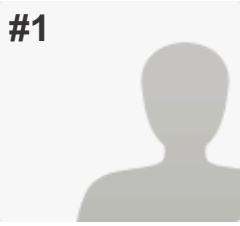


#1



COMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation
Started: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 3:51:50 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 11:08:59 AM
Time Spent: 19:17:09
First Name: Michael
Last Name: Levy
Email: mlevy@michaelfordistrict7.com

IP Address: 174.51.182.40

PAGE 1

Q1: What is your name please?	Michael J Levy
Q2: Which Counsel district do you hope to represent?	District 7
Q3: Please tell us the best way to contact you if we have a question..telephone or email. Please provide either or both in the comment box below.	email: mlevy@michaelfordistrict7.com

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Q4: Do you believe it is the ultimate obligation of City Council members to represent and advocate for their constituents in the neighborhoods they represent, rather than expedite the Mayor's office or private businesses that may benefit from these types of transactions between governmental entities?	<p>Yes,</p> <p>Comment: Absolutely! I also think that it would be my responsibility as City Councilman to better inform my constituents that important votes are coming up before the City Council. That might mean that I would need your help, by getting down to a City Council meeting or two... so that we would stand a better chance of convincing the other City Council members to vote in District 7's favor, on the situations that will impact you the most.</p>
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Q5: Do you believe that preserving strong public neighborhood schools in each of our communities is very important to the viability and strength for the future of our neighborhoods?

Yes,

Comment:

Definitely! It's certainly no secret that living in close proximity to very good schools is usually one of the key drivers of determining where a family buys a home. Quality schools equate to more cohesive communities and higher property values. Hence as your councilman I definitely plan to propose that some additional City of Denver budget dollars be specifically designated to hiring more teachers... in an effort to further reduce class sizes and student to teacher ratios. As the past fundraising chairman of Lincoln Elementary's PTSA, I know first hand that the majority of our ongoing school fundraising efforts goes toward paying for the salaries of additional para professional teachers. Also, funding is so challenged in DPS schools, that many of our teachers also dig into their own pockets to help purchase additional school supplies. Clearly our schools need some additional funding, that I believe the City of Denver can contribute to, to some extent.

PAGE 5: I. DESIGNATION OF UNDESIGNATED PARKS, PROTECTION OF OPEN SPACE, MORE PARKLAND

Q6: INC, in response to a request from the Department of Parks and Recreation, formed a committee to aid the department's effort to designate undesignated parks. While this committee has made progress over the past two years, the work is not finished. Would you support a concerted effort within all city departments affected to complete the designation of all undesignated Denver parks that are legally available for designation?

Yes,

Comment:

Yes. Certainly much like having better quality schools, having more quality parks in the City of Denver will motivate more people to move to those areas... which will have a much more positive affect on the quality of life in those neighborhoods.

Q7: In addition to designating undesignated parks, we also need to prevent the transfer of open space within designated parks to institutions within parks. Over many years, open space in designated parks has been re-allocated by the Manager of Parks and Recreation to institutions within parks such as recreation centers, museums, and zoos. It is important that open space within parks is protected. Would you ask for policy changes to protect open space within designated parks?

Yes,

Comment:

That said, I would look and examine each proposal on it's own merit. But most importantly I would ask the residents of each particular area, what THEY thought of any particular proposal before I would vote on an issue.

Q8: There is inadequate urban parkland in Denver given the size, density, and expected growth of Denver's population. For example: The city had 555,000 residents in 2000 and is projected to have 700,000 in 2020. While the Hancock administration may add additional parkland to the park system, the current plans focus on the acquisition of land at the periphery of Denver. We need parkland in the center of the city where the population is growing and "density" is a goal of the administration's urban development plan. Would you support the acquisition of additional parkland and open space within the center of the City of Denver?

Yes,

Comment:

I certainly would. Many people stay in Denver and also move to Denver specifically because of our proximity to our beautiful natural resources in Colorado. I believe it's critical that we add additional parkland, so that the City of Denver (as well as areas District 7) doesn't completely become an urban and concrete jungle.

PAGE 6: II. ACQUISITION OF PLAYING FIELDS AND A FESTIVAL SITE

Q9: The urban parkland that does exist is viewed increasingly as a site for multiple and oftentimes conflicting purposes-- opportunities to experience nature, spaces in which teams can play, and sites for large festivals. These uses of the same land has created problems within our parks including damage to parkland and vegetation, limitation of public access to parks, and distress for neighborhoods bordering parks (eg., unacceptable levels of noise, traffic congestion, threats to public safety, and problems parking). As a result, a site is needed for large ticketed events such as festivals that is not located within neighborhoods. Well-lighted playing fields with bathrooms and parking outside of city parks are also required. Would you support the development of a Festival Site?

