

Annual Report

2015



Featuring:

Candidate Kenney's Response To 16-item Crosstown
Questionnaire Plus Answers From 8 Council Members

Members of the Coalition:

Bella Vista Neighbors Association • Callowhill Neighbors Association • Center City Residents' Association • Central Roxborough Civic Association • East Falls Community Council • East Passyunk Crossing Civic Association • Fishtown Neighbors Association • Hawthorne Empowerment Coalition • Logan Square Neighborhood Association • Northern Liberties Neighbors Association • Overbrook Farms Club • Packer Park Civic Association • Passyunk Square Civic Association • Queen Village Neighbors Association • Society Hill Civic Association • Spruce Hill Community Association • Washington Square West Civic Association • West Powelton/Saunders Park RCO • Woodland Terrace Homeowners Association

www.philacrosstown.org

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Crosstown Coalition, a federation of Registered Community Organizations from 20 neighborhoods in Philadelphia, a city of neighborhoods, is celebrating its first full year of operations.

The Crosstown originated in 2007 when four civic associations allied to address Zoning Code reform. Over the next four years, the Coalition added seven members. Its representatives attended more than 50 Zoning Code Commission meetings and generated hundreds of pages of analysis. Immediately after the enactment of the Zoning Code, the AVI realty tax reassessment program surfaced. The Crosstown refocused on AVI, acquiring ten new members in the process and producing a 37 page analysis of the reassessment valuations and two 40 page "How To" manuals on the new tax programs.

In April of 2014, the Crosstown institutionalized, creating a nonprofit to pursue common goals of the constituent members under the direction of a board of delegates appointed by member civics. The Crosstown concentrated in three areas in 2015: education, elections, and zoning, planning and land use. Some highlights:

EDUCATION SUMMIT - In March, 120 education activists involved with 30 different schools gathered for workshops and networking in a summit organized by Jeff Hornstein, Crosstown vice chair.

CANDIDATES QUESTIONNAIRE – Five Mayoral candidates and 19 Council candidates responded to a 16 item Crosstown May primary questionnaire. Some interesting takeaways: 14 of the 19 Council candidates sided with candidate Kenney in agreeing that Council should have held hearings on the PGW sale; 18 Council candidates agreed with candidate Kenney that the Inspector General should be made a permanent position.

ZONING & PLANNING – Chair Joe Schiavo's Zoning and Land Use committee labored on a myriad of initiatives in 2015 but two of the most important involved negotiating the Center City overlay, an 18 month task that culminated in the passage of bill 140721 this Fall and the Planning and Development reorganization charter amendment where the Crosstown organized a partnership with the BIA and the Development Workshop which delayed the Bill in committee enabling the negotiation of numerous revisions before the Bill's passage.

Stephen Huntington

Chairperson

OFFICERS AND DELEGATES

OFFICERS

Stephen Huntington – Chairperson, Center City Residents
shuntington@hhflaw.com

Jeff Hornstein - Vice Chair Queen Village
Ilene Wilder - Vice Chair – East Passyunk
Brian Collins – Secretary Passyunk Square
Ed Panek – Treasurer Logan Square

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Chair of Education Committee
Jeff Hornstein Queen Village

Chair of Zoning and Land Use Committee
Joe Schiavo Old City

Chair of Governmental Initiatives Committee
Kevin Maurer Overbrook Farms

Chair of Communications Committee
Ilene Wilder East Passyunk

Chairs of SLAPP Task Force Committee
Stephen Huntington Center City Residents
Peter Gold Old City
Tanner Rouse Center City Residents

DELEGATES

Judy Applebaum - Washington Sq. West Civic
Claudia Archer - Bella Vista Neighbors
Michelle Atherton - Bella Vista Neighbors
Chuck Bode - West Powelton/Saunders Park
Jeff Braff - Center City Residents' Assn.
Jonathan Broh – Wash West CA
Monica Calkins – Spruce Hill C A
John Consolvo – Fishtown N A
Barbara Capozzi - Packer Park Civic Assn.
Cynthia Cronin-Kardon - Overbrook Farms
Greg Damis - South Broad Street Neighbors
Bill Epstein - East Falls Community Council
Lucia Esther - West Powelton/Saunders Park
Dominic Falso – East Passyunk C A
Jon Geeting - Bella Vista Neighbors
Meg Greenfield - East Falls Community Council
Barry Grossbach _ Spruce Hill C A
Peter Harwan - Fishtown Neighbors Assn.
Jeff Hornstein - Queen Village N A
Dan Horowitz - Society Hill C A
Stephen Huntington - Center City
Residents' Assn
Eleanor Ingersoll - Queen Village N'hood
Joanne Kundrat – Callowhill N A

