



DISTRICT 7 CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE- October, 2009

CITY SERVICES

How would you use your office to ensure that residents of all the neighborhoods of Boston have equal access to basic city services?

Carlos Henriquez: I will do a better job at delivering the city services we need:

- I will make sure the parks that families play in will be regularly maintained by the city the same as they are in other Districts.
- I will speak to community based organizations and street associations weekly to address issues that arise.
- I will have a walking tour of the entire District once a month and hold regular meetings in different neighborhoods across the District to hear directly from residents.

I will create a hotline to address resident issues within 24 hours.

Chuck Turner: Since I am a District City Councilor, I will reframe this question on using my office to assure that the residents of my district receive the same level and quality of City Services (particularly trash pick ups, street and sidewalk repair and replacement, crosswalks, traffic lights, appropriate signage, parks) that other districts receive.

For the last ten years, I have used a traditional method of secure those services for residents--referring constituent requests; identifying needs, calling agencies, and following up; using hearings to raise service concerns; and working with the Roxbury Neighborhood Council to identify needs. I think that this method is relatively effective but does not unify us in this effort. That is, if we are to beautify District 7 (Greater Roxbury), all sectors of our District need to work together. Thus, in 2010, I am going to initiate an organizing approach to this problem by forming a District 7 Beautification Task Force. I will ask every neighborhood and civic association, business association, and interested citizen to join the Task Force.

Every three months the Task Force will meet with the City Department representatives to discuss City service needs in each of the precincts of the District. At the follow up meeting, three months later, the T.F. will not only evaluate progress on the old issues but also raise new issues. I believe this comprehensive approach will maximize our power in the negotiations with the City. I

will also urge the TF to engage the youth of our community by having essay and art contests in the District 7 schools focusing on working together to beautify our community. I will also urge that we ask billboard companies to allow us to use their space to send messages urging our residents to work together to beautify our community.

HOUSING

In your role on the City Council, what steps would you take to address the variety of housing issues in Boston such as homelessness, foreclosures, and housing affordability?

Chuck Turner: I have three housing priorities for 2010.

a) First, I will continue to play a leadership role in the Mass Alliance Against Predatory Lending (Maapl) that I helped to form in 2006. Maapl's purpose is to pass legislation to protect homeowners who have been scammed by fraudulent mortgages deals and tenants who are being evicted from foreclosed properties. We also provide support to those organizations working with the victims of the crisis. We have four pieces of legislation under consideration at the state house. The City of Boston has also passed four similar pieces of legislation for state application to Boston if the statewide bills do not pass.

b) Second, recent work in assisting elderly residents at the BHA development cope with a rash of small fires has made it clear that the Council needs to assure that all residents are aware of the fire safety plans for each develop and have participated in at least two fire drills a year.

c) Third, the Boston Housing provides housing for the neediest families and individuals in Boston, approximately ten per cent of the population. Yet, because of insufficient funding from federal and state authorities, we have a billion dollar deficit in terms of fixing the conditions of Boston's public housing infrastructure. While the City does not have the resources necessary to do the rehabilitation necessary, I plan to use the Boston City Council hearing process to put a spotlight on this critical issue. If our public housing collapses around our residents, we are obviously contributing to homelessness in the City.

Carlos Henriquez: I will work to create more affordable housing for residents:

- I will partner with the City and local developers and non profits to create housing,
- return foreclosed homes to the market as affordable housing
- protect homeowners from predatory lending through legislation and host seminars that educate residents
- extend the terms of affordable housing with expiring use

YOUTH JOBS

What steps would you take to fight against state cuts to youth employment programs and advocate for increased city funding for youth jobs and training?

Carlos Henriquez:

- I will organize youth, their families and those that serve them to go through the city budget to find real dollars to create jobs for our teens with and without CORI's.
- I will publicly ask for the support of your 4 at large councilors and two more councilors who value our youth and as 7 councilors.
- Effectively veto any budget that doesn't create an adequate number of jobs for teens. And we as a community will have to support our teens by only electing officials that will and stand by that promise.
- Create incentives for local businesses to hire local youth for both summer and year round positions.

Chuck Turner: I have participated in rallies and lobbying efforts against state cuts to such services. However, given the financial crisis at the state and national level, the pressure to cut grows rather than diminishes. Estimates are that there are between 14,000 to 16,000 young people in Boston between 16 and 24 who are out of school and out of work. Given the level of the crisis, the Boston City Council passed a resolution I wrote urging the Massachusetts Congressional delegation to lobby for a government funded jobs program similar to the one that FDR initiated in the 30s that was revived in the 70s.

