



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 5 pm., 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 Silas G Kevil III

Position Sought council person 11th district

Address 1120 Flamingo Dr

City, State, ZIP Atlanta, Ga 30311

Telephone (404) 537-9649 Cell phone (678) 886-1624

E-mail address sgkevil1@bellsouth.net

Campaign Web site address silaskevil4atlanta.com

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?

A. Fiscal responsibility and accountability. We need a smarter/better government, one that acts like and thinks like a business. Going back to Economics 101, there are only three kinds of business; those that manufacture products, process raw materials or deliver goods and services. All city governments are the service delivery business.

All businesses if they are going to be successful must keep tabs on their income and expenses. We must reconcile our books on a regular basis. The city need to at a minimum do this monthly, quarterly and annually. Cost control, accountability and financial awareness must be incorporated into the operational culture. It has not been done in the past and is one of the reasons that we are in the financial mess we are in. We also need a better way for forecast and project our revenues. The city needs and economist, actuarial or business planner full time working for the CFO or an office of management and budget. We have to stop doing things that don't work and improve on those things that do.

B. Public safety. Certainly, we need more police officers. But, manpower alone is not enough to monitor those trouble spots that are a drain on our resources. We also need more code enforcement officers, more plan reviewers, more inspectors and a new innovative approach to policing that is technology based. All of this is a part of public safety. Public safety is much bigger than law enforcement.

More importantly than anything else, we must also rebuild our Fire Department. They more than any other organization have been under funded, under staffed, and relegated to step child status in the public safety umbrella. Yet they have the highest approval rating of all the public safety components in our city; are the sole providers of fire protection and fire prevention, which directly affect our insurance rating and insurance cost. Our fire department is the primary agency for emergency preparedness and response. They are our first responders on all emergencies, regardless of the size, complexity or scope.

In order to have a sustainable public safety for our citizens, we must hire the best people; incorporate the best technologies into our process; pay a competitive wage; institute a program of continuous education/training and implement a program of internal development. There is no doubt that we need more police officers. But more importantly we need to

C, Economic Development. There is not doubt about it these are tough times. Tough times require a new thought process. City's that survive the tough times are just like businesses that survive the tough times, they become icons in their arena. Atlanta needs to take a less from the Philadelphia playbook.

When the steel business stopped driving and dominating that city's economy, city leaders cut back and began to redefine what made "Philly" great. The retuned their vision for their city and started growing again. They stuck to their plan and have weathered the global recession better than any of the top 50 cities in the country. Just like steel made "Philly" great, tourism made "Atlanta" great. Industry can and will come to Atlanta.

We must also lobby to get more support at the state level. Under the present system of state government, rural communities dominate the urban centers. Atlanta has always been the heartbeat for the state of Georgia. It's time for the State house to step up and give greater support to its urban centers.

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.)

A city council person must have the ability to listen to the constituents and under stand the needs of the district. He must balance the want and needs of the district against the city's ability to provide them. A person who touts themselves as a fighter and is unwilling to be a negotiator will not get very far. I have always had the ability to work well with other no matter what their station or status. Because of my training and experience in the fire service, I understand the importance of looking at things from all points of view, before choosing a course of action. Without a thorough size up an action plan is not worth a hill of beans.

As Trustee for the Atlanta Professional Firefighters Union, ISO Coordinator, Fire Inspector, Real Estate Broker, small business owner, I've interfaced with people in many different capacities and learned to speak their language. Within the city I've had to work with councilpersons, employees who work in the water department human resources, IT, GIS, police department; facility managers; commercial property owners and their managers; engineers and fire personnel up and down the chain of command.

In business there are home buyers and sellers; mortgage people; appraisers; lenders; HUD employees; attorneys; accountants, insurance agents and brokers; people who want to go into business and people who want to sell their business.

Some people might think that working with the people who handle the day to day operation might not be as significant as sitting on boards or rubbing elbows with the movers and the shakers. But a lot more get done knowing how to working with the people who are running things, than being able to talk to the man I charge.

To be a successful councilperson you must be able to do two things well. The first is to work intelligently in a comprehensive way with the city administration and other members of council to keep the city's budget in balance, enhance fiscal responsibility and do everything possible to raise the level of safety and security in our communities. The second is to make sure that your district gets its fair share and access to city services and resources. I believe I have the skill to do that and do that well.

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

I started thinking about running for a council seat about 2 years ago. The union (Atlanta Professional Firefighters Union) and several friends have always thought it was a great idea. For that matter other people suggested the idea to me. But, I promised myself that I would never run against Jim Maddox. In my mind Jim is a great man, a noble and dedicated servant of our district. I have now him for year and I have the highest level of respect for him. I was not going to position myself in a race with him and be tempted by supporters to dig up dirt in order to win. Winning that way was not that important to me. When Jim decided to resign form local politics, my phone began to ring and the time was right.