Magali Larson - Woodland Terrace
Lorna Katz Lawson - Society Hill Civic Assn.
Sam Little - Logan Sq. Neighbors Assn.
Kevin Maurer – Overbrook Farms
Dave Marley - West Powelton/Saunders Park
Ray Nasser - Hawthorne Empowerment Coal.
Brian OKeefe – Callowhill N A
Gregory Oliveri - Woodland Terrace
Ed Panek - Logan Sq. Neighbors Assn.
Lynda Payne - Central Rox. Civic Assn.
Jim Petkovits - Central Rox. Civic Assn.
Matt Ruben - Northern Libs. Neighborhood
Eric Santoro – Spruce Hill C A
Amy Shelanski - Queen Village Neighborhood
Leah Strenger – Callowhill N A
Don Simon - Central Rox. Civic. Assn.
Andrew Toy - Logan Sq. Neighbors Assn.
Mary Tracy - Society Hill Civic Assn.
Jamie Ware – Fishtown N A
Ilene Wilder - Passyunk Sq. Civic Assn.
Ian Wilson – Fishtown N A
Peter Zutter - South Broad St. Neighbors

ELECTIONS

APPENDIX A (Page 11): FULL TEXT OF JIM KENNEY'S ANSWERS THE CROSSTOWN QUESTIONNAIRE INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING HIGHLIGHTS:

TEN YEAR TAX ABATEMENT Asked whether the ten year tax abatement should continue as is, the new Mayor observed that the ten year abatement program replied that "has done much to spur real estate development in some parts of Philadelphia" but called for consistent review of tax programs. Significantly, Mayor Kenney specifically referred to the Crosstown's critique of under assessed land valuations, and promised that: "As Mayor, I will look to raise the land value of the total assessment . . ."

REAL ESTATE TAXATION – Candidate Kenney called for realty tax reassessments "every two to three years" and singled out the LOOP (Longtime Owner Occupied Program) for support.

WAGE TAX – The new Mayor wrote that "Philadelphia's wage and business taxes are regressive and hamper our ability to attract businesses and create jobs. I fully support . . . the Job Growth Coalition headed by Paul Levy . . . to shift away from wage and business taxes and increase revenue through a higher tax rate for commercial properties.

DELINQUENT TAXES – Asked whether the City should sell delinquent tax liens, the Mayor recommended using "New York City as a model, where the government conducts yearly sales of their most marketable liens." and called for modernizing the Revenue department and a "complete review of our tax collection system" including simplification of forms and procedures.

PENSION DEFICIT To address the pension deficit, the Mayor recommends "growing the overall City tax base; negotiat(ing) fair contracts with our municipal unions; and work(ing) with the Board of Pensions to ensure that we are making smart investments without losing any money or the opportunity to grow the Fund as well as working with " Governor Wolf and the legislature to amend the Uniformity Clause of the Pennsylvania Constitution so that we . . . "place a greater emphasis on commercial property taxes as a revenue source."

PENSION BENEFITS Asked about providing defined contribution plans for new hires, the Mayor promised to "develop a hybrid plan that will actually entice employees to join, instead of the current Plan 10 that has failed to gain voluntary membership by City employees."

CITY-OWNED VACANT PROPERTIES - Asked whether he would support amending the Land Bank Ordinance by eliminating the 14 member vacant property review

commission, the Mayor stated that "If the current processes cause unnecessary delays, than I will work with City Council to rectify that by ordinance."

CREATING A PERMANENT INSPECTOR GENERAL – Candidate Kenney "will advocate again for the passage of this Bill to place the office of the Inspector General in the City Charter and "sign an Executive Order to continue the current Inspector General office under the Mayor.

UNFAIR ELECTORAL DISTRICTING – Asked for his opinion on having an independent, nonpartisan commission remap Council boundaries after the 2020 census, Kenney stated that "the idea of an independent and nonpartisan commission for redistricting is worthy of further study as we approach the 2020 census and subsequent reapportionment."

