



Logan Square Neighborhood Association

REIMAGINE Logan Square,
Avondale, and Hermosa

ALDERMANIC QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Education



Economic Development



Housing



Health and Wellness



Immigration



31st Ward

Felix Cardona Jr.

1. What resources or relationships do you uniquely have to support our economic development strategies?

Having worked in local government for 24 years with a focus on tax assessments, I believe I am uniquely prepared to help the residents and business owners appeal their property taxes successfully. This institutional knowledge will stabilize the community and help stem the exodus of residents and businesses.

2. How would you encourage local hiring and adopt anti-displacement standards we set?

I would encourage businesses to hire paid and unpaid interns in order to prepare young people for real job opportunities. I would also participate in all “shop local” events to strengthen our business community.

3. LSNA’s immigration proposal is to beautify a corridor along Armitage Ave. in Hermosa. Our project will uplift and celebrate our immigrant community. What are specific ways you will support this project?

Once again, I would work with businesses to lower their real estate taxes and I will also work with them so they can take advantage of certain tax credits and taxpayer funded programs in order to beautify the commercial strip. I will also support all grant applications proposed by community-based groups for funding at all levels of government but with particular attention to funding that comes from Springfield for these kinds of quality-of-life programs.

4. How will you strengthen the city’s Welcoming City Ordinance, particularly in regards to the gang database?

I support the city of Chicago’s status as a sanctuary city. Further, I believe the gang database is both racist and discriminatory in nature. Law-enforcement has enough tools at their disposal to identify

criminals living within our communities. But we certainly should not be engaging in the business of profiling young men and women of color in a way that will stigmatize them in the future and possibly reduce their employment opportunities.

5. How will you get the funding to make CPS High Schools a viable option in our neighborhood?

I have a two-pronged approach to resolve this problem. The first will be to have the trade unions come back into our city and to establish programs within our high schools to prepare our high school graduates for jobs immediately after graduation. While I support college opportunities for all of our young people, the reality is the college is not for everyone. With real vocational training, our youth will not be left behind or without a purpose. The second approach that I have to this problem is the complete and total elimination of TIFs. I have made my position on this very clear. TIFs are nothing but a conduit for the creation of a huge slush fund to be used at the discretion of the mayor for pet projects and favored developers. They siphon desperately needed tax dollars from our schools and the city's corporate budget.

6. Schools and housing are inextricably connected. As an alderman, how are you going to influence city council to push forward community-driven initiatives such as the 606 Ordinance and the Emmett Street Affordable Housing Project both of which will create greater equity in our gentrifying communities and increase student enrollment in our neighborhood schools?

I will work to strengthen LUCHA's 606 initiative and expand it to other areas with a high risk of residential destabilization. I have also been an advocate for a revision of the building code to allow for more attic and basement apartment units as starter homes for young people and to keep older residents in their communities.

7. Juan has schizophrenia and he has an altercation with the police – he's visibly agitated. It doesn't end well. What is your response from a public health perspective?

This scenario highlights the need for another two-pronged approach to the problem. First and foremost, we need to invest money in the re-training of all current police officers and make sure that the training of new police officers includes a mental health component. In the scenario presented, de-escalation would have been the order of the day. The second prong of the approach is the opening of new mental health clinics within our city borders. Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart and I don't agree on a lot, but he was right about one thing, Cook County Jail is currently the biggest mental health hospital in the City of Chicago. And that is shameful.

8. With the closure of the 6 mental health clinics, our communities have experienced instability. What funds and resources are you planning to invest in mental health?

At the very minimum, we need to bring back the six mental health clinics that were closed. Beyond that, I would say that we also need to petition our legislators in Springfield for money to open not only outpatient clinics, but three or four residential facilities for people truly in need of mental health services on a long-term basis.

9. 20,000 Latinx have been displaced in Logan square since 2000. How do you plan to prevent further displacement in Logan Square, Hermosa and Avondale?

The answer to this question is quite simple. Stabilize the neighborhood by properly assessing each and every parcel of real estate in these communities and also by revising the building code to provide for affordable attic and basement apartments in addition to more LUCHA type initiatives and the Emmett Street Affordable Housing Project. If you keep communities affordable you will not have the type of exodus of working class families that we are experiencing today.

10. What will you do to support and champion a strong ARO that has a higher percentage of affordable units, requires more family size units and builds in more monitoring?

I believe that the compromise reached in the Lathrop Homes case and the people of that community should serve as a model for strengthening the affordable residential ordinance. (ARO) I realize that compliance at that level took many years to achieve and some would say that it appeared that everybody was dragging their feet but in the end what you have is a mix of housing for the poor (CHA tenants), affordable housing units covered under ARO and market rate units. It's absolutely essential to make sure that everybody within those developments enjoy their communities with a certain level of peace, quiet and prosperity. Absent that kind of monitoring, those developments will be at risk of losing the market rate component. Those tenants will simply rent somewhere else where they believe they will be safer.