

IVI-IPO 2009 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SUBURBAN MAYOR, PRESIDENT, ALDERMAN OR TRUSTEE

DATE 3-6-09 CANDIDATE FOR Evanston, 4th Ward Alderman
NAME Donald N. Wilson
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NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES FILED 77 NUMBER REQUIRED 47

Please provide the following background information:

Elective or appointive public and/or party offices previously held including dates.

Evanston Zoning Board of Appeals - 2006 to present

Other elective offices for which you have been a candidate.

None

Principal business, educational, professional and civic activities of the past ten years.

Practicing Attorney
Board of Directors, Infant Welfare Society of Evanston
Board of Directors, Open Studio Project
Washington School Recreation Coordinator
EBSA, AYSO Coaching

What subjects have you studied and what experience have you had which will be most helpful to you in the office you seek?

In addition to the above items, I have a B.S. in Psychology from the University of Illinois, Urbana, and a J.D., from the University of Kansas. I have participated in continuing education programs relating to my legal practice, as well as in areas such as construction and municipal government. I have also served as a speaker on construction and building code issues. My community service related work has help keep me in tune with the issues that the City is facing today, and in the future.

Activities for other candidates. Please be specific.

None other than circulating petitions. (Judy Frydland, for Cook County Circuit Court judge)

Please list all endorsements you have received so far.

Julie Hamos, 18th District Illinois State Representative

As concisely as possible, state why you feel you should be endorsed over the other candidate(s). What goals for the office you seek are most important to you personally?

In my personal and professional life, I have been actively engaged in problem solving. This requires hard work, diplomacy and the ability to bring people together. If elected, I intend to do this job with civility, compassion and an open mind. I believe that I have the skills, the desire and the motivation to help Evanston get through this difficult period and emerge as an even stronger community. I have had a broad range of relevant work experience as an attorney in dealing with real estate, building codes, employment and business matters. I have also been actively engaged in community service, which has given me perspective as to the needs of many aspects of the community, from affordable housing and human services, to zoning relief for creative land use.

What is your campaign budget? How much have you raised to date?

\$3000. Approximately \$1000 to date.

How many people are on your campaign staff? How many volunteers are on your list?

3 people on the campaign staff. Approximately 25 volunteers.

PRIORITIES

1. How would you improve the delivery of services in your municipality?

By improving community communication with the departments handling the respective services.

2. What are your top priorities?

My priorities are economic development and financial management. With a responsible commitment to those issues, we can address specific problems such as pension funding and affordable housing, together with social concerns. Crime and community safety are other priorities. Hiring a new city manager will be a critical "first task" the new Council undertakes. This must be an individual with a solid background in financial management, as well as an excellent understanding of planning and development. The manager must also have a positive attitude toward communication with the people of Evanston.

Real estate development, as well as economic and financial management, must also take principles of sustainable growth and environmental impact into account, not only with regard to the physical environment, but the social environment as well.

3. How will you solicit and follow citizens' and community groups' recommendations on municipal matters?

I plan to attend community watch group meetings, conduct regular neighborhood meetings and utilize technology (list-serves, E-mail, webpage) to solicit input and to promote meetings and activities. I also intend to promote the use of City resources to promote community involvement and participation. It is also important to take the work of community groups, as well as boards and commissions, seriously and to give them an appropriate level of direction, respect and support.

PLANNING, ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT

4. How should business and commercial development be balanced with residential development in your municipality?

The 4th Ward has a broad range of residential, commercial and non-profit development. It is important to balance these interests in a manner that preserves the quality of life for the residents, as well as maximizing the business opportunities for merchants and the non-profits should be supported in the communities they serve. In order to enjoy the lowest possible property taxes, a concerted effort should be made to promote businesses in the corridors where they have developed and grown as Evanston has grown. A more focused effort to develop more business in Evanston's downtown should be made in conjunction with efforts to bring other businesses to perimeter locations where business has been lost.

5. How will you involve residents in planning?

Everyone should have a voice. I intend to serve in this position with an open mind and to listen to all points of view. The use of committees and commissions can be very helpful in determining the needs and wishes of the residents. I would promote the use of, or appointment of, such committee when appropriate. The planning process should be open and not conducted behind closed doors.

6. What is your long-range plan for the development of your municipality?

In making our planning decisions, we have to look beyond the height of a building or the shape of a building. It is my belief that, at this point in time, business and mixed use development are more important than adding condominiums. There is already a substantial surplus of condos on the market, and a large number of developments that are not going forward. The economics of what is being approved must be taken into account more than in the past.

