

## RoxVote Coalition DISTRICT 7 CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE



**TITO JACKSON**

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**CITY SERVICES/INFORMATION SHARING** How would you use your office to ensure that residents of all the neighborhoods of Boston have equal access to basic city services and to information regarding City-sponsored programs and activities?

By working with my fellow Councillors, I would like to link my social media outlets with theirs. By doing so, District 7 residents will know what's happening in other neighborhoods and see how they're dealing with basic city services concerns. We can and must do more to make city government open and transparent. The city budget should be available for public view as a searchable document on the city's website. Transparency is a must. By posting it on-line, it would open up public discourse, allowing residents to raise questions or concerns. The 4500 system is good, but we need a 311 system. The use of texting and automated calls are also a fast and effective way of communicating with thousands of residents quickly. Opening up City Hall to the public is the right thing to do. Residents have the right to publicly debate city hall on issues like public safety and development and their impact on our neighborhoods. To make City Hall more accessible to my constituents is a top priority.

**HOUSING** As City Councilor, what specific steps would you take to address the variety of housing issues in District 7, such as homelessness, foreclosures, and housing affordability?

Boston has made great strides in coordinating services to help place homeless individuals in permanent housing. As a board member for Housing First, I believe we need to deal with the ever-growing homeless family population. No family deserves to live on the street or in crowded shelters. By tackling this issue, in turn, it will help combat the rise in homeless Boston public school child.

**YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES** How would you use your office to create more opportunities for young people in District 7?

I would create more opportunities for young people in District 7 by building partnerships between the community and businesses and non-profits. My campaign plans to recruit and hire seven interns representing each of the wards in the district for a paid six month program dedicated to building leadership skills in the four sectors of organizing: Communications (media, etc.), Development (finance), Political (intra-organizational relationships), and Field (grassroots organizing, etc.) The program would be open to students 18 to 21 who are either seniors in high school or freshmen/sophomores in a local college such as RCC or Northeastern. After being nominated by a teacher, guidance councilor, church, or non-profit, the students would apply by writing essays about current elected officials. Those in the program would experience guest lecturers with experience in the themes mentioned above. These students would lead projects to gain invaluable hands-on experience. They would also be provided with tools like laptops that most students in District 7 cannot afford.

**PUBLIC SAFETY** What new steps would you advocate for to improve current crime and violence prevention strategies?

Neighborhood safety means living free of the fear of violence. With budget cuts and limited funds available, more of the responsibility falls on us. As residents, we need to take a common sense when it comes to combating crime and violence in our community. I live on Schuyler Street. As long I am there, there won't be a Schuyler Street gang. There are things all of us can do to make things better. Residents need to take an active role in crime watches, respond immediately to disruptions in basic city services, and reporting a crime. A few weeks ago, I was up near Blue Hill Ave and saw a stolen car still running

crashed into parked cars. While all of this was happening, people were walking by – ignoring it. We have to report crimes. It is imperative.

**EDUCATION Please identify the major challenge facing Boston schools and describe what you would do to address this challenge?**

The major challenge facing Boston schools is the persistent achievement gap among students of color, ELL students, and special needs students. With a 50 percent drop-out rate, closing schools doesn't help an already ailing public school system. The actions we take today will save the generation of tomorrow. Early education must be the top priority. When four year olds enter Kindergarten and place their coats in the cubbyhole for the first time, they are playing catch up. Middle income students have been read to for 1700 hours while lower income children have been read to for 25 hours. That is why I propose a Roxbury Reads program, but which seeks to address literacy needs.

**JOBS What steps will you take to make sure the City enforces the Boston Residents Jobs Policy which is designed to increase employment opportunities for Boston residents, workers of color, and women on City of Boston-funded construction projects?**

I would use the power of the office to collaborate with labor groups and open the union rolls to people from the community. Construction jobs and good-paying union jobs should be accessible to workers in the neighborhood. This would be a win-win. Unions rolls would grow, while new members, who call District 7 home, would get to reap the benefits and privileges that come with union membership. I believe that the under-representation of women and people of color, at all levels of Boston's municipal workforce, is a problem. The City of Boston needs to eliminate archaic promotion practices that have a disparate impact on women and people of color. I would work to encourage active recruitment of women and the use of a wider set of evaluation tools in promotion practices, including oral examinations, assessment centers, and prior performance appraisals.