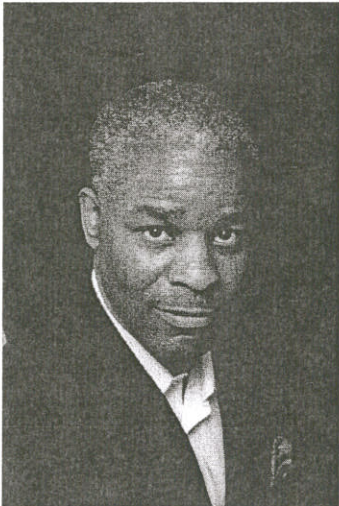


David Jonathan

CROSS

for Detroit City Council 2009

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Detroit City Council Candidate Questionnaire

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Employer: **Self employed attorney and President of Endeavor Real Estate Development Group**
Occupation: **Attorney and Real Estate Developer**
How long? **Attorney (20 years), Developer 15 years give or take**
High School diploma: School(s): **Cass Technical High School Year: 1974-77**
Graduated Southfield Christian High School 1978
College Degree: **Attended Tabor College (Hillsboro, Kansas) 1978-1981**
Wayne State University 1981-1985
Advanced degree(s): **Juris Doctor, Thomas M. Cooley Law School 1989 (admitted to practice in Michigan October 1989)**

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

I have not previously been elected or appointed to any public office.

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

Born and raised here in Detroit, my life and career were made possible because of this community's nurturing. This community prepared me for leadership, and I have a responsibility to step up to lead at a time when prepared, capable and competent leadership is so needed.

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

My training and experience as an attorney, my real estate development experience and the volunteer positions I have held with several Detroit non-profit organizations and my commitment to providing pro bone legal services tonon-profit/churches have prepared me to play a constructive role on the city council.

As an attorney and developer on many an occasion I have had to interact with several departments of city government as well as the Detroit City Council. I am familiar with the local legislative and administrative process. Additionally, my experience with several civic organizations such as the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce (Leadership Detroit Class LXVII), several CDCs and faith based organizations has provided me a unique background of experience that includes both sides of the community table – residents and business.

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

I anticipate that I will spend no less than \$50,000 on the campaign and perhaps as much as \$150,000. Political fundraising is extremely difficult in these tough economic times due to serious voters' election and fundraising fatigue. My campaign has raised just about \$15,000, excluding my personal contributions to the campaign so far. We have several scheduled fundraisers in the next few weeks leading up to the primary including a golf outing and these fundraisers are projected to raise another \$50,000. In various amounts we have had more than 50 contributors.

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

- **Ensure and oversee the management of essential, tax supported city services (i.e., public safety, trash pick-up, tax policy)**
- **Create and adopt laws and policies for a well functioning community (i.e., budget oversight, propose and adopt ordinances, participate in future master planning for city)**

- Advocate on behalf of community throughout the region, throughout the state and before the federal government

5. Please identify three government departments or functions you would be willing to eliminate.

Before committing to eliminate departments or functions an assessment should be done to determine what works and what does not. Council should certainly evaluate the performance of, and determine the necessity for, the following departments:

- Public lighting
- Public Health Department
- Fleet management (repair, maintenance, etc)

There are surely other areas of concern and I would push for a complete assessment that would not only address performance and need, but also how functions and departments can be combined or consolidated with other providers such as the county (i.e., Can we eliminate the duplicity of services provided by both the Detroit Health Department and Wayne County Health Department?).

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

Similar to the process mentioned in question (5) above, a professional assessment of appropriate levels of staffing, levels of compensation, benefits and work rules must be done before decisions are finalized. It is a fairly common assertion that city government is too large so this review should begin sooner rather than later.

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 abandoned homes and buildings in Detroit?

For privately owned property Detroit must step up efforts to forfeit neglected/blighted property, and utilize its' demolition by neglect process when appropriate. This same land can then be banked along with land already owned by the city (and possibly county), assembled for sale at the price of demolition, and requiring demolition by the purchaser as a pre-condition to sale within 60 days of the closing.