APPENDIX B (Page 25): COUNCIL CANDIDATES' ANSWER THE CROSTOWN QUESTIONNAIRE:

Eight members of the new Council responded to the Crosstown questionnaire. The most interesting responses were those where there was agreement among the then candidates, now Council members. For example, seven of the eight endorsed the idea of making the Inspector General's office permanent and five of the eight endorsed the concept of an independent election remapping commission while a sixth responded that the innovation was worth consideration.

OCTOBER SUPREME COURT CANDIDATE FORUM

On October 17, the Crosstown cosponsored a forum for Pennsylvania Supreme Court candidates held at Community College. 250 people heard Judges running as Democrats, Republicans and independents for three open seats in the November 3 election. Thanks to lead organizer United Voices of Philadelphia and Board members Andy Toy, Logan Square, and Jeff Hornstein, Queen Village for their work on this successful forum.

EDUCATION

FRIENDS OF NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS SUMMIT

In March, 120 education activists involved with 30 different schools gathered for workshops and networking in a summit organized by Jeff Hornstein, Crosstown vice chair. Topics for discussion included:

- How to Build Your Organization
- What Your Principal Needs from You
- Navigating the School District
- How Do We Build Voices From The Neighborhood

"HOW TO" SITE FOR FRIENDS OF NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS

The Crosstown Coalition Fone website at www.philacrosstown.org provides a sophisticated tool box for groups interested in initiating a Friends of Neighborhood Schools group. The suggestions are constructed from the experience of Friends groups throughout the Crosstown neighborhoods.

CROSTOWN PARTNERS WITH NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL GIVING CIRCLE

The Philadelphia Public School Giving Circle, organized by PCC Delegate Andy Toy with a major assist from PCC Vice Chair Jeff Hornstein is partnering with the PCC to solicit tax deductible donations to support neighborhood schools in disadvantaged communities. The PPSGC is a donor-advised fund at the Philadelphia Foundation and funding decisions are made by a Giving Circle Proposal Committee. This initiative, totally independent of school district bureaucracy, will react nimbly to needs as they arise. The PCC is serving as a fiscal sponsor for this initiative.

ZONING PLANNING AND LAND USE

ZONING PROCEDURE SUGGESTIONS DELIVERED TO ADMINISTRATION

In June, the Crosstown's Zoning and Land Use Committee commenced discussions on how to improve Zoning Board of Adjustment procedures by convening discussions with a wide i the Builders Industry Association and the Development Workshop as well as attorneys active in land use matters. The result: a five page Crosstown memorandum containing 10 suggestions for ZBA operational improvements delivered to the new administration. Key points were:

QUALIFICATIONS OF ZBA MEMBERS : The Planning, Historic and Art Commissions specify the educational/professional qualifications necessary for service. Not so the Zoning Board where anyone may serve.

STREAMLINING ZBA HEARINGS : "Downtime" for citizens, applicants and their attorneys/architects could be reduced by dividing each hearing day into time groupings with adequate buffer time between time slots to accommodate protracted matters, by calling "no contest" cases first, and by reinstating review of applicant materials by ZBA staffers to ensure that all applicants have completed the necessary paperwork.

ANNUAL REVIEWS OF ZBA ACTIVITY: An annual review of refusals, variances and special exceptions would identify needed revisions to the Code.

CROSSTOWN RECOMMENDATIONS RE LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURES

On November 16, Crosstown Chair, Steve Huntington, testified before the City Council Rules Committee requesting that Committee members consider what steps might be taken to ensure that Registered Community Organizations can participate early on in the drafting of legislation. Since then the Zoning and Land Use Committee has endorsed a 6 point memorandum calling for

- increased community and Planning Commission input in the legislative drafting process
- more deliberation both in Committee and on the Council floor.
- the appointment of a community ombudsman to provide services performed by paid staffers and lobbyists of better funded organizations.

