



Below is the unedited questionnaire response of:

Oz Hill
Atlanta City Council
District 1

2017 Candidate Pre-Interview Questionnaire

1. Describe briefly your qualifications for this office. In addition, please identify up to 5 organizations or individuals who are actively supporting your candidacy and why you believe their support is important.

I am qualified to serve in the capacity of Atlanta City Council, District 1 representative, based on the sum total of my professional experience, community service/advocacy, and education. My commitment to serve dates back to 1983 when I began my service as a U.S. Army officer. I served our country for 20 years performing in various leadership roles and as a strategic planner. I retired from the U.S. Army in 2004 at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and subsequently opened a small business which provided technical assistance to municipal and state governments in the areas emergency preparedness, disaster planning, and physical security. In 2005, I offered myself for public service in the City of Sandy Springs, GA, when I ran for Sandy Springs City Council. Although I did not win the election, I did take the race to a runoff and obtained 46% of the votes in that effort. As a result of my demonstrated commitment to serve the community, I was appointed to the City of Sandy Springs, Board of Zoning Appeals, where I served for four years. During that same period I served on the Atlanta Fulton County Land Bank Authority Board. Most recently, I served the residents of the City of Atlanta as an administrator responsible for the Atlanta Fire Rescue Department's Performance Management Program. Additionally, I served on the City of Atlanta Mayor's Commission for Natural Disaster Preparedness, in the aftermath of the severe winter storm that crippled the city in 2014. I have served on several nonprofit boards, to include serving as Commander, Atlanta Chapter, of the Military Order of World Wars. I am a former member of the Sandy Springs Rotary Club. I possess a master's degree in Public Administration from Auburn University Montgomery. In summary, my service and experiences as a U.S. Army officer; experiences working with municipal governments as a technical expert; my service as a City of Atlanta director; service in the community and collaboration with community organizations; as well as, my education and demonstrated expertise in Public Administration qualify me to serve the residents and community members of District 1.

2. What is your vision for the City of Atlanta and how would you implement it? Please be specific.

My vision for the City of Atlanta, is a city that fulfills its "world class" potential to all residents, neighborhoods/communities, and visitors, through the efficient delivery of municipal government services which distinguish Atlanta as an ideal place to live, work, and recreate. The city must be the catalyst to coalesce public, private, and nonprofit resources to offer residents opportunities for skills development, individual and community economic empowerment,

affordable housing, and provide for public safety and well-being. My vision will be implemented utilizing the following multifaceted approach:

- Ongoing and meaningful dialogue with community residents and stakeholders to thoroughly understand community needs and preferences desires;
- Engagement with leaders from the city's business and nonprofit communities to understand the services offered, resources available that will benefit the community, and opportunities for collaboration;
- Accountability of city departments/staff through legislative oversight and fluid communication with the city's executive staff regarding the effectiveness of city government functions and services;
- Constant collaboration with city council counterparts to work towards building consensus and making the best legislative decisions possible to serve the greater good for all Atlantans.

3. Please identify the three greatest issues or problems facing the City of Atlanta and specifically how you would work to solve them.

In my opinion the three greatest issues facing the City of Atlanta, as well as, and proposed strategies for solving them are:

- The efficient delivery of city services as the city continues to grow as a result of new residents moving into the city and annexations. The strategy for solving the issues related to service delivery and city growth the city currently confronts in some departments includes the re-evaluation, and possibly realignment of service deliver territories and reporting districts, leveraging technology through the efficient integration and monitoring/visibility of logical systems, and consideration of public private partnerships in the delivery of selected city services.
- Affordable housing for Atlanta residents. The strategy for solving the issues related to affordable housing requires:
 - The collaboration of all echelons of government to leverage resources and programs in a synergized fashion (i.e. federal, state and local) ,
 - Partnering with community housing developers and private sector developers to identify and bring to fruition feasible projects that integrate affordable housing into their respective portfolios.
 - The expansion of home buyer literacy programs to prepare home buyers for home ownership responsibilities...government has to incentivize the practice for developers to participate.
- Addressing the needs of the city's homeless population. Through coordination and collaboration with non-profit, faith-based, and government entities the city must be the catalyst for the development of a sustainable/on-going initiative to establish accessible transient shelters, providing mental health/public health resources to the homeless

community, and facilitating initiatives for self-empowerment to elevate homeless persons to being self-sufficient and no longer living on the streets.

4. As a City Council member, how would you manage collaborating with your colleagues on difficult citywide issues versus representing your own constituents?

