

Good evening, fellow Democrats. And thanks to the Monroe County Democratic party, and its officers, for providing us with this forum. And, of course, to the library and CATS staff that make it possible.

My name is Sophia Travis, and I am running for Monroe County Commissioner. Over twenty years ago I, like so many of us, came here to go to school. And, although I have lived all over the world, and all over our country, Monroe County is my home – it's where I've lived longer than any other.

When I ran, and won, a seat on our County Council, I ran on a platform of serving the underserved. I'm proud that, nearly four years later, I was able to keep that promise.

Now, I'm adding a new point: I'm running on the value of place. This is an aesthetic platform. I care about Monroe County, and I care about how it looks, how it feels, and how it functions for its residents. I am running to keep our special place, special.

In governance, that means I will presume in favor of the interests of existing Monroe County residents. I will be skeptical of government subsidies, such as TIF districts, that help developers convert rural greenspace into suburban shopping, that promote sprawl, and that make the lives of existing residents a little worse, even while making the lives of speculators much better.

Over the past few years, I've become acutely aware of county government's role in land-use policies. And, serving on bodies such as the Planning Commission, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the Plan Review Committee, I've seen first-hand what happens when those policies go wrong. How the interests of Monroe County residents can be harmed, even by something as seemingly innocuous as an inappropriate appointment to a land-use board or commission -- most of which are under the control of the County Commissioners.

Which is why I want to serve as one.

I am a progressive Democrat, which means I come from the Democratic wing of the Democratic party. And I have a record, now, of the decisions I've made in government and how those positions support progressive initiatives. Initiatives in the interest of Monroe County residents.

I support labor, I support the environment, and I support just and equitable economic development that raises the standard of living for all, not just a select few. And that is the standard by which, if elected, I will govern.

My name is Sophia Travis and I hope I can count on your support on May 6th. Thank you.