

Questionnaire response from Candice Rusie

To: Candice Rusie,

1) What are your motivations and aspirations to run for SCS city council?

Answer: *As a long time resident of SCS (almost 20 yrs.), I have a great deal of pride in our city and I would appreciate the chance to help our city retain what makes it great and to better the things that can be (and should be) improved. I will bring to the council an independent and thoughtful voice, and I promise to treat residents with the respect they deserve.*

2) What do you like about our beautiful City of St. Clair Shores?

Answer:

- a. *Level of community involvement and pride.*
- b. *Small-town feel of our community.*
- c. *Beautiful lakefront.*
- d. *Eclectic and unique business community.*
- e. *My family lives here.*

3) What do you see as the greatest challenges for our city in the future?

Answer:

- a. *Decreased satisfaction with and loss of faith in local government.*
- b. *The current economic crisis; surviving and thriving in this environment.*
- c. *Attracting business and families into the city; keeping the businesses and families already here.*

4) The treatment of some of our residents has been appalling here in Saint Clair Shores. What can be done to improve government and resident interactions?

Answer:

- a. *Increased openness and transparency in the government, including easier access to information.*
- b. *Increased responsiveness to citizen concerns.*
- c. *Maintain 2 min. and 5min. audience participation, plus respect when such participation occurs.*
- d. *Notices before snow/grass code enforcement; frequent assessment of enforcement and oversight of enforcement.*

5) Would you take political donations from individuals and businesses that have contracts with the city? And if so, state your reason.

Answer: *No. I would not want residents to fear that my decision-making was being influenced in any way by any improper motivation. As a councilmember, my #1 concern and responsibility would be to act in the best interests of those whom I would be representing - the citizens of SCS. Even the rare appearance of impropriety must be avoided. I'd rather have 1 less sign than to have a sign paid for by someone who is benefiting under a city contract.*

6) With declining property values and decreased state revenue sharing, what would you do to balance our city's budget?

Answer: *Just as families must do to weather the current economic climate, the city must examine and reexamine its budget. We must cut out any unnecessary spending. We must also carefully examine any new proposed expenditure before they are approved to determine if it is something we truly need at this time. Our city and the world today look different economically than they have even in the recent past; we cannot turn only to the same ideas and viewpoints as we had in the past. We must examine our priorities and plan carefully for the future more so now than ever.*

7) Do you believe millages are a way to balance the budget? And if so, state your reason.

Answer: *No, millages should be a last resort, and only used in true economic emergencies to cover necessary and unavoidable expenses. Oftentimes, millages can be avoided with careful planning, analysis, and reprioritizing.*

8) Our recent Snow enforcement was a Public Relations nightmare for our city. With what we know now, what direction would you take this ordinance next year?

Answer:

a. Objective and clear enforcement criteria.

b. Clear records of alleged violations-including clear photos w/ dates (to justify action).

c. Issue notices of violations before fines to allow residents to respond before action is taken and to decrease administration costs.

d. Frequent assessment of how the program is being implemented to determine if the program is being applied evenly and fairly.

9) Would you support and uphold a comprehensive Ethics policy to be put into our SCS charter?

Answer: Yes.

a. It would send a good message to residents and non-residents alike that our city cares that it is run ethically.

b. Provides a yardstick by which to measure conduct – to be used both by the government itself and by its watchdogs.

c. Easier to hold those who run afoul accountable for their conduct – needs to have teeth.

10) Would you change the city's charter to allow a greater number of candidates to maybe prevent another \$40,000 primary election just to eliminate one candidate?

Answer: *Yes, I would advocate for and seek such a change. Our city council cannot afford a \$40,000 primary in order to remove only 1 candidate from the race. Nor do we want to discourage people from running. Although a primary is necessary in certain circumstances (such as a circumstance in which, say, 15 people apply to run for 1 vacant seat), it is not worthwhile fiscally or administratively to have such an election in order to reduce the pool of candidates by one, as what will have to occur this year under the charter as currently in force.*

11) Public participation in government has been a fundamental right to every citizen. Do you encourage the current 2 minute public participation at the beginning of each city council meeting and the 5 minute public participation at the end of the agenda, and all online summaries and minutes of all governmental documents?

Answer: Yes. *The two audience participation periods each serve a vital purpose – the 2 minute period allows residents to address upcoming items (what will be discussed and decided); the 5*

minute period allows residents to introduce or bring up issues that should be addressed by council. The 2 minute period should be retained; the 5 minute period should also be retained and should not be shortened to 3 minutes, as has been recently discussed. Residents need to be able to speak in a public forum regarding their concerns.

Easier access to documentation will encourage thoughtful participation; let those who are being governed know how they are being governed and increase accountability of those in charge to those who put them there.

Thank you,

Candice Rusie