

**Committee for a Better Atlanta
Candidate Pre-Interview Questionnaire 2009**

Candidate Information

Name: Alvelyn Sanders

Position Sought: Atlanta City Council – District 11

Address: 1375 Adams Drive, SW
City, State, ZIP: Atlanta, Georgia 30311

Telephone: (404) 401.2721 cell

E-mail address: alvelynsanders@gmail.com

Campaign Web site address: www.alvelynsanders.com

Secondary contact information (If you prefer that CBA direct scheduling inquiries to someone other than the candidate, check here ___.)

No secondary contact information.

1. In your opinion, what are the three greatest issues (problems or opportunities) facing Atlanta?

A. Unfortunately, at times, citizens of Atlanta feel as if they are not getting the optimum value for their tax dollars. City leaders must be cognizant of this perception, and provide leadership to make the city work for its citizens as best as possible.

B. The news coverage has been rife with crime reports that seem to have placed our city on a heightened alert. Public safety is always an issue. However, it is one that can be addressed by establishing partnerships between the community, law enforcement, and crime prevention initiatives.

C. Atlanta is a vibrant city. However, there are bleak areas of poverty that belie the greatness of our city. Any city concerned about sustained growth and regional leadership cannot move forward without acknowledging its impoverished, which includes the homeless population. The city should strive to insure a fair distribution of resources by tapping into the expertise of existing agencies and organizations.

2. Describe briefly your qualifications for holding this office.

I am a graduate of Northwestern University (Bachelor of Science, Radio-TV-Film), Clark Atlanta University (Master of Arts, African American Studies), and Emory University (Master of Theological Studies and Master of Divinity). I have been a public servant in my community through my work as a journalist, reporting for Atlanta's flagship National Public Radio station and the Atlanta Journal Constitution newspaper, and others; my work as a college instructor; my work as an ordained minister; and my work as a supporter of the Democratic Party as a former County Party officer, and present Post-Seat Holder elected multiple terms by residents of House District 63. My professional career spans communications/journalism, academia, faith, and politics.

Additional Bio Notes:

Ordained Clergy, serving as an Assistant Minister at Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church on historic Auburn Avenue in downtown Atlanta

Former Staff Member of President Barack Obama's 2008 Campaign as an Organizer based at the State Headquarters in Atlanta

Graduating Fellow of the National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women

Fulton County Democratic Party, Post-Seat Holder, Elected by residents of House District 63 multiple terms

Reactivated South Fulton Democratic Committee as a Founding President
Immediate Past Chaplain, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Atlanta Alumnae Chapter
Served as a Full-time Instructor at Morris Brown College (2000-2003)
Former Adjunct Instructor at Spelman College (2003-2004)
Arts advocate as a staff member and consultant for the National Black Arts Festival
Award-winning writer and journalist

3. What events or experiences caused you to decide to run for this office?

I am seeking to be elected to the Atlanta City Council – District 11. It will be an honor to offer a new generation of service to southwest Atlanta, where I was born. I want to build on the tradition of residents who have worked over the years to make our community one of excellence. I have great respect and admiration for their leadership. I believe now is the time for a visionary, consensus-building servant who will lead District 11 into the years to come. With the help of residents, I am ready to create VISION 11— inviting citizens and the present leadership of our community “to the table” for a collective conversation as we work to continue to move southwest Atlanta forward.

One of my most recent achievements as a former staff member of President Barack Obama’s Presidential Campaign was tapping into my theological training as it relates to community building and combining it with the Obama Campaign’s vision of a volunteer led effort, allowing me to serve as a catalyst, leading from within, to organize citizens and empower them to create change. Working in two distinct sections of Fulton County throughout the course of the campaign, I had the privilege of working with a diverse group of supporters reflecting the spectrum of America.

4. Please identify up to five organizations or individuals who are actively supporting your candidacy. (I understand that these responses may be posted online. I have not yet queried supporters about placing their names on the web. However, I will list my parents.)

Dr. Georgianne Thomas
Alvin Sanders

5. The city government faces a \$50 million budget shortfall this fiscal year. How would you close the budget gap?

The \$50 million budget shortfall has been resolved with the property tax increase recently passed by the Atlanta City Council. Going forward, as the city prepares to approve an annual balanced budget, departments can be encouraged to undergo continuous auditing to identify ways to trim costs, and to ensure that tax dollars are being spent effectively.

6. Since 2004, the city’s official goal has been to have 2,000 police officers. The Police Department is now at 1,615 officers. Do you support the goal? If so, how would you pay for the additional officers given the city’s budget problems?

Before the city settles on a finite number of officers to hire, city leaders must realistically look at the cost per officer, per year. The total amount needed could result in another discussion of tax increases. One serious issue is the retention of Atlanta Police officers. If the city retains its police officers over a sustained period of time, it does not have to hire as many. Finally, it would be wonderful to have officers live where they work by striving to present affordable options, which would positively impact retention.

7. Mayor Franklin has used tax-allocation districts and tax abatements to support redevelopment projects. What would you have the city government do to support desirable redevelopment areas in the years ahead?

Tax-allocation districts and tax abatements work well when the economy is thriving, and the budget shows a surplus. However, when the economy is sluggish, these two options can be difficult choices because of the decrease in tax

revenue, sales tax particularly. Therefore, the burden is placed on residents. In the years ahead, the city should continue to weigh the benefits of tax-allocation districts and tax abatements in relation to the projected economy, while promoting those projects that combine residential and commercial development, so the latter can generate the revenue the city needs. Additionally, city government can consider Community Improvement Districts as an option for redevelopment projects.

8. Traffic congestion is a major problem in Atlanta. If you could implement only one initiative, enhancement or management change to reduce congestions in Atlanta in the next four years, what would it be? Note: This should be something within the city's government ability to implement.

I would implement an initiative that allows the city to engage in a public campaign to encourage the business community to increase live-work opportunities and telecommuting options. With digital technology, employees don't always need to report to a specified building to engage in meaningful work. Corporations could create satellite centers, using the model of virtual workspaces, to serve as work stations for staff. Therefore, present and new developments could be created with that idea in mind. Furthermore, the city could take leadership in leading the conversation about a "traditional" work-day. A paradigm shift of the eight-hour day would be encouraged.

9. In your opinion, what are the three greatest infrastructure problems facing Atlanta over the next four years? Please rank them in terms of importance and urgency.

1. Water and sewer systems
2. Old bridges
3. High-speed Internet/Wireless Technology

End of Questionnaire