Also, after 25 year of working for this City, I'm tired of the way things are being handled. Our government has become so consumed with it's image of a Great International City, that it has neglected to care for it's people in due proportion. In many ways good people who have pushed their on "selfish" agendas, have done more harm to this city than the criminals.

Certainly great things have happened to Atlanta, but the price we've paid is high. Our Crime rate is up. Our schools have not performed well for quite sometime. We have homeless families living under bridges and shelters. Our property tax system of millage rates up this year and down the next makes no sense. None us really know what our property taxes should be relative to the level of services we want to have.

It's time to make a change. The common people need a voice in city government. I have been there with them, I have a feel for them and I am one of them. Being involved in the business of emergency response, saving lives and managing emergencies give you a unique perspective on the people you serve. I want to bring that knowledge to the table, represent my district and help improve my city.

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

- 1) Atlanta Professional Firefighter Union Local 134
 - 2) Richard Katz, Republic Land and Investment (long time friend, business associate and advisor)
 - 3) Milton Jones, attorney at law (long time friend, business associate and advisor)
 - 4) Mary Lou Romaine-Waymer, the Political Public Affairs Director for the UFCW.
 - 5)
-

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

For starters, you have to accept the fact that unless you win the lottery you are not going to come up with that kind of money over night. Some cuts will have to be made and some programs will have to be eliminated. If I had to offer up an action plan it would include the following:

1. **Eliminate all cost plus contracts.** If a contractor cannot prove that he can deliver on time and at the negotiated price, we won't do business with him. The water meter project is a prime example. We should have never entered into a contract with a company to replace all the water meters who could not lock them in at a fixed price. Cost over runs that are not related to a change order in the contract should not have to be paid for by the city.
2. **Implement a quartermaster system.** All city departments utilize and purchase similar items; uniforms, computers, paper products, software, certain hardware, vehicles, tools communications equipment; office equipment. Some of if not most of can be purchased by the city direct from a supplier and not a wholesaler/retailer.
3. **Take a complete inventory of all assets.** We should know exactly what we own and the value of it. That information should be place in the cities data repository, which is managed by the IT department
4. **Implement a monthly accounting and reconciliation process.** City operations are a business and should be run like one. This need to be a part of our culture.
5. **Eliminate the residency requirement for Department heads.** It costs a lot of money and takes a lot of time to find a department head. When the work and the day to day management of the department is being performed by the deputy director and the staff. Most of who have a track record and do not live within the city. It is much cheaper to promote from within.
6. **Develop a culture of succession and ascension within each department.** By developing our people who are currently on staff, exposing them to the latest innovations that improve their operations. They will hold down the costs and develop new processes that streamline operations internal to the organization.
7. **Reduce consultant fees to a bear minimum.**
8. **Prioritize projects.** If it can wait, it moves back in the schedule.
9. **Hire a full time lobbyist** who represents us at the stat and federal level. More funds are needed from those levels of government. We are providing services that enhance their function ability. More reciprocation is needed.
10. **Improve our fee collection mechanisms**
11. **Do an indebt study and develop a methodology for collecting our own property tax.** We should not be paying Fulton County 2.3 million dollars to collect our taxes.

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. But more importantly we need to understand and factor in the attrition of our current officers. Some will leave for better opportunities. A lot are leaving because of retirement. If we loose 80 officers in a year and it takes a year to recruit, hire and train 60. We are always going to be behind. In the interim we must have a more efficient way of policing. Using technology will do this.

In so far as covering the cost of the new officers is concerned. An actuarial study of the payroll saving of loosing an experienced higher paid officer and hiring a new officer needs to be done. This way you will know more preciselv what the cost is for those new officers.

Alternative funding needs to be explored. More specifically, there needs to be a set aside of tax dollars for public safety as a whole.

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?

For the next 3 years with the projected short falls that we have and will probably have, redevelopment projects are not high on the priority list of things we should be concerned with. This economy and prior improper management of our funds has shifted us into the survival mode. We need to concentrate on damage control, delivering essential basic services, controlling cost and changing to cultural mentality of how we operate as a city. The way I see it, we don't have a lot of money to go shopping. We need to hold on to what we've got. When the right deal comes around we will be ready for it.

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.

Marta is not being used to its potential. We need to support Marta in every way we can in order to get rider ship up. That could include, buying Marta card for all our employees as a part of their benefits. Advocating and perhaps advertising for them. Having a monthly raffle, where in the city raffles off 100 to 500 Marta cards. Once people start to ride it a percentage of them will continue. If 30 percent stop riding, the other 70 percent will be there.

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) Improving the water system (storm water, waste and fresh water).
- 2) Foreclosed - vacant homes.
- 3) Maintenance of bridges and streets