HOUSING

7. a. Please comment on housing problems in your municipality.

There are people in the community who are being priced out of their neighborhoods and there are many in the workforce who cannot afford to live in the community. In addition, there has been a significant reduction in the number of available rental units in Evanston, and a reduction in Section 8 as well. The trend toward supporting home ownership over rental property has negatively impacted rental housing availability. Furthermore, teardowns have eliminated many properties at lower price points. Careful planning must be implemented to preclude further trends along these lines. Falling home prices alone are not likely to solve these problems because unemployment and underemployment are continuing to rise in the short term.

b. What proposals do you have for dealing with these problems? Limiting teardowns may help with certain levels.

Eliminating the trend away from rental property should also facilitate availability of additional units. I believe that creative, adaptive reuse of existing buildings may provide some solutions. Contrary to some recent suggestions, I do not believe that the City should require City employees to live within the City limits.

8. What should be done to provide affordable housing for low-income individuals and families who are not served by existing programs?

The available funds should not be channeled for homeownership. I believe that supporting rental property is more effective and more impact can be realized on such investment.

9. Do you support adoption of an ordinance banning source-of-income discrimination against Section 8 voucher holders? Yes.

EDUCATION

10. What proposals would you make to improve the quality of the public schools and their infrastructure?

The Schools are not under the direct control of the City Council, however, the City should be working to promote partnerships with our schools.

ENVIRONMENT

11. What should your municipality do to improve the environment?

Implementing initiatives in Evanston's Climate Action plan will be a priority. The initiatives in the Climate Action Plan will directly address many environmental challenges. By improving transportation coordination, driving will not be the easiest alternative. By making mixed use development, in conjunction with economic development initiatives to bring and keep businesses in Evanston, we can create a stronger "walking" and "cycling" culture, as well as improve the use of public transportation.

Stronger energy conservation codes could be adopted as part of the building code to ensure a higher level of performance of new or rehabilitated structures.

I would also support incentives for projects, construction or other non-construction related programs that achieve certain benchmarks, such as LEED certification or locally produced food that work toward meeting Plan objectives. Programs such as Chicago's Green Permit Program provide a streamlined permit application process, as well as partial waivers of otherwise necessary permit review fees. Evanston should look to other communities for additional ideas and strive to develop its own incentive programs.

REVENUE AND BUDGET

12. What changes if any would you propose to the current budget, both revenue and expenses?

There will, inevitably, be difficult choices to make in the current economic environment. Certain capital project may have to be deferred. I would support reprioritizing toward revenue generating projects, such as Robert Crown Center. Stronger negotiations with employees will almost certainly be required. I believe that the actual revenues will be significantly less than the projected revenues, so it is probable that cost saving measures will likely be required almost immediately.

CIVIL RIGHTS

13. a. Do you support affirmative action based on race, gender and sexual orientation in establishing criteria for hiring and promoting public employees?

While I support affirmative action to level the field, I do not support "quotas". I believe that promotions should be merit based.

b. Do you support affirmative action as a criterion in letting municipal contracts?

I support it as a component, but not as an exclusive basis or as a quota.

c. Please comment on current women and minority participation in municipal hiring and contracts.

Be sure your comments include firefighter and police officer recruitment and promotion.

I believe that everyone who is qualified should be given an opportunity to be hired or retained to provide services.

14. Do you favor restructuring the wage scale of municipal employees to institute gender-equal pay for jobs of comparable worth? Absolutely.

ETHICS & CAMPAIGNING

15. Do you support patronage in hiring and promoting public employees?

No.

16. a. Do you support employing municipal staff who hold other public sector jobs concurrently?

Only if the other public sector job poses no risk of a conflict of interest.

b. Do you support employing municipal staff who have either outside employment or contracts with entities which do business with the municipality? No.

17. In what circumstances should the municipality contract for outside professional services and what criteria should exist for letting contracts? Please comment on any existing abuses and how you would correct them.

Outside staff could be utilized when the City staff does not have the expertise in an area to adequately perform a task or a project. I believe that the City is too liberal with the hiring of outside consultants to do work that likely could be performed by existing staff, existing boards of commissions, or commissions that could be appointed by the City.

18. Will you or have you accepted campaign donations from current or potential suppliers or employees?

No

19. Who are your top 5 contributors and how much has each contributed to your campaign?

Donald Wilson \$300

Frances Wilson \$300

David Haracz/Mary Dolan \$250

Frozen Ropes \$100

Alisa Arnoff \$50