



Candidate Pre-Interview Questionnaire

The Committee for a Better Atlanta (CBA) is a coalition of business organizations concerned about Atlanta. In 2009, CBA is interviewing candidates for mayor, City Council president and City Council with the intent of publishing a voter's guide of candidate evaluations. The evaluations will be based on the answers to the questions in this document, plus in-person interviews to be held this summer.

Your answers to these questions are very important to the CBA interview and evaluation process. ***Candidates who do not complete this questionnaire will not be scheduled for an interview with CBA.*** Please complete this questionnaire and deliver it to the Committee for a Better Atlanta so it arrives **no later than 5p.m. , July 31, 2009.** Questionnaires can be filled out electronically and emailed to cwatkins@macoc.com, or mailed to:

**Committee for a Better Atlanta
235 International Blvd., NW
Atlanta, GA 30303
Attn: Che Watkins**

If you have any questions about completing the questionnaire – or about the CBA process – please contact Che Watkins at (404) 586-8468.

Candidate information

Name	<u>Keisha Lance Bottoms</u>
Position Sought	<u>Atlanta City Council District 11</u>
Address	<u>4900 Guilford Forest Drive</u>
City, State, ZIP	<u>Atlanta, Georgia 30331</u>
Telephone Cell phone	<u>404-405-6684</u>
E-mail address	<u>keishalancebottoms@live.com</u>
Campaign Web site address	<u>keishalancebottoms.com</u>

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

Name
Relationship to candidate (e.g. Administrative assistant, campaign manager, etc.)
Address
City, State, ZIP
Telephone Cell phone
E-mail address

Please answer the questions in the space provided on this questionnaire.

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

Atlanta faces a number of interrelated challenges that must all be effectively addressed. I do not believe that we have stand alone problems. Atlanta must:

1. **Address its financial situation by instituting sustainable fiscal management procedures.** We should explore the use of zero based budgets, hire and retain experienced and proven financial management professionals, identify new revenue sources, collect on overdue fines and fees, and eliminate the duplication of services where possible. Additionally, we need to examine the pension/retirement options for newly hired City employees. It seems doubtful that Atlanta can continue to fund its pension obligations at the current rate of new hires.
2. **Improve public safety across the City.** We start by having strong leadership in our public safety departments. We need to recruit and retain effective police officers. We must also expand the police force to enable and equip it to protect all of our citizens, commuters, and visitors. The approach to public safety must also include addressing issues that contribute to crime. Specifically, we must provide opportunities for education and meaningful jobs for those who might otherwise turn to crime. This will require partnerships between the City government, Atlanta Public Schools, intown and suburban communities, and the business community. We must also address the budgetary issues that have impacted the fire department, as well as the issues of retention and recruitment in that area.
3. **Promote economic development.** Atlanta must promote a climate that attracts and retains businesses of all types. We must continue to leverage our position as a transportation hub by ensuring the continued viability of the airport. We must work with our public school system, and colleges and universities, to ensure that there is a supply of trained workers to attract businesses to the city. We must also address our regional transportation issues. In short, we must ensure a quality of life for our citizens, both individual and businesses, that makes existing businesses want to stay and other businesses want to come to the City.

By addressing these issues, we can also exploit our greatest opportunities for improving our city.

2. Describe briefly your qualifications for holding this office. (Please answer in the space below, but you may also attach a resume or other description to provide us with additional detail.)

I am a lifelong resident of Atlanta and a proud graduate of the Atlanta Public School System. I graduated Magna Cum Laude from Florida A&M University and received my J.D. from Georgia State University College of Law. I am actively involved in my

community and church and have dedicated countless hours of community service to projects throughout the City of Atlanta.

I have the traits needed to be an effective member of Council in that:

- a. I am an effective consensus builder;
- b. I listen more than I talk;
- c. I have an ability to walk comfortably in the worlds that make up our city; and
- d. I have a desire to serve and improve the City of Atlanta.

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

In 2008, I ran a county wide campaign against a 12 year incumbent and received more than 46% of the vote as a first time candidate. In the course of that campaign, I repeatedly heard the need for government to do its job, i.e. efficiently provide basic services and ensure an improved quality of life for all of its citizens. As a victim of two mid-day burglaries, a recipient of decreased services, and a witness to a shrinking financial base, I feel the need to offer myself for public service.

4. Please identify up to five organizations or individuals who are actively supporting your candidacy.

I believe that my candidacy is supported by those with whom I have formed relationships with as a lifelong resident of this city. I also believe that my candidacy is likely supported by the thousands of people that I touched during my campaign last year. Specifically, however, the following are actively involved in and support my candidacy:

- 1) Rev. Richard Winn (Pastor Ben Hill United Methodist Church);
- 2) Mr. and Mrs. Michael and Lovette Russell
- 3) Dr. and Mrs. Rod and Brooke Jackson Edmond
- 4) Mrs. Patrice Greer
- 5) Mr. and Mrs. Dolan and Kimberly Falconer

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

I believe that the recent three (3) mill tax increase addressed the majority of the 2010 budget gap. Going forward, however, I would recommend the use of zero based budgets to force a continuous review of ongoing city programs. I would support a study to identify new areas of revenue for the city in order to reduce the tax burden on our citizens. Finally, we must improve the collection of overdue fees and fines which should result in a significant revenue source.

Shoring up our finances, however, is a two way street. Not only must we improve the revenues that come in, but we must also be mindful of the money that goes out. Primarily, we need to address our pension payment responsibility that accounts for more than 20% of the 2010 budget. This is unsustainable for new employees and we must indentify new options.

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?**

I support the goal of more officers for the city, but I am not yet ready to land on a specific number of officers. The correct number of needed officers may very well be more than 2000. To achieve more officers on the force, we must first address the retention of officers. To pay for more officers, we need to seek federal funds as we did with the COPS program. We must also use enhanced revenue sources and cuts to non-essential services to help pay for additional officers. Nontraditional incentives must also be explored such as assistance in securing affordable housing within the City for officers.

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 projects in the years ahead?**

I support the continued use of “balanced” TADS and tax abatements in the city. We must ensure that TAD based bond debt is paid off as quickly as possible to ensure that the underlying revenue is available for other uses. I would focus our TAD and tax abatement use to ensure the development of mixed use areas and sustainable projects. I would also enhance partnerships with the Atlanta Development Authority to facilitate growth throughout all areas of the city.

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

I would work to improve the coordination of the use of traffic signals throughout the City and enhance our real time traffic management capabilities.

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**– We must ensure our continued access to water to sustain future growth. That will also entail the completion our water/sewer consent decrees.
- 2) **Traffic/Transportation**– Traffic congestion must be relieved if Atlanta is going to continue to draw businesses and industry to the City. A regional and statewide

approach to the transportation issues that face the metropolitan area must be exercised.

- 3) **Education**– While the Atlanta Public School System has made tremendous strides recently, there are miles to go. A quality, public school education must be an option not only for upwardly mobile families seeking to call Atlanta home, but also to ensure that the thousands of children currently relying on the school system are equipped to pursue viable career options in the future.