values as a city.
Leslie Pool	Yes.
Question 9	How familiar are you with organizations, such as Out Youth, the Austin Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, and AIDS Services of Austin that serve the LGBTQ community? If elected, would you support increased funding for the services organizations like these provide? What services do you think are crucial for LGBTQ residents?
Natalie Gaudin	These programs provide crucial services to the LGBTQ community in Austin, and if elected I would support continuing funding for these services.
Leslie Pool	I'm familiar with all three. Yes. AGLCC has seen an increase in its budget support from the City and I have met with members of the Chamber in support of their programs since taking office.
Question 10	Describe a step you would take, or have taken, or a proposal you would make, or have made as a member of Austin's City Council that would specifically benefit Austin's LGBTQ community.
Natalie Gaudin	I would push city staff to focus on raising awareness of businesses about gender neutral bathrooms.



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Leslie Pool	Fully half of my staff are LGBTQ folks and some of those whom I've appointed to boards & commissions are from the LGBTQ community. It's my long-held hope that we continue to overcome and erase lines of distinction, and that someday we all will view one another with complete respect and without discrimination.
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Question 11	Do you support the requirement that all single-occupancy public restrooms are made available to all people, (for example families and transgender people)?
Natalie Gauldin	Yes. There are no reasons not to do this, and gender neutral bathrooms help ease the anxiety of transgender people about what bathroom to use it.
Leslie Pool	Yes.

Question 12	The Texas Democratic Party recently adopted a plank in their 2016 Platform that reads, "support the right of all people to use facilities and participate in all aspects of life in a manner that is consistent with their gender identity, irrespective of the gender they were assigned at birth". How would you advance or further the goals of this Platform plank in Austin and how would you work with other jurisdictions to advance or further the goals of this plank?
Natalie Gauldin	Austin passed a requirement to make all single-occupancy public restrooms available to everyone, but enforcement has been lax. I would step up enforcement and efforts to make sure companies are aware of the issue.
Leslie Pool	The Community Advancement Network (CAN) is one appropriate place to work with other jurisdictions and community organizations to raise awareness, and to further the various goals of the LGBTQ community. Through my assignment on the Council Public Safety Committee, I support anti-discrimination policies and work with our uniformed responders to ensure the respect and careful treatment of all.

Question 13	Do you believe that public schools should institute rules and policies to prohibit harassment and discrimination against LGBTQ students?
Natalie Gauldin	Yes. LGBTQ are especially vulnerable to harassment and discrimination and we need to do everything we can to help them in what can be a very difficult time.
Leslie Pool	Yes. I support the Anti-Defamation League's "No Place for Hate" campaign and AISD has embraced it. Last Thursday the tenets of that program were in stark relief as we dealt on the dais with a colleague's insulting behavior to children who had come to testify on behalf of after-school programs; I joined three of my colleagues in an Open Letter to the children and their parents condemning his words that was published in the Statesman and on social media. I have partnered with MPT Tovo on a resolution to ensure our workplace is free of discrimination and harassment of our employees.



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Question 14	If elected, how would you stay informed of the concerns and interests of your LGBTQ constituents?
<p>Natalie Gaudin</p> <p>Leslie Pool</p>	<p>As a council member, I would reach out to LGBTQ groups and welcome their proposals for how we can make Austin a more welcoming place for LGBTQ people.</p> <p>Through my appointment of LGBTQ community members to boards & commissions I specifically stay in touch. I'm proud that my staff represent the LGBTQ community. In addition, I am proud to be a very public presence at events such as the PRIDE Parade.</p>
Question 15	Have you attended functions in Austin's LGBTQ community and, if so, which?
<p>Natalie Gaudin</p> <p>Leslie Pool</p>	<p>I have not attended specific LGBTQ events in the community, but I am a strong support of LGBTQ rights.</p> <p>Yes! I've marched the last two years in the PRIDE parade. I also participate in the annual AIDS Remembrance Day held at St David's Episcopal. It's a very moving and poignantly hopeful ceremony that simultaneously builds community through mourning its losses.</p>