



## 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 p.m., July 31, 2009. Questionnaires can be filled out electronically and emailed to [cwatkins@macoc.com](mailto: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 Weslee Knapp

Position Sought Post 2 - At Large - City Council

Address 2485 Northern St

City, State, ZIP Atlanta, GA 30317

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Campaign Web site address www.knappforatlanta.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 \_\_\_\_\_

**Weslee Knapp, Candidate for Atlanta City Council Post 2 At Large**  
**[www.knappforatlanta.com](http://www.knappforatlanta.com)**

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

**Job Creation and Economic Development** – In my real estate business, I have spoken to more than 100 business owners that include developers, restaurant owners, service companies and construction companies, who now prefer doing business in other municipalities in our Metro Atlanta Region over the City of Atlanta because of small business owners negative experiences with the city in permitting, taxation, water bills, and their perceived treatment from City of Atlanta department heads.

If we can get people working again, we will solve our budget and crime issues expeditiously! June's unemployment rate has increased by more than 4.3 percent since 2008, with over 10,000 Atlantans losing their jobs this year. July's unemployment rate has more than 25, 000 Georgians losing jobs and Atlanta has taken another big hit.

**Crime – The crime issue starts with leadership.** The leadership of our City has not made our police force feel important. You do not become a police officer for the money. You do it for pride and civic service. Recently, our police force has not been supported and suffers from low morale. They have not been regularly recognized. We need to let our police and fire fighters know on a daily basis that they are appreciated!

- Even if we hire additional police officers; it doesn't guarantee a reduction in crime (unless we place a police officer on every corner of the City). However, we must strategically place our police officers in high crime districts and encourage them to build relationships with the community.
- Replicate initiatives of other municipalities, like DeKalb County with citizens assisting neighborhood police officers with information of potential public safety issues. Our NPUs could institute a **Communities of Cooperation (CICs)** which would be a partnership of cooperation between business owners, the community and other stakeholders.
- With our high school dropout rate increasing every year and the underemployed (individuals who stopped looking for work) having no hope or opportunity to provide for their families; our public safety will continue to spiral out of control. We must form partnerships identifying why our children are not finishing school.
- The City of Atlanta and State elected officials must create jobs and attract new industries to stem the increased crime wave.
- Unless City of Atlanta residents, business owners and community leaders work together; (solutions instead of excuses) we will continue to do and say the same thing expecting different results.

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**Budget – Accountability and Reaction Time** – We must have more accountability from all of the City's departments. We must streamline our budgeting process and review each line item as if we were budgeting for our own business or household. We cannot afford to have various accounting processes that come up with different numbers when trying to balance the budget. Every line item has to be justified when we are spending taxpayer's money. All of our revenue streams and budgetary line items must be evaluated to determine whether we are able to fully fund any expenditure. We cannot talk about hiring more police officers if we haven't evaluated how we will generate the revenue.

Reaction time is critical with regard to the City's budget. We now face additional decreases in our revenue because our tax base continues to decline. Our troubled economy is now being burdened by our taxpayers. The budget is not a once a year process. The budget is a daily process that should be managed with every moment and every decision.

**2. Describe briefly your qualifications for holding this office?**

My background in working with Fortune 500 Companies in process improvement while at Pricewaterhouse Coopers and my degree in Industrial Engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology allows me to look at our city while doing business from a very analytical and skilled way.

I currently own a company named Keller Knapp, Inc. My company is a residential real estate brokerage which has grown despite the market and economy. We currently employ fourteen associates. Additionally, I own numerous commercial real estate properties and have been involved in a number of real estate developments throughout the metro Atlanta area. I understand smart growth and being a good steward of our environment.

I have done business in every office of the City of Atlanta. I have represented clients, tenants, and myself through permitting, fire departments, police precincts, zoning, permitting, water bills, watershed management, and more. In my real estate brokerage business, I have literally walked every street of this city and fought for the rights of numerous home owners.