As a council member I would collaborate with my colleagues in the spirit of cooperation, consensus building and compromise, with my priority being to advocate for the best interest of District 1, coupled with an awareness of the impact all legislative decisions will have on the city as a whole and what will be in the best interests of the entire city. No council district stands alone as an entity unto itself. In my opinion all city council members are obligated to consider the impact of their respective legislative votes on the City of Atlanta as a whole, as well as, representing the concerns and preferences of their constituents.

5. How do you view the City of Atlanta's financial position? Should the City of Atlanta have additional tools in place to ensure financial management going forward?

In my opinion, based on the financial surplus the City of Atlanta has at this time, I would view the city's position as stable. However, if the city council and city's executive leadership are not prudent stewards of the public resources that have been entrusted to their care, the stability can be compromised without any forewarning. Additional tools would be beneficial in managing the financial integrity and practices of the city's financial bureaucracy. Working in concert with the city's CFO and FEC a truly independent advisory board of senior executive financial experts should be commissioned to oversee an annual financial audit that is performed as part of the end of year closeout, and new fiscal year budgetary processes; transparency, integrity, and objectivity in the compliance and enforcement of existing financial management ordinances and policies are imperative. Additionally, the city must place emphasis on greater integration of software systems/databases that will enable the efficient monitoring of budgets and financial transactions.

6. Please describe your philosophy regarding property tax assessments and municipal taxation.

Property taxes are a necessary and primary source of revenue for the city to ensure the financial resources are available to deliver services to residents and stakeholders. Elected officials and city staff members must strike a balance between the revenue generated through taxation (i.e. property tax, sales tax, etc.), and government spending. Fundamentally, property taxes are based on the assessed value of a property, exemptions the homeowner is entitled to receive, and the municipal property tax rate. Property taxes are often the single highest recurring expense a

homeowner pays on an annual basis. So, it is of the utmost importance there is accuracy and consistency in property tax assessments, in order to garner and maintain public confidence in the process for assessing, as well as, challenging tax assessments.

7. What is your opinion of Atlanta's MOST, and what approach do you support to fund long-term water and sewer operations?

My experience as a director at the Department of Watershed Management has provided me with valuable insight and shaped my perception about the need for MOST, or the one penny sales tax to fund the water and sewer capital improvement projects. Some of the city's linear infrastructure required for potable water transmission, and the processing of sewer waste dates back to the first half of the last century. In my opinion, the requirement for funding is unquestionable. I also believe it is appropriate for those who use or benefit from the transmission of potable water, as well as, the processing of wastewater, even on a transient basis (i.e. visitors to the city) should assist with the burden of paying for the capital improvements to DWM infrastructure. In my opinion, the greater issue is the accountability of how the funding is spent by DWM. Funding you should be legislatively designated for specific purposes and executive/senior staff members must be held accountable for using the funds prudently for the legislatively mandated purpose.

8. Would you change the current procurement process to protect against "pay to play"? If so, what changes would you support?

The current procurement process has "checks and balances" designed to prevent "pay to play" impropriety. It appears a major challenge was that functionaries responsible for monitoring procurement processes were derelict in their duties. The rules are in place; compliance, enforcement, transparency, and objective oversight were lacking. I would support the establishment of an objective/independent advisory commission that would convene on a quarterly or semi-annual basis to review contracts/expenditures during that period which exceeded an established financial threshold...\$250k or \$500k. The results of the advisory boards review would be released to the media. The keys are transparency and accountability.

9. If elected, describe your role in ensuring ethical and transparent management of City resources by City employees?

My role in ensuring ethical and transparent management of city resources is to collaborate with other council members to ensure the ordinances and policies are in place that requires ethical behavior by all city employees, as well as, the mechanisms to ensure compliance and enforcement of those policies. I would also have the responsibility of addressing or questioning

any impropriety that I became aware of to ensure the appropriate measures are taken to investigate and resolve the issue.

10. What economic development strategies would you prioritize to ensure the City of Atlanta captures its fair share of future job growth?

Economic development is most effective when it is both a “top-down” driven strategy through collaborative partnerships between government, the private sector, and non-profit organizations; as well as, an “organic strategy” that takes root in neighborhoods and grows to meet the needs of the respective neighborhoods and the larger community. As a city council member I would support the following initiatives and strategies to ensure Atlanta receives its fair share of future job growth:

- Aggressively monitoring national and international business development trends and analyzing data to determine where future job growth will occur.
- Offer skills development opportunities for residents (ensuring they are invested in the process) to provide a skilled workforce to fulfill the staffing needs of future economic growth.
- Creation of a “business-friendly” municipal environment that encourages and rewards business success...those established businesses that relocate to Atlanta and those successful start-ups that are nurtured in business incubators supported by all echelons of government.
- Emphasis must be placed on ensuring the city is effectively promoting and leveraging the attributes of its residents, geographic location, infrastructure, culture, etc.; to achieve its fair share of future job growth.