No,

Comment:

While I am open to all discussions, but as with anything, the proposal has to be financially viable in order for a dedicated festival site to work. And with real estate in Denver being at such a premium, I'm at a loss as to just where in the City of Denver we would put such a site. That said, if a for profit event is held on public parkland, those that put on the event should be held financially responsible for making the city whole financially... for expenses related to public safety and any damage to the vegetation in our parks. I am also all for being much more mindful on the stresses that many of these festivals have on the residents of our communities. And I believe communities should have much more of a say as to a) whether they want these types of events to take place in their communities b) the hours of operation of these events and c) how else the community might benefit from these events taking place in their specific communities.

Q10: Would you explore opportunities for and support the development of playing fields outside of city parks for Denver citizens?

No,

Comment:

BUT there are other alternative playing fields that already exist! Many high schools, middle schools and grade schools already have playing fields of their own, that are often not used or underutilized on the weekends. Perhaps in exchange for the use of school playing fields, participants would pay the schools a use fee, which could go toward the cost of covering insurance and other school expenses. Bottom line, with limited real estate resources in the City of Denver, we have to get more creative as to how we will solve problems.

PAGE 7: III. USE OF RECYCLED WATER IN PARKS

Q11: Would you ask the City administration to convene a panel of independent experts in plant physiology, soil chemistry etc. to evaluate the safety of the type of recycled water used in our parks and to report the results to the public?

Yes,

Comment:

But only to the extent that these experts stay within a reasonable budget. That said, much of the information and science needed to make these sorts of decisions is likely already in the public domain. And with a little research, chances are we can save a great deal of money learning from other municipalities that have already grappled with similar issues.

Q12: If the risks of the type of recycled water currently in use are found to be too high, would you support all steps necessary to eliminate these risks?

Yes,

Comment:

But again, all within a reasonable budget. Much like our own personal budgets, if certain expenses go up in a certain area, chances are we'll have to make cuts somewhere else. I'm committed to - Always keeping our budget balanced - Eliminating wasteful parts of our budget - Finding additional revenue sources that others had not originally foreseen... in order to help pay for programs that residents of District 7 deem to be a priority

PAGE 8: IV. PARK ADMINISTRATION

Q13: Effective government requires citizen engagement. INC has received multiple complaints and over many years pertaining to the use of parks. Complaints include the difficulty citizens have in influencing park policies. A new Office of Special Events has been formed by the Mayor and its function will have an impact on what events occur in parks. Would you advocate for INC representation on an Advisory Board for the Office of Special Events?

Yes,

Comment: Absolutely!

Q14: Would you direct funds to the Department of Parks and Recreation to ensure enforcement of park rules and regulations within the entire park system?

Yes

PAGE 9: V. PARK FUNDING

Q15: Denver's park and parkway system is grossly under-funded. A broad range of funding sources must be pursued in order to sustain and to expand Denver' park system. This funding includes local and state-level dedicated revenue sources. Denver is surrounded by municipalities that fund their parks with a tax levy dedicated to parks. Would you support a tax levy to provide a stable funding source with which to acquire land for parks, open space, a festival site, playing fields, and for maintenance of all these for Denver's park system?

No,

Comment:

Not before I first had the opportunity to go line item by line item to help determine any wasteful spending in our current budget. Chances are through saving money on existing wasteful programs, as well as reallocating funds from some other programs, we'll be able to find some additional money to apply to Denver Parks and Recreation. But what say you residents of District 7... are you willing to pay more in taxes to purchase additional parkland in Denver? email me your thoughts at mLevy@michaelforddistrict7.com. It's all up to you... it's YOUR district, your city and your money! If YOU deem it a priority I would certainly respect your wishes.

PAGE 11: Discretionary Projects

Q16: If elected, would you support an increase to Public Works funding for discretionary projects in neighborhoods?

Yes,

Comment:

But first I would want to know exactly what those discretionary projects actually are and evaluate them all on their own merits. That said, last year Public Works represented 16% of the total city budget, while all projects at Denver International Airport consumed a whopping 35% of the total city budget. My hope is, that as work and expenses at DIA begin to wind down... that we can reallocate some of those funds to certain public works projects (within District 7 especially) that have long been neglected.

PAGE 12: Committment to Vision Zero

Q17: Would you support Denver joining the ranks of cities that target elimination of traffic deaths and serious injuries as a moral priority by adopting a Vision Zero approach?

Yes,

Comment:

Here's a link to find out more info on this subject...
<http://www.visionzeroinitiative.com/>

PAGE 13: Best Practices regarding sidewalk installation and maintenance

Q18: Would you support Denver pursuing and implementing best practices from other cities regarding sidewalk installation and maintenance, with the goal of increasing walkability?

Yes

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Q19: . Would you support the City of Denver engaging consultants to study the effects of parking on neighborhoods in areas where high rise development is contemplated prior to approval of the development. If so, what parking study process would you suggest?

No,

Comment:

From Baker, to Wash Park, to Platte Park, to Athmar Park, to Ruby Hill... we already have plenty of "consultants"... and those are the actual people that live and work there. Additionally I consider it part of my job to actually know the most salient issues that are affecting the communities that I represent, and to the extent that I don't know... I will go out and walk the community and talk with people and understand the issues first hand. Before employing any outside consultants, I also have to better evaluate and understand all the resources that might already exist in the City and County of Denver... before we outsource any projects that perhaps the City of Denver can and should handle internally.