CROSSTOWN INPUT ON PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BILL 140721

In September of 2014, Council President Clarke introduced a proposed charter change to create a cabinet level Director of Planning and Development and reorganize the city agencies responsible for these tasks. Working with the Development Workshop, the Crosstown organized a consortium to stage a February press conference and testify at the bill's Committee hearings. Participants included The Central Delaware Advocacy Group, the families of the victims of the Salvation Army building collapse, and the Design Advocacy Group. The Bill was kept in Committee and Council President Clarke undertook to issue a memorandum on the issues presented. When the memo did not issue, the Crosstown followed up with two letters and an email requesting that the stakeholders be convened to discuss the legislation with Council staffers. Commencing in late April the Crosstown scheduled five consecutive weekly meetings with Council and administration staffers and the consortium members (joined by the Preservation Alliance). The result: a much improved bill endorsed by the voters via a November ballot question.

PARKING SURVEY TEST MARKETED

The Crosstown Parking Committee chaired by CCRA's Bill West, test marketed its parking questionnaire via the CCRA and West Powelton email lists. 380 respondents to the 19 item questionnaire replied within 48 hours. 51% rated parking as very/extremely tight on weekdays but In the evenings, both on weekdays and weekends, that figure exceeded 80%. The most important parking problem – "the length of time it takes to find a parking space." 90% of those who do not own cars use SEPTA regularly. 53% of non car owners report never renting a car while 30% do so only several times a year. When non car drivers do enter a car, it's a taxi or Uber – 74% use taxis and 32% use UBER regularly. After cleaning up technical glitches in the survey platform, the Committee will send the questionnaire out to the other 18 Crosstown neighborhoods.

CENTER CITY OVERLAY PASSES AFTER 18 MONTHS OF DELIBERATIONS

Bill 140519, the Center City Overlay, was introduced in June of 2014 at the request of the Building Industry Association. In the ensuing 18 months the Crosstown met with Council, the Planning Commission and the development industry more than ten times and the Bill was revised on numerous occasions. On October 15 the Bill passed with a whimper, not a bang, when 22 citizens appeared to testify in favor of the Bill and no opponents signed up to testify.

UED OPPOSITION

City Council Bill 140906 enables the erection of UED's (Urban Experiential Displays - six story digital billboards) ignoring both a Crosstown letter to Council and testimony from Crosstown representatives in Council. Two weeks after the Bill's passage, Pennsylvania's Acting Secretary of Transportation Leslie Richards revoked the City's authority to regulate billboards along federally regulated highways. The Crosstown has written PennDOT inquiring whether UEDs will be permissible at the two locations identified in the Bill, on north Broad adjacent to the Convention Center and at 12th and Arch opposite Reading Terminal.

INVESTIGATION OF THE MYSTERY RCO BILL

A June 1 Plan Philly article reported that Council President Clarke's office had prepared a draft ordinance in cooperation with the Planning Commission applying the City's Standards of Conduct and Ethics to Registered Community Organizations, (RCO's), standards which do not apply to Council members or their staffers. When the Crosstown investigated, the Council President's office denied authorship of the bill as did the Planning Commission. The Crosstown therefore wrote both the Council President and the Planning Commission requesting that the Crosstown be alerted should the bill be presented for passage in Council. Stay tuned.

MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

CROSTOWN'S ANTI SLAPP BILL PASSES SENATE

Senator Larry Farnese's Senate Bill 95 providing safeguards against SLAPP suits (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) passed by a 48 to 1 bipartisan cross state vote on June 30 and now awaits passage in the State House. The bill incorporated virtually all of the revisions suggested by a three person Crosstown attorney taskforce comprised of Peter Gold, Steve Huntington and Tanner Rouse. Procedural and substantive protections for the defendants named in SLAPP suits (who often are civic associations) facilitate the prompt dismissal of SLAPP claims with an award of attorneys' fees, costs and damages.

SPRUCE HILL & CALLOW HILL JOIN CROSTOWN

Two new communities have become dues paying members of the Crosstown bringing total membership to twenty one civic associations. Spruce Hill Community Association represents the neighborhood on the west edge of the University of Pennsylvania campus from 38th Street on the east to 46th on the West, and from Market on the north to Woodland/46th Street on the South. Callowhill Neighborhood Association's boundaries are the north side of Vine Street to the north side of Spring Garden and from the east side of Broad Street to the West side of 8th Street.