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The unique responsibilities I possess of a small business owner, provides me with the business acumen that is transferable in running a business such as the City of Atlanta.

**For nearly 10 years, I have:**

- Developed a comprehensive budget;
- Created jobs;
- Managed a staff;
- Worked tirelessly in my community giving back through volunteerism; and
- Become a good steward in ownership of land and buildings to encourage other buildings to thrive.

I am the only candidate in this race, uniquely qualified to hold the position of City of Atlanta Councilman Post 2 At Large.

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

I have fought for tax bills, fought for water bills, fought for permits, fought for rezoning, and more within our city, I have been in every office in City Hall pushing for something for a client, a tenant, or myself. I know what it is like to live and do business in this city.

After experiencing the inefficiencies of our City Hall and hearing from more than twenty business people who said they will "Never do business in City of Atlanta again because the City makes it too difficult," I decided that it was time to start taking action.

My wife and I are raising two sons who are 2 years old and about 3 months, who I want to have educated in this City. I have a business that I want to continue to grow and succeed in this City. With everything in my life at stake with the City of Atlanta, I believe that I will make great decisions for long-term viability of our City!

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

Larry Kelly, President of Pope & Land

Heather Alhadeff, Assistant Director of Transportation for City of Atlanta

David Allman, Regent Partners, Founder and Chairman

Pat Pullar, former deputy director for State Democratic Party

Townsend Bailey, Damespointe, Sustainable Atlanta Campaign

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

1. **Accountability** – Every department's budget should be on-line. You want to see people become more accountable. Make all information transparent and public.
2. **Business Development** – We have made cutbacks on the bottom-line. But what are we doing to encourage the top-line. We need people working. We need to expedite building permits. We need to expedite business permits. Business development immediately generates revenue for the city, gets people to work which brings in revenue, and it creates hope in our communities which will reduce crime!

Last year, I did a commercial lease for a Mexican Restaurant in Atlanta. They did not have to build-out the space and could have been operational in 3 weeks. However, the permits and liquor licenses took them nearly 8 months in Atlanta. Twenty-two jobs that could have been created for 8 months that were held up by the inefficiencies in government! We can improve this to bridge the budget gap!

**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 we add additional police officers, we need to make sure that we are taking care of the ones we have. Our police force is not just a magic number. We are losing police officers to other municipalities because they pay more or they feel more appreciated. It is poor investment of the taxpayer to hire and train our police force to have them leave and work somewhere else. Before we invest in hiring and training four hundred more police officers, we must invest in retaining the police officers we have and let them know that they are appreciated. If we do this, every police officer in the metro area will want to work in Atlanta.

**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 head?**

I worked on the language of the TAD when the Memorial Drive Corridor TAD was being developed. We worked with Mayor Franklin's office in writing the Tax Allocation District language for the Memorial Drive Corridor. I believe in Tax Allocation Districts (TAD) as a tool to encourage redevelopment. The payback is excellent for the City. Given the economic return in investment and jobs, it is a great method to push redevelopment of a corridor in an expedited manner with a low economic risk to our city.

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I am concerned that we have pushed TADs through our City in the past without determining the constitutionality of the legislation. I am also concerned that we are using TAD money to fund non-redevelopment projects where the return of the project is not benchmarked. As a business person in elected office, I would work to better calculate not only the potential reward to our city of TAD monies, but I would also help convey the risk to our City which is rarely spoken of when the legislation is presented.

**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.**

We have got to get our public transportation on path. I would immediately set-up a task force with City Officials and MARTA with an effort to sell off air rights and land around the MARTA stations. Just think what the real estate is worth over the Arts Center, Tenth Street, North Avenue, Lenox Road and more. We need to get the people living over the stations or working over the stations to increase ridership. The monies received from the land and air rights would go into adding additional nodes throughout our city. More nodes and more ridership will make our public transportation more sustainable and viable, and we do not have to raise one dollar to make it happen!

**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 Management
- 2) Transportation
- 3) Garbage / Recycling