I would also seek state and federal funding to assist in demolishing those properties that pose serious environmental risk to residents.

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 support the concept (zero density) but only when it is accompanied by a clear and concise policy/plan for future re-development. Vacated land should be re-assembled

in an effort to create new and complete neighborhoods based upon a “town within a town” concept. Within this concept, re-development should be comprehensive and includes infrastructure, transit, new schools, churches, commercial development for retail and services that serve these new neighborhoods, as well as public safety (police/fire) and civic facilities.

Property tax is one of the top revenue sources for any city and land should be placed back on the tax roles as soon as possible. A clear, concise and comprehensive public policy for relocation and re-development of vacated land would attract investors, developers and home buyers.

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?

Eventually I would like to see the region invest in a new convention center altogether; a convention center with a design so revolutionary it would, by itself, be the reason to not only hold a convention here but also a tourist attraction alone (similar in visual appeal to the Guggenheim, Sydney Opera House, etc.). Think about a jointly owned and developed international convention center between Detroit and Windsor.

However, we are not there yet and my answer to your question is that I did support the concept of the deal but I was not enamored with its details or the process that led to the deal. Something has to be done about Cobo Hall and I would hope that this new administration along with a new City Council as well as regional and state congressional leaders can sit down in earnest to come up with a new plan that works for all interested parties.

I believe that a focus on reviving the already vetoed plan is counter-productive. The financing plan (extension of current liquor and hotel tax financing) is a viable source for funding Cobo Hall. Cobo Hall is one example where a public private effort should be considered and explored. I would explore monetizing Cobo Hall in the private sector. Our convention center is an ideal municipal asset that would be attractive to the private investment sector. Monetizing Cobo Hall would not require a sale because monetizing is usually accomplished through a long term lease. In addition, it is quite possible that the private sector would do better at managing Cobo Hall and bringing it to profitability.

10. How important is it to you to improve relations between the city of Detroit and the rest of the metropolitan region?

_____ Highest priority _____ Somewhat important _____ It matters but
not critically to the city _____ not very _____ not at all

The options provided here don't quite capture my position on this issue. My position with an explanation is that improved regional cooperation is very important for the region and the city. Earlier this year Freep.com included a revised version of an article I produced for my Facebook page on this issue and I am including the original FB piece here for your review:

"As a general proposition, political and social debates in our area generate more heat than light; in spite of frigid temperatures outside we need more light and less heat. The discussion about Detroit and her relationship with its nearby suburbs is one of those debates that generate anger and resentment back and forth and offer little enlightenment.

As a Detroiter and candidate for Detroit City Council I believe that there is great potential for regionalism to work. Detroit and her suburbs are inextricably bound together and I have to believe that much of suburban criticism of Detroit is born from frustration, love and concern for this community. Clearly, a high percentage of suburbanites are former Detroiters who grew up in, went to school in, continue to have family, church and business ties to Detroit; not to mention those who enjoy the entertainment options Detroit offers that can't be found in the suburbs and that large numbers of suburbanites work in the city.

I believe that suburban support for Detroit is an important tool that can be used to get Detroit on track. The region can ill afford to continue hammering the wedge that exists between us deeper and deeper. In the long run neither Detroit nor its suburbs can survive alone and we clearly will do better if we work together.

However, all those who support regionalism and a better Detroit/suburban relationship must be committed to a reciprocal relationship that recognizes what Detroit has to offer as well as her needs, and that what Detroit needs is more than downtown traffic. If we are to be truly committed to a regional approach we must all acknowledge that it is not just a matter of suburbanites identifying with Detroit but it is also a matter of Detroiters identifying with its suburban neighbors. With regionalism comes the notion that there are some bad things that come with the good of every community, and we all must be committed to resolving the bad in order to enjoy the good.