TRACKING REALTY TAX ASSESSMENTS

More than two years ago, the Crosstown delivered to the Office of Property Assessment a 37 page analysis of the Actual Value Initiative citywide realty tax reassessment. The study found many shortcomings, including the the underassessment of large commercial buildings and of land on properties subject to the ten year tax abatements which land remains taxable even on abated parcels. OPA Chief Assessor, Michael Piper and seven key OPA staffers met with Government Initiative Committee Chair, Kevin Maurer, Jeff Braff, committee member from Center City Residents and Steve Huntington, Crosstown Chair, to discuss the report's findings. The OPA representatives said that many of the issues identified in the report should be remediated in revised assessments of the City's 470,000 residential properties. These new assessment figures will appear in notices to be mailed in April of next year for tax bills payable in 2017. The OPA committed to meet with the Coalition in March to discuss the new assessments.

APPENDIX A



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JIM KENNEY'S RESPONSE TO CROSSTOWN QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES

1. TAX ABATEMENT

Philadelphia's ten-year tax abatement eliminates real estate taxes on new construction and improvements (but not the underlying land) for ten years. Supporters argue that the lost tax revenue is more than offset by enhanced business, wage and sales tax collections and note that since the abatement went into effect, development activity has increased dramatically. Opponents argue that the abatement stimulates development for only high income housing, and reduces much needed city real estate tax revenue, of which more than 50% goes to schools.

Should the ten year realty tax abatement continue as is?

On City Council, I supported legislation to create the tax abatement program, and it has done much to spur real estate development in some parts of Philadelphia. However, I believe that we must consistently review and examine all of our tax programs, credits and abatements to find their true cost and whether they work. We must ensure that these programs are effective at either retaining or creating jobs.

One change I believe we must make is in the land/improvement value of properties after reassessment under AVI. As the members of the Crosstown Coalition knows from their years of advocacy on this subject, throughout the majority of the City, land values account for small portion of the total assessed value of a property, and for properties receiving tax abatements this percentage is even lower on average, specifically for some of our most expensive property. As Mayor, I will look to raise the land value of the total assessment, which keeps property taxes the same on

properties without an abatement, ensures those benefiting from the abatement pay a fairer share of taxes, and keeps the abatement program intact so development is not inhibited.

Should it be modified or abolished?

Answer above.

If you favor modification, what modifications should be made?

Answer above.

2. REAL ESTATE TAXATION

In 2013, for the first time in over two decades, the City reassessed all 579,000 parcels within the City limits. Tens of thousands of residential property owners were shocked to receive much higher property tax assessments. *How frequently should reassessments occur?*

In order to avoid dramatic property tax increases like Philadelphians recently experienced after the most recent AVI, future reassessments should be done every two to three years. As Mayor, I will work with the Office of Property Assessment to ensure they are using accurate sales information, along with street level data to make sure our system does not fall into disrepair again. We must also continue to support programs like LOOP, the Longtime Owner Occupant Program, of which I was a proud supporter and which has helped many Philadelphians stay in their homes.

3. WAGE TAX

Philadelphia receives 66% of its tax revenue from wages and business receipts; in contrast, in New York City and Washington DC, 34% and 35% of tax revenues are from wages and business receipts. In those two cities, proceeds from real estate taxes are much larger (41% and 36%, respectively) than in Philadelphia, where this value is 17%. Critics contend that Philadelphia's reliance on wage/business

taxes drives workers and businesses out of the City because it is easier to relocate people than it is to relocate offices and factories.

Should Philadelphia shift more of its revenue sourcing from wage and business taxes to real estate taxes?

Yes. Philadelphia's wage and business taxes are regressive and hamper our ability to attract businesses and create jobs. I fully support the plan circulated by the Job Growth Coalition headed by Paul Levy and others to shift away from wage and business taxes and increase revenue through a

higher tax rate for commercial properties. This would lessen the tax burden on individuals and employers, while taxing static assets, like property, that can't leave the city. As I said previously, I would also reevaluate all our current tax incentive programs to ensure that we're not wasting tax payer dollars on economic incentives that don't result in additional revenue for the City.

If you believe we should shift away from wage and business taxes to real estate taxes, how would you propose to do this?

See above

If you do not believe that such a shift should occur, why not?

