

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE
QUESTIONNAIRE

1 What is your motivation for running for this office?

Birmingham is broken. We are divided, blighted, and though we are making some small progresses, the progress is only coming in small, specific areas of town. I am confident, willing, capable, understanding of the laws, and intelligent enough to move our city forward with the help of a unified community effort.

2 What is your greatest virtue, especially as applied to stewardship and the law?

Integrity. We must always do the right thing, even when no one else is watching. As a recent Cumberland School of Law graduate and an Army Officer, I understand the difference between right and wrong as well as have the mental fortitude to make decisions that will benefit the city, not my own pockets, even when I know no one else is looking.

3 If you currently attend a house of worship, what is the name of it and how often do you attend?

Church of the Highlands, Grandview Campus. I attend every Sunday as well as the first Wednesday of each month. I am on the "Dream Team" as a greeter and am awaiting an open training session so that I can become a part of the prison ministry division of the Dream Team.

4 What impact will your faith have on the performance of the duties of this office?

I think it's important that any leader have a servant heart. Fortunately I have been able to rely on my faith to bring me through many difficult times and I constantly pray and give thanks, for myself as well as for others. Despite my own religious beliefs, regardless if someone else doesn't believe what I believe in, I will still give them respect and listen to their concerns and suggestions. Everyone deserves an equal opportunity to be heard and advocated for, and as a city councilman, I will be a servant leader of all people, even those who don't follow the same faith as me.

5 How will you establish a good working relationship with the elected Mayor to ensure the city's success?

I already have relationships with all but two of the Mayoral candidates. I understand the importance of working together in order to accomplish good for our city. To reinforce that understanding, I have attended all of the Mayoral Candidate's debates, to better hear their plans for the city, and have even asked them how they plan on working with us as city councilmembers. My campaign motto is "build Birmingham together" and I truly believe in that. I plan to continue making an effort to meet the other Mayoral Candidates in order to best work with them in the future.

6 Suppose the City Council faced a development proposal that meets all the regulations, yet a large number of citizens appeared before the City Council to stop it. How would you vote?

Like every decision made in office, we must weigh the positives and negative effects of our decisions, not just the short term, but the long term ones as well. Situationally dependent, I think it is still extremely important to factor in the passion of citizens. After all, they are the ones who elect us and we are supposed to advocate on their behalf. If we don't, we aren't doing our job.

7 How would you stay informed about City issues and what the City Council is working on?

I am constantly staying updated on events in the city, through multiple media outlets with opposing bias as well as on multiple social media pages. Furthermore, I think it is important for councilmembers to make themselves available to the citizens. We are their voice, and if we cannot hear them, we cannot speak and act on their behalf. Moreover, I think it is important to keep the citizens updated on what we are working on. Transparency is key, which is why I plan to keep our government resources frequently updated, let people see what will be voted on before it is voted on, show citizens where money is coming from and how it will be spent, as well as host a weekly radio program to discuss what is going on at city hall. Communication is important in all relationships and it must be at the forefront of our local government.

8 Have you thought about any legislation you are interested in seeing the City Council enact, repeal or revise? If so, what is it? What would you propose?

Absolutely, many actually, but for starters; I would like to see a minimum wage increase, gradually overtime. Last time the city council tried to do this, the effort was too quick and didn't give businesses time to adjust their budgets. We must have a livable wage for all employees in Birmingham, but we must do so with enough time for businesses to adjust their budgets. On the topic of business, I would also like grants to be given to businesses who are considered environmentally friendly, open businesses in economically disadvantaged areas, hire veterans, hire the disabled, hire women, and hire other minorities.

9 How will you determine the City's wants v. needs?

Listen to the people. Infrastructure is a necessity and so is transportation. Overall, citizens have been vocal about safety, transportation, and education. Though those are wants, those are also necessary budgetary decisions to make a city run efficiently. We must prioritize and reevaluate our budget in order to have a more efficient city that moves forward and is no longer stagnant.

10 What do you see as Birmingham's major challenges and assets?

The biggest challenge seems to be getting people to work together and simply acting as adults. We cannot move forward on legislating, advocating, or balancing a budget if no one is willing to work together. As for assets, we're an untapped market with a rich civil rights history and loads of potential in creativity, tech, medical field personnel, innovation and more; however, there seems to be a lack of light shown on our resources. When we can better communicate what we already have, ensuring people can take advantage of those resources and opportunities; we will be better off as a city.

11 How long have you lived in Birmingham, and how would you characterize the City's quality of life? How should it be improved?

I've lived in Birmingham for over three years. Our quality of life is getting better from where it was when I first moved here, but it still has leaps and bounds to go. We must all work together to energize our city in healthy living, sustainable growth, better education and after school programs, community projects, and more. When a city invests in the quality of life of citizens, everyone can grow together.

12 What distinguishes you from the other candidates?

In the literal sense; I have a college degree from the University of Alabama where I majored in Political Science and minored in Civic Engagement and Leadership. I have leadership experience as an Officer in the Military overseeing more than thirty million dollars in weapons and equipment as well as over one hundred and twenty personnel. I have a law degree from an accredited law school, Samford University's Cumberland School of Law. I've held multiple leadership roles in nonprofits as either the founder, president, vice president, and or community outreach coordinator. I have a history of giving back to the community and expecting nothing in return. I simply want to see Birmingham better than it was the day before and I am confident enough to know I'm capable of making that happen, with the help of all constituents and other community leaders

13 What issue is not getting enough attention?

Education. Everything stems from education, or lack-there-of. Young couples are moving out of the city to go to nearby suburbs where they see the education system is better than ours. I want people to be moving into our city because our school system is so great. We only allocate one percent of our budget toward education while Hoover allocates ten percent of theirs. Look where that has gotten us. And no, we can't just throw money at the system and expect it to be better, we must ear-mark the funds for better purposes such as teacher raises, paying for basic school supplies for students as well as teachers, funding after school programming and mentorship programming, communication efforts regarding the certification programs that are already in place, bringing community businesses into the schools to provide professional development and internship opportunities, creating pipeline programs in order for high school students to have less hoops to jump through if they want to become a police officer or another type of first responder. Education is the cornerstone of our society and we are only limited by our intelligence. We have so many great resources in Birmingham that are underutilized due to either a lack of transportation, lack of funding, or simply a lack of knowing they exist; if we would focus more of our attention and funding toward the betterment of our education system and after school programing, everything else would fall into place more smoothly. Young people need mentors, they need something to do, and they need opportunity to take advantage of. Once we put more effort into those things, we will benefit greatly as a city and progress toward a brighter future for all of us.