

CARROLLTON CAUCUS QUESTIONNAIRE

GENERIC

What are the issues facing District A for residents? For businesses?

At a recent Palm Air meeting, the first two things the residents complained of were not seeing the police enough and the streets were in terrible shape. With the August 5th flooding and the September boil water advisories, we can add a lack of credibility and accountability to the issues facing residents and businesses. The bottom line is that people feel as though they are paying their fair share and not getting basic services in return.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

1. What steps will you take to lower gun & violent crime in our City?

There are at least two pieces to this puzzle. First, in the short-term, we need more police officers on the beat who are focused on violent crime – particularly violent crime involving guns. The NOPD has begun focusing its efforts again on the most habitual and violent offenders and this is where our focus ought to be in addition to focusing on crimes committed with guns. Moreover, the City should continue to work on programs such as Ceasefire to warn and reduce tensions leading to gun violence.

As a longer-term solution, we need to focus on better economic opportunities. That focus includes not only bringing new jobs to the region through the efforts of public-private partnerships but also on skill acquisition. As the *New York Times* recently reported, “[o]nly 6 percent of American high school students were enrolled in a vocational course of study, according to a 2013 Department of Education report. In the United Kingdom, 42 percent were on the vocational track; in Germany, it was 59 percent...” The Orleans Parish School Board plans on piloting the New Orleans Career & Technical Center to teach skills so people can earn higher wages. I would like to see them partner with business and labor to ensure jobs are waiting upon completion of the program.

2. What will you do to reduce the number of people incarcerated in our City & to improve the success of re-entry for prisoners returning home upon release?

Before Katrina, the jail held over 6,000 inmates. That fraction has been greatly reduced. The City should review policies related to incarcerating non-violent offenders--provided that dangerous offenders continue to be jailed to protect public safety. For re-entry, we should support vocational and educational services while incarcerated as well as community based reintegration programming, such as that offered by Youth Empowerment Project which has been a model since 2004.

3. Do you support the current policy on bail for City offenses? (yes/no)

Yes.

4. What is your position on the role of New Orleans police in enforcement of Federal immigration law?

The City should continue to follow its current policy established by the local administration.

HOUSING

1. In our District A neighborhoods, an increasing number of long-term residents of all income levels can no longer afford to live here. Why do you think this is happening and would you do to reverse this trend?

With fewer parcels in stock and taxes/fees increasing, people are pushed to the brink. First, we must examine property held by the City and selling that property. Second, we need to expedite the return of blighted property from Hurricane Katrina back into commerce. Third, we must look at other sources of revenue to reduce our property tax burden. The City needs to increase its sales tax collection. Finally, given the overbreadth of non-profit exemptions, putting the most obvious examples back on the tax rolls such as “property that is sitting idle, held for future investment, or even used for a related commercial purpose” makes the most sense.

2. What will you do to support accessibility and wide distribution of affordable housing across neighborhoods?

There is no magic bullet for fixing the housing shortage. I will work on providing additional transportation to ensure people can get to and from home as easily as possible. In addition, I will work on increasing the stock of available housing in the market to ensure more homes are available. I have also expressed my concern about the non-profit exemption, which drives up costs for homeowners and renters. If more of those properties are on the tax rolls, property rates should decrease. Finally, we need to work with developers on credits that ensure affordable housing is available.

3. Do you support current policies related to Short Term Rentals? What changes will you make if any, and how would you ensure enforcement of these regulations?

First, I do not support the expansion of short-term rentals from 90 to 180 days or expansion into the French Quarter. Second, while I would have preferred short-term rentals for those who have a homestead exemption or partial rentals of houses in which an owner lives, the City passed broader rules. Those rules must be tightened and rigorously enforced. My understanding is that certain platforms continue to advertise short-term rental properties even though they are not properly licensed. The City must work to ensure those properties are not rented and not turn a blind eye towards covert rentals.

4. Carrollton is under partial HDLC control to review requests for demolition. What enforcement mechanism will you employ to prevent 1) deterioration of historic structures and 2) demolition through negligence?

The answer lies in the question itself. The HDLC should utilize clear, objective criteria on a regular basis to evaluate properties to avoid deterioration and unnecessary demolitions. The unique architecture in New Orleans should be preserved. At a minimum, there should be an inventory of those properties with routine inspections to ensure the historical nature of those buildings is maintained as well as coordination with the neighborhood groups to ensure the inventory is properly inspected.

5. District A residents are receiving tax bills that are sometimes 50% higher than the previous year. How will you lessen the impact of increased valuation of homes and make it easier for residents to pay their tax bill?

While the City Council is the direct appeal from the Assessor's office, this can be a long process in which there ought to be more certainty. I would be willing to work with the New Orleans legislative delegation to cap drastic property-tax increases so that residents do not see their property tax bills skyrocket from one year to the next.

INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Given the city's recognition of climate change & recent flooding events, what steps will you take to prioritize resilience and sustainability in the city's infrastructure?

I support the administration's focus on resiliency as well as the Urban Water Plan to live with water. There is no single answer to this question. A few examples of steps that can and should be taken include:

- Examining best practices from other parishes – such as Jefferson Parish – to see if intentionally flooding parks will prevent flooding of homes and businesses;
- Improving efficiencies, such as reducing idling cars unnecessarily using gas, using more permeable substances and requiring more environmentally thoughtful street work, and promote use of mass transit, HOV lanes, and bicycling; and,
- Continuing to write and receive grants from the state and federal government as well as foundations to ensure sustainability projects are properly funded.

2. Given that moving towards making New Orleans a “green” city may impact Entergy’s profits, what can the city’s regulatory powers do to ensure renewable sustainable energy use is optimized and rates controlled now and in the future?

The City Council conducts much of its business through various committees, including the Utility, Cable, Telecommunications and Technology Committee (“Utilities Committee”), which oversees Entergy. The Utilities Committee is responsible for studying and implementing policies to control rates for consumers. It should be constantly vigilant to ensure utility infrastructure is properly maintained and that throughput remains maximized while at the same time containing costs for consumers. The Utilities Committee should explore with Entergy the use of solar, wind, and other sources of renewable energy to reduce emissions while simultaneously ensuring those alternative energy sources are economically feasible.

3. What reforms in S&WB governance will you advocate to assure accountability to the city and execute citizen oversight?

The Utilities Committee has a “work-hardening” plan in which Entergy evaluates its preparedness for hurricane season. At a minimum, the City through the Public Works Committee needs the same evaluation not only before hurricane season but on a regular basis to ensure: (a) the pumps are properly maintained; (b) the turbines are working properly; and (c) the catch basins are actually being cleaned. This information should not only be provided to the Council but also citizens through the website of S&WB. Moreover, the reform of S&WB always included rigorous oversight of management. That piece must constantly be evaluated by the Council to avoid the flooding of August 5th and the recent boil water advisories. Finally, there is discussion of potentially returning a councilmember(s) to the S&WB. If so, it should be someone with connective tissue between the S&WB and Council such as the President of the Council, the Chair of the Public Works Committee, or the Chair of the Utilities Committee.

Parks

- 1. What steps would you take to ensure public oversight in parks, particularly those which are governed as a public private partnership, such as Audubon and City Parks?**

Parks are public assets. The concerns of neighbors and preserving the parks in accordance with the law is important. Much as the question two under the “Budget” Section below asks, the City Council has the power to approve members to the boards of both parks (the Mayor appoints those to Audubon and has an appointment to City Park and the City Council has two appointments to City Park). The councilmembers then need to be constantly vigilant of appointment commissioners/board members who have the time to dedicate to listening to, understanding, and working with stakeholders to ensure the parks’ best interests are met. Of course, community input is critical. That means notice of meetings related to parks should be readily available, with agendas published well in advance of meetings, and meetings held at times when the public can participate.

- 2. Would you support the expansion of the Lafitte Greenway to include an additional ½ mile across City Park Avenue to Canal Boulevard? (yes/no)**

Yes.

Public Services

What will you do to ensure adequate capacity and accessibility for mental health and substance abuse care in the city?

We have to care for those with mental health and substance abuse issues in New Orleans. According to a June 2017 report from Odyssey House, EMS was responding to five heroin overdoses per day. The City should continue to work on funding sources and local government entities – such as Metropolitan Human Services District – to ensure those with mental health and substance abuse receive needed care. Moreover, city officials need to work with the legislature to protect and work on funding to these entities.

Budget

1. What do you think should be done to improve and increase citizen participation in government decision making process?

After spending nearly a decade at the grassroots and neighborhood level, while there are many neighborhood stakeholders energized about and engaged with government, many people either feel like government does not work for them or have acquiesced on what government provides. Government should be providing for safe, livable neighborhoods and restoring confidence in those basic functions. Perhaps, then, people will become more engaged. In addition, city government needs to communicate early and often with neighbors through multiple platforms to encourage engagement in decision making as well as ensuring public meetings are held when people can participate.

2. How would you ensure that our many commissions fairly represent all the residents and fairly manage the public interest and our public dollars?

I'll actively engage local organizations to seek appropriately qualified candidates. I'll also utilize best practices established nationally, and internationally, to promote diversity.

2(a). When is it appropriate for the City Council to override decisions made by CPC, HDLC and other city department recommendations?

Generally, the City Council should generally give deference to the CPC and HDLC. While there are no absolutes, if (a) an interpretation is improperly construed, (b) the law was clearly not followed by an agency, (c) a new, undecided issue arises, or (d) a one-size-fits-all approach is applied to an unconventional problem, then the City Council should consider intervening.