N/A

4. DELINQUENT TAXES

The City currently has over \$1 billion in delinquent taxes. Approximately half are delinquent property taxes and half are delinquent wage, business income, and related business taxes. Each year, the deficit grows, a trend which suggests that the City lacks the political will or competence (or both) to collect taxes. One tax collection strategy is to remove the collection task from the City and sell tax liens to private investors so that the private sector would set about collecting these debts. Proponents observe that because the \$1 billion delinquency shows that the City is incapable or unwilling to collect delinquent taxes, tax collections should be transferred to the private sector. Critics worry that private concerns would engage in improper collection tactics or fail to fairly treat tax delinquents who are down on their luck.

Should the City sell tax liens to private investors?

With nearly a third of our residents living in poverty, it's nearly impossible to collect all of the delinquent taxes due to the City. Our best option for increasing revenue through delinquent tax collection is to focus on real estate taxes. Any future tax lien sale should use New York City as a model, where the government conducts yearly sales of their most marketable liens. According to a 2013 report from the City Controller, the City can collect nearly \$100 million through the sales of investor-owned residential properties, along with delinquent commercial and industrial properties. A sale of these liens would allow us to wipe this debt from our books, and provide an immediate source of revenue that could be used, among other things, to improve our revenue collection system and assure this massive backlog of debt doesn't happen again.

If not, what steps would you take to ensure that the delinquency is addressed?

In addition to the lien sale, we must modernize our Revenue department, especially its tax collection methods. As Mayor, I will undertake a complete review of our tax collection system and determine where changes can be made to simplify tax forms and payment avenues. It should not be overly difficult for people to file their taxes.

5. PGW SALE

Advocates of the recent failed sale of the Philadelphia Gas Works (PGW) favored the sale because the City could use the proceeds, about \$400 million, to reduce the \$5 billion underfunding of the City's pensions. They further contended that the City had no business running a gas company, that City ownership leaves open the door for patronage positions at PGW, that City ownership limited the business opportunities of the operation, and that under public ownership, it will take nearly 90 years to replace the City's ancient and increasingly unsafe gas mains. Opponents asserted that a sale would eliminate PGW's annual \$18 million contribution to the City's general fund. Opponents were also concerned that even though a privately operated PGW, like PECO, would be regulated by the Public Utility Commission, a private operator would be more likely to raise rates and be less responsive to the needs of low income residents than a City owned utility. Critics also contended that the private operator produced no credible plan for upgrading infrastructure that would not have entailed substantial longterm rate increases. Both sides presented reports substantiating their positions. Despite these divergent views, City Council decided not to hold public hearings on the proposal, let alone conduct a ye or nay vote.

Do you believe that City Council should have conducted public hearings on the PGW controversy? Please explain your answer.

Yes. As a member of City Council, I had hearings on the subject nearly 15 years ago and supported the possible sale. However, in part because of the Nutter administration's refusal to discuss amending any part of the deal including discounted rates for senior citizens or wage protections for current PGW workers my fellow Councilmembers were unwilling to consider a hearing. I could have grandstanded on the issue, but I would have angered and

embarrassed my colleagues. Now, if I'm elected, I'll have a significantly more positive relationship with Council than the Mayor's Office does

currently, and we'll reduce the political dysfunction that plagues important conversations like the sale of PGW.

What is your vision for the future of PGW?

While PGW has improved greatly over the past few years, we still have an aging gas pipeline infrastructure that is increasingly dangerous. We also have the opportunity to expand LNG production and possibly increase PGW's contribution to the City. As Mayor, I will work with City Council to develop a comprehensive plan for a public-private partnership that protects the current PGW workforce, but also seeks to more quickly replace our aging pipes and takes advantage of our prime location near the Marcellus Shale deposits to make Philadelphia an energy hub on the East coast.

6. PENSIONS

The City spends 18% of its budget – about \$660 million (in 2012) – on pensions. Even so, the City's pension obligations are currently underfunded by approximately \$5 billion, more than the \$4 billion the City expects to take in during the next fiscal year. Three questions:

Do you believe that the City can "grow" its way out of this deficit– i.e. that prosperity in the City, as distinguished from tax hikes, will produce higher realty and business tax revenues so that the additional funds can be used to pay down the deficit OR that the City can somehow change its ways and pay down the deficit by better practices?

It is important to understand that this underfunded pension liability did not happen overnight. To fix it will require a concerted effort by my Administration to create new revenue by growing the overall City tax base; to negotiate fair contracts with our municipal unions; and to work with the Board of Pensions to ensure that we are making smart investments without losing any money or the opportunity to grow the Fund.

