

Questionnaire response from Jack Downey

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

**Answer:** *My reasons are to try and improve the expectations and integrity of this council. I believe we owe it to the residents of this community to look out for their best interest. At present there are a multitude of issues that should be addressed and reformed. We cannot continue to be governed by 1950 standards. This is 2009 and we need to change accordingly. This present council goes along with whatever the City Manager would like, while most all his directives are coming from a specific person who is an elected official in Mt. Clemens, however resides within St. Clair Shores. This has to stop immediately.*

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

**Answer:** *We are actually blessed with an abundance of beautiful things. Our Lake St. Clair for one which makes us rank among the top as the boating capital of Michigan. Our parks and recreation facility for the residents is second to none, providing the standards are kept up. We have an array of eatery's and night spots, Harper Avenue Cruise, Memorial Day Parade, and Fireworks. We offer a multitude of activities for all. The city also offers a nice senior activity center that has many activities for everyone.*

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

**Answer:** *The greatest challenge I see is trying to fulfill the Police and Fire pension obligations without the proper tax base. We have no industrial industry in the city to speak of; all you see is vacant store fronts on your major streets and more and more vacant homes. I don't care how you calculate this, it is all a minus in tax dollars. We have to entice business to operate within our city. Our Code Enforcement Director has done more to damage businesses by not trying to go that extra mile and work with the businesses during these bad economic times, consequently they are moving or just going out of business and then the pressure falls back on the residents whether it be a millage increase or tax increase its all a tax period. That's why we have over 1400 vacant homes; people can't afford the high cost this city requires from its residents. Especially when it comes to the shady way some of our contractors are treated at the expense of the residents.*

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:** *I believe committee's like "STRAW" is the only way to combat this type of situation. As you know, most of our problems are directed through the City Managers office as well as Code Enforcement.*

*What residents fail to realize is this can be controlled when they go to the voting polls on Election Day. This council has to realize that the City Manager answers to the council, his Position does not dictate to council. Shame on council and this Mayor for allowing this to happen. Number one, the City Manager is nothing more than a rubber stamp, with no qualifications for the position he holds. He was appointed to that position through one of the "Good Ole Boy" deals.*

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

**Answer:** *Absolutely not. I proved that in 2007 when I ran for council, I paid for my entire campaign myself without donations from people who do work within the city. I think this is totally absurd and is in direct conflict with what a councilperson stands for and votes and makes decisions on. I not only think that taking donations from businesses in the city is wrong, I also think that accepting donation from special interest groups is wrong, that perform duties within the city.*

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

**Answer:** *Its very easy, Stop spending. I don't care if you are operating a penny candy store, or a city, you can't spend more than your income. We have made some terrible purchases this past year and your present council approved and voted for each and every purchase. Also all the contract renewals without going out for bid, this is terrible. Just remember there is a reason for everything they do, this is totally absurd, this is taxpayers money they are throwing around. Most of the major purchases were through D.P.W. Where does the Director get his directives? (Two guesses, the first one doesn't count).*

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

**Answer:** *No, not at all. You don't get out of debt or balance the budget by raising taxes or renewing millages. You balance the budget by reducing the spending and learn to live within the budget set forth. This is something this council has failed to do, however when the residents have the opportunity to change policy at the voting polls they seem to come up short, or they forget. Another way to balance the budget is to renegotiate some of the contracts rather than renew them. Trash hauling, Engineering, Construction, Unions, Police Command Officers Union, there are a number of ways to save expenditures they just overlook the various avenues.*

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:** *I would alleviate the problem by taking the work load and decision making out of the hands of Code Enforcement. Number one I don't believe there is anyone there capable of handling the responsibilities that they have. Number two, I think that there is a way to talk to residents, after all they pay the taxes which consequently is wages and benefits of the city employees, whether it be the City Manager or the sweeper. Certain people have too much power and authority.*

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

**Answer:** *I certainly would and I think its way over due, however an Ethics policy is only as good as what it is written on and enforced. If there are a few hand picked people who would make up the commission or committee to form policy, forget it. It could be worse than it is now. The committee should be picked something like a lottery system, at random, no relatives, personal friends, or back room associates. This way we may have somewhat of an honest selection of people to form the policies. It's like I have stated before, the only difference between the city of Detroit and St. Clair Shores is the size of the population, their policies and actions of councilpersons are very similar.*

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:** *I don't believe we need a primary, what purpose does it serve? If you say process of elimination, this could be established at the General Election in November. This is just another form of wasted tax dollars.*

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, I do support both public participations at council meetings as well as the posting of minutes and documents. I also would like to see the public be able to bank their minutes and pass it on to another participant of their choice. I would also like to extend a thank you to the STRAW COMMITTEE for getting these various issues passed and put in place.*

*Thank you for the opportunity to submit this questionnaire, if there are any additional questions or if I may be of further assistance, please contact me at your convenience.*

*Thank You,*

*Jack Downey,  
Candidate for City Council*