11. What strategies would you implement to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing?

As previously suggested in my response to Question #3, my strategy for ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing includes:

- The collaboration with all echelons of government to leverage resources and programs in a synergized manner (i.e. federal, state and local), to ensure feasible opportunities for affordable housing are available throughout the City of Atlanta.
- Partnering with community housing developers and private sector developers to identify and bring to fruition feasible projects that integrate affordable housing into their respective

portfolios...government has to incentivize the practice for private developers to participate in affordable housing initiatives.

- Collaboration with financial institutions willing to work with developers interested in building multi-family units in transitioning communities, and home buyers who may financially-challenged. Additionally, the expansion of home ownership literacy programs and awareness to cultivate and prepare home buyers, coupled with the opportunities for homeownership will be part of the strategy.

12. What workforce development strategies should the next administration prioritize? How will these strategies address and improve economic mobility among low-to-mid skill workers?

The workforce development strategies the next administration should prioritize include:

- Technical skills development to meet the needs of future industry and jobs growth in the City of Atlanta.
- Outreach to low-to-mid skill works in the communities where they live, making the opportunities readily accessible for them.
- Greater job placement efforts for participants who complete the skills development programs.
- Establishing a mechanism to support job retention by program participants once they have been hired.

Taken or implemented collectively, these priorities will improve economic upward mobility among low-to-mid skilled workers and give them greater earning power.

13. What are the three most important transportation/infrastructure projects that should occur in the City of Atlanta? Please rank them by importance and urgency and explain your reasoning.

In my opinion, the three most important transportation/infrastructure projects that should occur in the City of Atlanta are:

1. Traffic congestion mitigation.

- Currently, the congestion on surface street roadways that are the responsibility of the city, present challenges for individual motor vehicle operators, as well as, adversely impacts private business services in the city, and the delivery of municipal services...especially in the area of emergency medical services, and fire-rescue services

response. As the city population continues to grow, traffic congestion mitigation must be at the forefront of our planning processes.

2. Security of the city's water distribution system.

- The delivery of clean potable water is a basic service of any viable municipal government. The delivery of the service must inspire public confidence in the cleanliness/potability of the water, as well as, the security and integrity of the transmission system. City of Atlanta leaders must ensure vulnerabilities of the water distribution system have been identified and strategies are implemented to mitigate the vulnerabilities.

3. Protection of all City of Atlanta IT and logical systems infrastructure.

- The city's IT infrastructure is the backbone of city operations. Computer systems control the treatment of water, the dispatching of first responders, the management of procurements and financial transactions. Safeguarding all city logical systems against cyber-attack and "insider threats" must be a priority or with a click of a button the city can be brought to a stand-still.

14. What strategies would you pursue to improve the safety – both real and perceived – of all residents, visitors, and workers in Atlanta? What partnerships are needed to realize these strategies?

The strategies I would pursue to improve the safety – both real and perceived – of all residents, visitors, and workers in Atlanta include:

- The realignment of first responder precincts, zones, territories, and reporting districts.
- Enhance community-based public safety initiatives (i.e. proactive preventive community engagement/participation by first responders, increased foot patrols, etc.).
- Increased workforce housing for first responders. The goal is greater first responder investment, ownership and presence in the communities where they work.
- Greater emphasis on hiring a culturally-sensitive and demographically-representative workforce for all city departments, and especially in the area of public safety.

Partnerships with community-based institutions, private sector businesses, cultural and ethnic organizations, and collective bargaining entities are key elements in the effectiveness of these strategies.

15. Georgia ranks 49th among states for per-capita arts funding. What actions would you take to ensure our arts and culture organizations have the funding they need to thrive and enrich our city?

Against the backdrop of reduced federal funding for the arts, I would support the following actions to ensure our arts and culture organizations have the funding they need to thrive and enrich our city:

- Continue the city's dedicated funding for arts and culture activities.
- Enhance existing funding for city arts and culture activities by supplementing designated funds with matching funds from the city's hotel/motel tax, and nominal contributions from major entertainment venue ticket sales.
- Increased partnerships and collaboration with arts and culture organizations to enhance support for arts and culture activities in the city.