

Speech for Bloomington Chamber of Commerce's *Elect Connect* Event
March 21, 2023

Good evening! Thank you for being here, and thank you to the Chamber for hosting. My name is Isabel Piedmont-Smith, and I'm running for re-election to the City Council. I was born and raised in Bloomington. My mother was a small business owner, and my father was an IU professor. I worked for the university for 26 years, but I've also had a lot of other jobs, from my first position shelving books at the Monroe County Public Library to my current job baking muffins at Crumble. And of course I've served a little over 11 years on the Bloomington City Council.

If you've ever watched a Council meeting, you know that I ask a lot of questions. Sometimes I ask questions that I already know the answer to, just to clarify information for the benefit of the public. I also listen to constituents, while at the same time recognizing that most residents don't have the time or opportunity to provide input. I have held monthly constituent meetings since my first term, and I also try to reach people where they are, whether at their doors while canvassing, or at various community meetings and events.

I've been an active Council Member. I have co-authored at least 8 ordinances and 6 resolutions. My guiding star and why I got involved in local politics in the first place is protection of our environment. My top priority as a City Council member is to implement our Climate Action plan, which includes investments in bus transportation, waste reduction, energy efficiency, and the local food economy. As they say, there is no Planet B - we've got to save the one we have.

Another issue I'm passionate about is homelessness. When I was 19, I went to my first big protest march in Washington DC, to call out our leaders for not doing enough to provide housing. I went to Oberlin College, where protest was practically a degree requirement, so I was in good company. Well, homelessness figures haven't gotten much better since then, and the numbers in Bloomington are substantial. We need to get folks into housing first. Only then can our unhoused neighbors work on other issues in their lives. The city must continue to support the Heading Home project through the United Way.

I'd also like to mention that we as community leaders must recognize and work to change systems based on racism and other injustices. Our decisions, and how we make these decisions, must reflect a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

My name is Isabel Piedmont-Smith, and I want to leave my hometown better than I found it. More equitable, more sustainable, and more inclusive. I hope you'll support me for another term on the City Council.