



Candidate Information

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 questions in a questionnaire, plus in-person interviews to be held this summer.

Please complete this information form and deliver it to the Committee for a Better Atlanta as soon as possible in order to ensure that we have accurate information for our database.

This form can be faxed back to 404-586-8427 or mailed to:

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

If you have any questions please contact CBA at (404) 586-8468.

Candidate information

Name	<u>Sidney Wood</u>
Position Sought	<u>Atlanta City Council District 4</u>
Address	<u>719 Lawton St, SW</u>
City, State, ZIP	<u>Atlanta, Georgia 30310</u>
Telephone	<u>(404) 200-0436</u> Cell phone _____
E-mail address	<u>sidneyprays@yahoo.com</u>
Campaign Web site address	_____

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

Name	<u>Najee Johnson</u>
Relationship to candidate	<u>Campaign Manager</u> (e.g. Administrative assistant, campaign manager, etc.)
Address	<u>830 Westview Dr, SW Unit #141105</u>
City, State, ZIP	<u>Atlanta, Georgia 30314</u>
Telephone	_____ Cell phone <u>(901) 870-7950</u>
E-mail address	<u>johnson.najee@gmail.com</u>

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

The three greatest issues facing Atlanta are crime (public safety), neighborhood stabilization and economic development.

- 2) Describe briefly your qualifications for holding this office.

I am a graduate of an Atlanta metro high school (North Springs High School) and was educated at a college right here in District 4 during my freshman year (Morehouse College). For more than 20 years I have had a career in on-air broadcasting (radio), serving multiple Atlanta radio stations (WCLK, WVEE, Kiss 104 and others). I believe in this capacity I have gained and developed the strong communication skills necessary to be the most effective in the role of city councilmember for my district. In addition to honing those skills, I also served as Community Affairs Director of the Atlanta radio station "Kiss 104," a position which gave me insight into the needs of Atlanta's communities. I received key management experience as the program director of the Atlanta radio station WCLK.

Stepping aside from the world of communications just a bit, I have been able to develop business acumen and sales experience as a senior account executive for Streaming Faith, which is the world's largest online broadcast portal to the faith-based audience. Using that knowledge of business, I have gained entrepreneurial experience as owner and operator of New Covenant Communications (a firm providing marketing and media services for ministries) which will assist our city in stimulating new business development opportunities. In this role I have also developed an understanding of technology and its role in business and new media as the sales and marketing manager of the Northeastern United States for Multicast Media Technologies: Faith Division.

Over the years I have served a number of local church congregations in Atlanta, which has given me compassion and a service perspective which is motivated to aid homelessness and human restoration efforts. Lastly, I have shown an unwavering commitment to engage in the process of the municipal discussion, as evidenced by my previous attempts at election to the City Council and endorsement from this distinguished body.

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

Certain events have uniquely qualified me for servant leadership in the 4th district. The event of being burglarized in my home 3 times gives me great sensitivity to the issue of crime. As a cancer survivor (non-Hodgkin's lymphoma [2003]) I have an acute sensitivity to the importance of affordable health care. As team leader of The West End Warriors, an Obama '08 Community Campaign volunteer organization, I learned the importance of service, voter registration and change from the ground up. As president of the Youth and College Division of the NAACP in the state of Georgia (1982) I learned the lifelong value of the important traditions of the civil rights movement and the further significance of youth/student involvement.

- 4) Please identify up to five organizations or individuals who are actively supporting your candidacy.
- Jeff Riddle, Lawyer, Riddle Schwartz
 - Louis Schwartz, CEO, Multicast Media Technologies
 - Pastor Michael McQueen, Senior Pastor, St. James United Methodist Church
 - Attorney Janice Mathis, Senior Officer of the Rainbow Coalition
 - Edward Long, Jr., Youth Minister, New Birth Cathedral
- 5) The city government faces a \$50 million budget shortfall this fiscal year. How would you close the budget gap?
- Our deficit is somewhat attributable to failure to collect on somewhere between 25 and 35 million dollars in receivables. The revenues range in form from property taxes to traffic tickets. No business can have long range sustainability without correcting this leak. Our city must, through technology, quantify, identify and engage to recover these receipts. While landfills and natural gas revenue generating ideas begin to develop for income generation we shall do well to eliminate waste. We must make important decisions on what to cut in contrast to our overall objectives. The perspectives are many. My position is that the discussion and subsequent action of eliminating waste is essential.
- 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 increase to 2000 officers. I submit that we pay for the expense by way of prioritization. Public safety is a charter service of our city's covenant to its citizens. In an action that will connect with the previous question Atlanta must make a decision of courage to pay for (off the top) what we need the most (our police officers in our communities). By so doing, we commit our funds to our priorities and thereby force ourselves to make necessary cuts of waste in the remaining areas. If your mortgage is a priority it comes off the top and you pay the rest with what's left. The same is true for the IRA, tithe or any other fixed non-negotiable expense. Likewise our public safety should be prioritized as a non-negotiable priority which is paid from the first fruits of the city treasury.
- 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?
- Before we develop the next strategy of financial sustenance, I believe the following must be said regarding our past performance with tax allocation districts. While conceptually sound, our implementation and efficient management of these unique opportunities has resulted in too few people being employed and in the worst cases funding was left on the table, unused for reasons that still confuse and irritate many. So, before moving forward I suggest we recommit ourselves to keeping our eye on the ball. Thereby, we may move forward with a better stewardship than before. As for future opportunities for funding our city's critical development needs I believe that the significant favor that Atlanta has from the White House Administration should be intelligently harnessed and efficiently managed. I also hope to foster greater partnership allowing the triumvirate of business, government

and non-profits to form coalitions by which the financial, human resource and operational strengths of the partners cumulatively may usher in new opportunities through the unifying of previously separate entities of good will and purpose.

- 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.

Atlanta's traffic burden may best be alleviated by some of the main arteries of our major streets and boulevards. The one adjustment to make this a more attractive and productive alternative to highway congestion is to synchronize the timing of our traffic lights so as to allow heavy volumes of traffic to travel significant distances in a flow wherein the green lights are in synch, allowing a highway-like flow of traffic during peak travel times. There are patterns in other major cities to help us in this effort.

- 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.

I believe the three greatest infrastructure problems facing Atlanta over the next four years are our bridges, sewer system, and the accessibility of MARTA.