It is past due time for all of us to get over ourselves for the sake of all of our communities. If we are willing to truly respect each other as legitimate communities, stop talking and start doing, we can begin to heal the wounds between Detroit and its neighbors. Let's recognize and acknowledge that Detroit has much to offer the suburbs and the region, and that the suburbs have much to offer to Detroit. Let's commit to make it happen.

I am not suggesting that we take a naive approach by ignoring the deep seated historical problems that exist between Detroit and the suburbs, but I am suggesting that our approach recognize that times have changed, and those things that kept us apart in the past will spell the ruin of us all if we don't come together. We certainly have a long way to go in dealing with racism, classism, cultural and religious phobias,

economic disparities and territorialism, but these problems have existed far too long for us to not have them resolved by now; for this failure we are all at fault. We can no longer afford the seeming luxury of a separatist mind set. Detroit needs to change and its suburbs need to change as well.

Finally, don't judge all of Detroit by the current make up of its leadership on Council. There are other voices like mine who recognize the potential for cooperation between Detroit and her suburbs. My priority as a City Council candidate is Detroit, and one of the strategies I want to employ is to welcome our suburban neighbors who respect Detroit as a viable community to help Detroit solve its problems which include crime (its perception and its reality), a failing educational system, high unemployment and lack of economic development. Our media plays an important role in providing a platform for new voices to be heard and to stop parading the histrionics and ineffective voices of those who don't have Detroit's best interest at heart. With your support I can start making a difference."

11. How can the city provide better bus service?

Mass transit is a problem that extends well beyond the need for improved bus service. Public bus transportation is an essential city service but options for improvement are limited due to limited financial resources. However, I do believe that public transportation can be improved and enhanced by providing more private transportation options for residents and visitors. The recent promising developments for light rail transportation down Woodward Ave should serve the city well and take some burden off of the bus system. I also believe that the city should explore and discuss other forms of private transportation which include legalizing and regulating private modes of transportation such as sedans, vans and busses within specified zones.

I also believe that the city of Detroit should implement a "best business practice" way of providing public bus transportation. This can be done by partnering with the private mass transportation industry to provide training and logistic so that we city bus drivers and management can improve how public bus transportation is delivered to residents. We should also explore ways to consolidate bus repairs and maintenance with other fleet service providers to gain some efficiency in bus repairs so that down time is reduced.

12. Which if any of the city's assets should be put up for sale to raise revenues or reduce expense? How would you evaluate proposals to sell any such asset?

As a council member I would request an assessment of city assets to determine whether the asset is essential to providing core city services. I would also seek to determine which assets are symbolic and represent the development and growth of the city over time or those assets that have an emotional civic attachment to the positive image of Detroit; most importantly is an evaluation of the performance of the asset financially – is it a burden on the city's general fund?

I would certainly sell, as soon as possible, any troubled city assets such as the large amount of land owned by the city which generates no tax revenue. After sale I would consider taxing vacant land higher than structures in order to encourage development on vacant land.

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?

If a transaction can be properly negotiated it can be a good idea. As I mentioned earlier I believe the city of Detroit can and should explore further the idea of "monetizing" Cobo Hall and other city assets. The sale of city assets is always going to be highly politically charged but monetizing, properly negotiated and explained, can help resolve the political issues involved in selling city assets. By monetizing the city would maintain ownership but receive a large, up front "rent" payment in return for transferring, under a long-term lease, the assets' profit and loss risk to a private operator which, in turn, should be able to operate the asset far more efficiently.

Several other jurisdictions and large urban centers have experienced success in these public private partnerships including Chicago, the state of Indiana, the state of Virginia and the state of Pennsylvania.

The city of Detroit has several assets it can consider for monetizing such as its' municipal parking garages, Detroit City Airport, real estate developments that have reverted back to the city, our solid waste facilities, water/wastewater facilities as well as our waterways and ports. I am not suggesting that this is the solution for Detroit's revenue shortages but I am suggesting that we explore the possibilities. Any monetizing of city assets must take into account employment issues, and the civic emotional attachment to certain assets citizens have come to see as essential to the image and pride of Detroit.