



DeKalb County Democratic Committee
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2021 Municipal Elections Candidate Questionnaire (Responses) N^o: 6

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Name	John J. Funny
Municipality	Brookhaven
Position for which you are running	City Council
District and seat (if applicable) for which you are running. If not applicable, please type "N/A."	District 4
Do you support your municipality's Nondiscrimination Ordinance (NDO)? Or, if your city does not have one, do you support passing an NDO? Please explain.	Yes, I do support the City of Brookhaven's City non-discrimination ordinance that was unanimously approved for private businesses on January 14, 2020 to promote the public health and welfare of all persons who live and work in the City of Brookhaven. It is important for Brookhaven to ensure that all persons within the City have equal access to employment, housing and public accommodations. The purpose and intent of the ordinance is to protect and safeguard the rights and opportunities of all persons to be free from all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, marital status, familial status, or veteran/military status.
Do you believe armed police officers should be dispatched to mental health calls? Please explain.	One of the jobs of the Police is to keep the public safe, but sometimes they are placed in situations where they do not know the mental state of the person they are encountering. Like many in the community, I share the concerns when it comes to people with mental illness being confronted by police. Brookhaven have applied for and received State grant funds to employ two (2) mental health professionals who assist our police officers on calls dealing with mental health. The program works exceptionally well and have provided mental health professionals working alongside our officers to improve public safety. We need to provide the Police all the tools they need to be successful in the field including improved Police practices and ongoing training that deals with mental illness, when to know when to divert someone to a mental health facility instead of jail, and when to use a taser instead of a gun. More information being gathered at the time that 911 calls are made, including questions on a person's mental health or mental state, should be part of the line of questions asked because the more info Police have before they arrive on the scene, the better they can evaluate and make the right decisions to seek help instead of jail. In addition, many communities have crisis intervention teams and programs that train police officers to handle and respond safely to psychiatric crisis calls. Like CPR, every police officer should be trained in a CIT program. Once elected, I will support funding to increase the number of mental health professionals and to continue the efforts that are in place, while welcoming new crime fighting initiatives, ongoing training for officers, and implementation of best practices to continue provide a safe environment for Brookhaven residents and visitors.

Do you believe citizens should be arrested for possessing small amounts of marijuana? How is your view similar or different from the current policy in your municipality? Please explain.

Possession of marijuana, in any amount, is still a crime per the laws of Georgia, but change is occurring. In 2019, Georgia approved a CBD program, which shows the state gradually changing its position on this topic. We see the headlines each day where cities and states across the country are taking immediate action by creating laws that reduce or eliminate the criminal penalties for possession of an ounce of marijuana and creating programs to expunge criminal records obtained from these charges. Per the National Conference of State Legislatures, 18 states, two territories, and the District of Columbia have legalized small amounts of cannabis for adult recreational usage. Several cities in Georgia have also done so while police departments have said they will not make arrests for small amounts of the drug. As a government, the Mayor and Councilmembers should discuss this matter to understand how this would impact Brookhaven and determine if this is something our citizens desire in our city.

The pandemic has presented unique challenges to cities in many different areas. What is your position on masking and vaccine mandates?

To ensure the safety of those who live in Brookhaven, I will take the politics out of COVID-19. I will support adherence to CDC guidelines, along with health expert recommendations, for the safety and protection of our citizens. Working with other council members, I will support advocacy and education to ensure that the latest facts and other pertinent information are in the hands of citizens in real time. I will use information from these health experts to protect our community from future threats. I will ensure that federal funds allocated to Brookhaven are used in the most effective and efficient manner possible. As we take constructive action to protect ourselves, I will seek ways that will allow for public reinvestment as we increase our resilience and recovery with the federal recovery funds we have received. This includes supporting essential workers, who should be recognized and compensated. They have worked diligently to keep our community functioning and have ensured that essential services remain available and accessible for our citizens during this pandemic. I will seek to identify and leverage our funds through thoughtful private-sector engagement that would benefit Brookhaven. This includes creating initiatives with businesses to ensure that we are preparing ourselves for the future. One such initiative is creating a clean environment through ventilation and air conditioning retrofitting of offices and buildings that can be supported by portions of our federal funds. This work alone has the potential to create new job opportunities for citizens seeking employment in our community, while stimulate our economy as we move forward.

Please explain how you would address the current housing crisis at the municipal level. How would you help people who are homeless/unhoused in your city?

Communities across the U.S. are running short of homes and Brookhaven is no different as we have seen our share of concerns regarding this issue which equates to a supply-and-demand problem. In addition to the homeless and the unhoused, the availability of housing affects the working-class citizens of Brookhaven including police, other first responders, and teachers who are all seeking housing for their families. Tackling the lack of housing in Brookhaven will be a priority for me as District 4 Councilman. I will collaborate with other leaders on the local, state, and federal level to strategize and come up with solutions. I will review the American Jobs Plan from the Biden-Harris Administration and its list of policies to determine if information they share is applicable to Brookhaven. I will also look at best practices around the country for ideas and strategies in creating housing, including exploring tiny home and rail car homes. I would also investigate turning large abandoned or underutilized facilities in Brookhaven into housing units that would provide a housing solution while families go through a program that would get them on track for home ownership.

