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McCraith, Linda

From: Alberta Tinsley-Talabi [albertatinsleytalabi@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, June 08, 2009 6:07 PM
To: election
Subject: Detroit Free Press Candidate Questionnaire
Attachments: ATTFreepQuestionnaire.doc; AlbertaTinsleyTalabiHeadshot.JPG

You will find my completed Free Press Candidate questionnaire attached as well as in the body of this email. In addition per your request, I have attached a photo, in jpeg.

Thank You
Alberta

Detroit Free Press
Detroit City Council Candidate Questionnaire
August 4, 2009 Primary Election

Name: Alberta Tinsley-Talabi

DOB: August 14, 1955

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Website address: currently under construction

Employer: City of Detroit

Occupation: Member, Detroit City Council

How Long?: Elected in 1993

High School Diploma: yes School: Southeastern High School Year: 1972

College degree: B.S.W School: Eastern Michigan University Year: 1976

Advanced degree(s): N/A

~~Please list any previous public office to which you have been elected or appointed beginning with the~~

most recent.

Detroit City Council, first elected in 1993

Wayne County Commission, 1988-1990

1. Explain, in 50 words or fewer, why you are seeking a seat on the Detroit City Council.

I am seeking re-election to continue championing important issues of employment, substance abuse prevention/treatment, business retention/development, housing and neighborhood stabilization. I believe my actions on council have shown I have the temperament to address important issues without fanfare.

2. Describe any professional, educational or civic experience that has prepared you to play a constructive role on the city council.

My 16 years as a member of the Detroit City Council, combined with 3 years on the Wayne County Commission have provided me a healthy dose of the realities of political office. I have been involved in many community and business organizations during my lifetime. I am very close to the heartbeat of citizens in our city and work to meet their individual and collective concerns.

I continue to live in a neighborhood beset with all of the challenges confronting our citizens throughout our city and work daily to create healthy models of living to duplicate in other areas. The current fiscal state of Detroit will require everyone to make sacrifices and I recognize this reality and subsequently prepared to make tough decisions.

3. What do you anticipate spending on your campaign? How much have you collected so far? How many people have contributed?

I anticipate the total cost will be around \$250,000. Less than 50% has been collected from several dozens contributors.

4. Please list what you consider to be the three most important core functions of city government.

I believe that all services impacting the quality of life in Detroit is a core service that should be addressed by city government. At the top of the list, in my opinion, are public safety, public works and water.

5. Please identify three governmental department or functions you would be willing to eliminate.

The ultimate goal is to reduce costs and overhead through efficiency which can be achieved not only thru elimination but also consolidation & regionalization. I think regionalizing Cobo Hall and public transportation are reasonable. Public Lighting is another possibility.

6. What changes in staffing, compensation, benefits or work rule do you believe will be required to assure Detroit's continued solvency?

Changes in work rules can go a long way in reducing the city's overtime budget and improve the overall quality of city services by being able to operate on a 24 hours basis, where & when appropriate, without paying a wage premium. Given that the typical benefits package costs an additional 70% of salary, providing incentives for employees to move from benefit-

based compensation to contract-based could reduce the city's personnel costs greatly.

7. With money available to tear down only 3,000-5,000 a year, how would you speed up the demolition of the estimated 80,000 abandon homes and buildings in Detroit?

The best way to expedite the demolition of structures currently in the system is to prevent any more from being added. We must clearly do a better job preventing vacant buildings from entering the dangerous building system; I think the vacant property ordinance I am working on, which is similar to steps taken by other municipalities, will certainly help. Secondly, there are abandoned buildings in the system that can be rehabilitated. Given the volume of foreclosures, these homes can go back on the tax rolls and we can begin to repopulate our neighborhoods. If we do nothing, these homes will further deteriorate and must be demolish which will further strain demolition resources. I'm advocating that some of the federal funds be used to rehab existing homes instead of building new. Finally, I think amendments to state laws governing the Fire Escrow Fund can assist in removing burned out buildings faster.

8. Detroit's dwindling population is distributed over a geographical area many times the size of other cities. Do you support efforts to concentrate residents in a smaller portion of the city? If so, how would you facilitate this, and what short and long term uses would you envision for vacated neighborhoods?

I do not support the wholesale concentration of residents into a smaller portion of the city. However, in those areas that maybe barren, with 1 or 2 houses for blocks, I would consider approaching those residents with the option of moving into a more stable area. This must be handled very carefully with strict guidelines. This is not 1954 when we were approaching a population of 2 million. The reality is that City planners should concentrate on identifying those areas depleted of population and focus on moving those residents as well as businesses into areas with synergy and population to further stabilize our city. Utilization of those areas as growing spaces for food is the responsible thing to do until future development plans are in place. Ultimately, we must work on the redevelopment of these areas in order to put land back on the tax rolls.

9. Do you support the agreement the Cockrel Administration negotiated to transfer the ownership and operation of Cobo Hall to a regional authority? If not, how would you propose to finance the expansion and operation of a convention center that costs Detroit \$20 million annually to support?

I do support leasing Cobo to a regional authority.

10. How important is it to you to improve relations between the city of Detroit and the rest of the metropolitan region? **Highest priority (in some areas)** **Somewhat important (generally)** It matters but not critically to the city not very not at all

11. How can the city provide better bus service?

I think city bus service can be improved and the cost of the service reduced by merging D-DOT and SMART.

12. Which if any of the city's assets should be put up for sale to raise revenues or reduce expenses?

How would you evaluate proposals to sell any such asset?

Generally, for me, such proposals should not only provide an immediate infusion of cash but also long term tax benefits, e.g., vacant land for development. Additionally, I would decide on any proposal based on its ability to not reduce services to city residents and create more jobs.

13. Is it a good idea for the city to raise money by selling for an up-front cash payment its revenue from such sources as public parking or Detroit-Windsor tunnel tolls?

My decision would be based on the structure of the deal. Generally, these types of deals, once approved, are managed to generate more revenue for the buyer than what was paid to the seller. Without careful and thoughtful due diligence, citizens and visitors could be impacted for a long time. I would not support any deal I thought would unnecessarily burden residents and visitors.