Next year I plan to focus on this issue through three initiatives:

a) Hearing with Public Safety Officials:

I plan to call a hearing with organizations focusing on the issue of youth crime to focus on their job placement strategies. I think it is time for these agencies to acknowledge that we don't have job resources in order to help young men leave the streets. If we are going to be serious about crime reduction, we have to be serious about putting youth to work.

b) Hearing with Boston's business leaders:

I plan to call a hearing with the leaders of larger corporations in Boston to discuss my proposal that those businesses establish goal of 25% (at a minimum) of each year's entry work force for Boston workers with a career ladder to enable Boston workers to rise in the corporations.

PUBLIC SAFETY

What would you do to improve current crime and violence prevention strategies and what new strategies would you propose?

Chuck Turner: In February of this year I reached out to Councilor Yancey, the Nation of Islam, the Mass Alliance of Minority Law Enforcement Officers, and the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute to form a coalition to work with residents to reduce violence. We have held three focus groups composed of families that have lost love ones to violence; families that have love ones in jail for committing violence; and one focused on youth. These focus groups have been facilitated by Ron Hampton, President of the National Black Police Officers Association and Dr. James Bell, professor at Jackson State University. On Saturday, October 31st we will have a day long Community Summit at the Jeremiah E. Burke High School beginning at 9:30.

In addition, I will continue to work on:

a) Working with Mamleo to have more men and women of color promoted into command positions as well as increase the number of officers of color in the force.

b) Focusing support for those between 16 and 24 who are out of school and out of work. In 2006, the American Community Survey (federal census) indicated that there were 10,800 young people in Boston who were out of school and work. Estimates are that the number has risen to 13,000 to 14,000. The Mayor initiated a pilot program at my request that led to 1000 young people between 16 and 24 who are out of school and out of work in the Grove Hall area being interviewed in terms of City assistance that can be helpful to them.

c) Provide more street workers, youth workers, and case workers to work with those identified as having long term needs.

Carlos Henriquez: Over 50% of murder victims are under the age of 24. I believe we need to take public safety more seriously than we have:

- I will take a hard look to make sure the City's spending on public safety is used efficiently and used in methods that prevent violence.
- I will facilitate a true partnership with residents, businesses and the Boston Police Department to develop strategies, solve problems through regular community working sessions.
- I will pressure the BPD to improve the clearance rate and work to do a better job of stopping the flow of guns into our community.

EDUCATION

What specific strategies would you propose to ensure that all students have a chance to graduate from high school and go to college?

Carlos Henriquez: Education is the cornerstone that makes or breaks our future: We have seen an average of 1,000 students drop out of high school per year. That is 5.8 % of the student population. Part of that 5.8% not all are referred to as the small percent of impact players that create a sense of fear for families and other students. In 2004 Harvard did a BPS study that over 68% of students witness acts of violence either to or from or in school.

- I will visit each school in the District to organize parents and empower them to make positive changes in their child's school.
- Work with parents and the school department to improve the curriculum and performance standards in our schools.
- Make sure we are investing more money directly to our students in the classrooms and not to administrators downtown who are not directly supporting or enhancing your children's education.
- Make sure the BPS provides better services for ESL families and have multi-lingual staff in each school.

Chuck Turner

a) Preserve Choice: I will continue to provide leadership in the fight to stop the movement to bring back neighborhood schools. We have defeated the effort three times in the last five years but we must continue to be vigilant and prepared.

b) Achievement Gap: I will continue to work on the elimination of the achievement gap through the following strategies:

- 1) Improve special education through enlarging the inclusion program where special needs students are integrated into regular education classes. The Mason school, the O'Hearn School, and the Murphy school have experienced success in using this strategy.
- 2) Encourage the BPS to support cross training so English Language Learning teachers, Special Education teachers, and Regular Education teachers understand the methodologies that are used in each of the other fields. This will enable us to reduce class size as well as improvement teacher performance.
- 3) Develop an internal system for raising the percentage of teachers of color to at least 60% given the fact that 80% of the students are of color. This system will be built on building teacher development clubs in the high schools and persuading local teacher colleges to provide scholarships for members of the clubs that show potential as future teachers.
- 4) Use the Gaston Institute (UMass) analysis of BPS ELL work to guide the improvement of our system.
- 5) Strengthen BPS's efforts to improve the cultural competence of teachers and administrators.
- 6) Strengthen follow up with students who are truant.
- 7) Support BPS's efforts to encourage students who are behind in credits to enable them to make them up without repeating a school year.