What would you change about how development is being approached in your municipality? What is your position on affordable housing and making homeownership more accessible?

Overall, Brookhaven has done a great job of providing quality housing, however, there needs to be a focus on affordable/workforce housing to support the diverse income levels that exist in our community. Many residents that reside in the district have expressed the desire for the city to create some type of affordable housing development. As we move forward, we must be conscientious of continued growth as we support the best quality of life for all citizens, while promoting various forms of development to remain competitive in the region. I will support creating an action plan for developing affordable housing to increase the overall supply. We can seek out best practices and partnerships within the private and public sector to implement affordable housing projects within our community. We must look at ways of eliminating the growing gap that prevents people from becoming homeowners. As we must look at development and housing options, we must ensure that we are inclusive of all as we seek to create and preserve affordable housing in Brookhaven.

Do you consider the way your city government operates to be transparent, accountable, and effective? What would you change?

Brookhaven is a transparent, accountable and effective metro-Atlanta city. The leadership of the city has provided a great deal of thought and analysis into governing the city and developing policies to run the city effectively and efficiently while focused on the long-term vision for the city. Elected leaders of Brookhaven have been transparent and have paid particular attention to the sharing of information with citizens that is needed to make informed decisions as they conduct the people's business.

Please give an assessment of your municipality's current infrastructure needs (roads, sidewalks, etc.). What would you change or do differently?

One of the most challenging elements of any urban setting, including Brookhaven, is to provide for a transportation system that integrates safety and operational efficiency within existing neighborhoods and business districts. As a transportation engineer, I believe that our transportation infrastructure must be planned and implemented in such a way that weaves the future development into existing neighborhoods and business districts. In addition, it must support the overall land use and urban design plans. We must also review current and future automobile traffic, truck traffic, and pedestrian, bicycle plans. Lastly, local transit initiatives must remain a focal point, focusing on quality-of-life issues here in the City of Brookhaven. District 4 has three major arteries (North Druid, Buford Hwy and Clairmont) that need major attention to enhance operations, safety and efficiency. I would collaborate with other members of the Council to ensure that these major roadways receive the funding/capital/assets they need to continue to function effectively into the future. If there are state or federal resources available, I would work with other elected officials at both levels to ensure that Brookhaven is on the list for allocations as they become available. Lastly, I would champion improved policies that support walking, biking, and public transit to get people out of their cars and help reduce air pollution from vehicles on the road.

Are you satisfied with the number, quality and management of trails, parks and green space in your municipality? If not, what would you change?

District 4 needs more Greenspace in the form of an active destination park, which would complement our linear park, Peachtree Creek Greenway. Adding more Greenspace to District 4 would allow us to become aligned with the rest of the city in offering quality outdoor space for citizens to enjoy.

Please list, in order, your top 3 priorities or things you would like to accomplish, should you be elected or re-elected.

I have four top priorities For Brookhaven: • Transportation • Smart Growth and Affordable Housing • Public Safety • Greenspace The city of Brookhaven is a relatively young city compared to others in the metro-Atlanta area. Since our inception, elected leaders and citizens have worked together constructively and effectively over the past decade to make Brookhaven a great community. I am proud to say that I have been one of those citizens, actively involved with Brookhaven from the start, and I welcome the opportunity to continue to work for the community inside government as the next District 4 Councilman. As I seek elected office, I do so with the understanding of the importance of strong partnerships between government and the community it serves. Having served in two volunteer roles with Brookhaven, I would like to further explore other areas citizens can be involved as we harness the best ideas they have to offer for the advancement of Brookhaven. As Councilman for District 4, I would expand and strengthen this partnership as we continue to create the best quality of life achievable for all in Brookhaven. Transportation and Smart Growth are two key area that all residents of Brookhaven are concerned with. One of the most challenging elements of any urban setting, is to provide for a transportation system that integrates safety and operational efficiency within existing neighborhoods as well as business districts. As a transportation engineer, I believe that Brookhaven's transportation infrastructure must be planned and implemented in such a way that successfully weaves future development into neighborhoods and business districts. We must support overall land use and urban design plans as we review current and future automobile traffic, truck traffic, and pedestrian, bicycle plans within Brookhaven. While maintaining our distinctive character, we must seek ways to achieve our goals for growth and development. We can do so by managing our progress with smart growth policies to ensure balance. As District 4 Councilman, I will continue to strengthen and build on our assets to ensure Brookhaven's prosperity. As a business owner, I understand economics and making tough decisions for the overall good. I will apply this knowledge and understanding to this government role to make the best decisions for our city. Lastly, local transit initiatives must remain a focal point, focusing on quality-of-life issues here in the City of Brookhaven as we continue to build a city that is the best place to live, work, or play.