I will work with Governor Wolf and the legislature to amend the Uniformity Clause of the Pennsylvania Constitution so that we can finally fully reform Philadelphia's antiquated business tax system and place a greater emphasis on commercial property taxes as a revenue source. This will allow Philadelphia to be a more competitive economy for businesses to locate and operate, and allow us to grow our tax base and generate further revenue to pay into the Pension Fund.

I will negotiate contracts with our municipal unions that are both fair for workers and the City. As the son of a union firefighter I have a unique respect and perspective on the collective bargaining process. While treating workers with the dignity and respect that they deserve, I will negotiate contracts that take into account the general wellbeing of the Pension Fund, and ensure that current and future workers are paying enough to keep the Fund sustainable so that they can actually collect a pension in retirement.

Finally, I will make sure that the Fund is being managed effectively and we are not losing money through failed investments or poor contracting. Shortly after being sworn in as Mayor I will convene an independent Public Pension Funding Commission made up of private sector leaders to take a fresh look at how the City manages and engages others to manage the Pension Fund. This Commission will evaluate the performance of professional service providers and evaluate the availability of financially responsible local investment opportunities so that our pension fund dollars can work for Philadelphia's economy.

If you do not believe that "growth" alone will suffice to address this issue, which do you favor: raising taxes, cutting spending or selling assets? Depending on your answer, specifically identify the taxes to be raised, the names of the programs that should be cut (please no generalities like eliminating "waste and abuse"), or the assets to be sold.

As I mentioned above, I will work with the Governor and legislative leaders to reform Philadelphia's business tax environment and place a greater emphasis on commercial property taxes. This, along with strategic partnerships between businesses, the Community College of Philadelphia, and the School District, will help create an environment where businesses will want to locate and operate in Philadelphia, as opposed to the current regressive tax structure in place now.

To gradually improve the pension plan's funding status, do you favor continuing the defined benefit plan for existing employees while instituting a defined contribution plan for more recently hired employees?

As Mayor I will negotiate contracts that are both fair for workers and fair for the City. As part of these negotiations we will develop a hybrid plan that will actually entice employees to join, instead of the current Plan 10 that has failed to gain voluntary membership by City employees. This and any other concession can only be gained by negotiating with our workers in good faith, and with mutual respect from all involved.

7. CHANGING NEIGHBORHOODS

Some Philadelphia neighborhoods are changing, with better-off people moving into areas historically occupied by less well-off residents. This trend increases the city's tax base (and thus its ability to address the challenges many of its residents face) and often improves the physical characteristics of a neighborhood, but it can also bring unsettling changes, not only through increasing property taxes but also via alterations in the makeup of affected communities.

Other than providing real estate tax relief to longtime residents whose assessments have increased due to rising values in the neighborhood, do you believe that government should intervene regarding these neighborhood changes?

I am proud to have been one of the prime sponsors of the Longtime Owner Occupant Program that has helped many residents stay in their homes and avoid large tax increases. With that said, I do believe that more can be done. I believe that neighborhoods are best when there is a mix of residents with different backgrounds and ages. The newly graduated college student should be able to live next to the 80-year-old African-American woman who moved to Philadelphia in the 1960's and has lived through tremendous change in our City during her lifetime. I believe that government's role here should be as a facilitator of these arrangements with a mix of protections

for longtime residents, and incentives for new residents. I also believe the City can leverage our vacant, non-revenue-producing vacant land into affordable housing opportunities.

If so, list the disruptions you would target and the remedies you would suggest.

The major disruptions that affect longtime residents are obviously rising property taxes for owners and rising rent for renters. As Mayor, I will work with City Council to extend the LOOP program for residents who face either large future tax increases due to reassessment or for residents who failed to apply for the program last year but qualified after AVI went into effect. I will also work with City Council to develop a program modeled on LOOP to help longtime renters who face higher rents due. Finally, I will work with the Land Bank to make sure that we are using our vacant and City-owned land to provide affordable housing opportunities for Philadelphia residents who are in need.