Q20: Do you believe the 2010 Zoning Code adopted by City Council in 2010 has benefited all neighborhoods in Denver or some neighborhoods? Please cite examples.

Yes,

Examples:

The new 2010 zoning law seems to have been fairly well implemented and fairly well received across the board. However certainly one major hiccup in this whole process unfortunately will result in 2 thirty story towers going up in an area, where the largest such project before that was 21 stories. Bottom line 30 story buildings belong downtown. A much more reasonable height limitation for the country club area would have resulted in 4 fifteen story buildings being built instead of 2 thirty story towers. But all this occurring wasn't so much a failure of the 2010 zoning code... so much as it was a failure on the part of the City Council and Landmark Preservation committee not understanding the ramifications of their decisions on this specific community. I actually lived in the Country Club Gardens apartment complex when I first moved to Denver. I thought they were charming and the flowers were nice. However (and the voters in the area mostly agree that)... given their druthers... they would vote to tear down all of the gardens if it could ultimately result in putting up 4 fifteen story buildings, instead of 2 thirty story buildings. On the City of Denver's zoning website... it talks about how different neighborhoods all have different "contexts". Well clearly 2 thirty story buildings going up in this West Wash Park neighborhood is clearly OUT of Context.

Q21: What changes do you believe need to be made to the 2010 Zoning Code, if any, and why.

First, I intend to study the 2010 Zoning Code in more detail. That said, I would like to make sure that residential rental developments include adequate on-site parking for residents and guests. For rental and owned units I would like to see parking as an included benefit of ownership or residency. Given the choice of saving some money...often a good percentage of folks will park out on the street. This in turn clogs up the side streets for other residents who also live in the community.

I would also like to see the current Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (IHO) modified to also include rentals vs just for For Sale units. My proposal would allow for greater density and apartment development sites, only so long as a) any additional units would be required to be designated as affordable housing units and b) included parking is also added to a parking structure for those affordable housing units.

Q22: Will you urge the Mayor and city officials to appoint representatives of residential neighborhood organizations to all city boards, commission, advisory committees, collaborative groups and task forces which consider planning and zoning issues. If so, describe the efforts you would take to ensure such appointments are made.

Yes,

Comment:

Part of what's great with so many people running for council in District 7 is that we have so many different parts of our community represented. Even if the Mayor does not officially appoint representatives from each neighborhood, it would still be my intent to reach out to the other candidates and ask them for their opinions on critical items that are due to come up for a City Council vote.

Q23: INC has been advised that the Director of Community Planning and Development is recommending Blueprint Denver be revised and updated. Do you support such a recommendation and describe what process you would support to ensure neighborhood participation.

Yes,

Comment:

I DO support such a recommendation. It's been 13 years since Blueprint Denver was passed and 15 years since the Denver Comprehensive Plan was passed in 2000. Hence a revision is certainly in order. That said, I would specifically reach out to the leadership of all the neighborhood associations to help ensure that all their voices are heard.

Q24: Please describe your vision of "smart growth" for the City of Denver in ten words or less. The vision should capture stakeholder expectations of your anticipated leadership on City Council.

Responsible development that respects the context of each community.

Q25: . Entertainment districts which extend the hours for alcohol to be served, often until 4:00 a.m., have been adopted in a few cities throughout Colorado. Would you support an entertainment district in certain areas in Denver? If so, where and until what time?

No,

Comment:

Unlike New York City, which bills itself as the "City that never sleeps"... I believe the majority of Denver residents, (who live in close proximity to bars and restaurants)... ultimately would like to get just a little bit more sleep!

Q26: Short term rentals, that is rentals for less than 30 days are now illegal in Denver residential neighborhoods. Do you support the adoption of an ordinance which would permit short term rentals in Denver residential neighborhoods. If not, why not. If you would support an ordinance to allow short term rentals in residential neighborhoods, please describe the process you would support, including the process for funding.

No,

Comment:

Simply put, I don't think short term rentals are good for neighborhoods. The concept of short term rentals, ala AirBnb, sound good in concept... BUT if you happen next door to one of those short term rentals (with a different set of guests coming and going on a daily basis)... I don't think most people would much like that. If they were OK with living next to a motel, they would have bought a place next to a motel! But what say you District 7 residents, let me know what you all think on this issue by sending me a note to

mLevy@michaelfordistrict7.com - - - - -

Lastly, I'm the only District 7 candidate who is NOT taking campaign contributions from any voters or any special interests. Please instead of making a donation to any campaign, please consider just making a donation instead to the K-12 school in your community. I can assure you that our schools need your money certainly more than any of the candidates, (including myself) who are running for office. Here's the Direct Donation Link for Lincoln Elementary School (my daughter's school)...

<http://www.mylincolnptsa.org/fundraisers/support-lincoln-elementary/> That said if YOUR kid's school also has a direct donation page, please forward that link to my attention, and I will post that link on my website. I will then ask visitors to my website to follow those links and make donations to those schools as well. Thank you for your time and your support! Michael Levy

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