8. ZONING RELIEF THROUGH COUNCIL

In 2012, after years of effort, the City passed a comprehensive revision of its zoning code. Many developers with projects which do not conform to the new zoning code have sought City Council ordinances to revise the zoning of their parcels, without going through the Zoning Board of Adjustment for a variance. Critics claim that zoning by council ordinance favors those with Council connections and/or big-ticket projects. Proponents argue that stakeholder input can be received in Council and that the Council procedure will encourage development because legal challenges to council ordinances are less likely than appeals from Zoning Board decisions.

Would you vote for (or sign) ordinances enabling developments contrary to the zoning code and which have not received a variance from the Zoning Board of Adjustment? If so, under what circumstances would you vote for (or sign) such ordinances?

During my time on City Council, I was happy to support the adoption of the new Zoning Code, which has improved the City's processes considerably. I believe the Code is a living document, and there will always need to be some exceptions to the rules. Most of these exceptions can be

handled by the ZBA, but there will be times when a zoning change will be necessary through Council Ordinance. As a Councilmember-at-Large and a member of the Rules Committee, I participated in many hearings to discuss zoning changes that presented positive changes for neighborhoods, but may not have been approved by the ZBA. As opposed to District Councilmembers, I was able to view each zoning change impartially, and with a view of how the change would effect not only the surrounding area, but larger City as a whole. As Mayor I would take that same approach. I would not seek Council Ordinances for simple changes that could easily be handled by the ZBA, but when there is a larger project, that requires robust debate before a committee of City Council, and then by the body as a whole, I will make my decision to sign and support the legislation based on its impact on the neighborhood involved, and its impact on the City as a whole. I believe this approach will allow all interests to be considered fully.

9. CITY-OWNED VACANT PROPERTIES

The City owns some 10,000 vacant properties. These properties cost \$21 million per year to maintain. Selling these properties requires City Council approval under the newly enacted Land Bank Ordinance. Sales must also be reviewed by the 14member vacant property review committee, composed of City officials. Some

worry that these procedures serve to delay the sale of these properties and open the process to political bartering, favoritism, and waste. Others say that City Council and the Project Review Committee will appropriately protect the public interest and increase community input in redevelopment.

Will you vote to amend the ordinance by eliminating the Council ordinance provision? Explain your response.

I was happy to support the creation of the Land Bank, and I am excited for the progress the interim Board has made in the creation of their Strategic Plan. Before suggesting changes to the Land Bank Ordinance, I would like to work with the Board and City Council to determine the most effective procedures to dispose of and redevelop this land in a fair and equitable way. If the current processes cause unnecessary delays, than I will work with City Council to rectify that by ordinance.

10. ETHICS: CREATING A PERMANENT INSPECTOR GENERAL

The current City Inspector General, Amy Kurland, holds office pursuant to an Executive Order originally issued in 1984 which could be rescinded at any time by any mayor.

Are you willing to support for Bill 130001 calling for a ballot referendum to amend the City Charter to establish an independent Inspector General funded by taxpayer dollars who would have oversight over every city department?

I was happy to introduce and sponsor Bill 130001 while on City Council, and as Mayor I will advocate again for the passage of this Bill to place the office of the Inspector General in the City Charter. The work of the current I.G., Amy Kurland, has saved the City millions of dollars in former waste and abuse, and I would be happy to have her continue in this role in my administration.

If elected Mayor, would you leave the current Executive Order in place and promptly fill the Inspector General's position?

Yes. Understanding that even with City Council approval, this change to the City Charter would not take effect until after being approved by the voters, I would sign an Executive Order to continue the current Inspector General office under the Mayor.

11. UNFAIR ELECTORAL DISTRICTING

"Gerrymandering" is drawing electoral districts to serve the interests of politicians or parties. A 2010 survey ranked two of Philadelphia City Council districts (5 and 7) among the top ten gerrymandered districts nationwide, with two others (1 and 9) also highly ranked on the gerrymandering scale.

Would you vote to amend the City Charter in 2015 so that the next redistricting in 2020 will be conducted by an independent, nonpartisan commission?

As a member of City Council, I took part in two redistricting debates that were difficult and contentious. The process, however, is very important, specifically for District Councilmembers who have represented the interests of certain communities and areas for some time. The idea of an independent and nonpartisan commission for redistricting is worthy of further study as we approach the 2020 census and subsequent reapportionment.

12. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Philadelphia elects three "City Commissioners" whose only duty is to administer elections. They serve four years regardless of their performance. In most cities, the election process is not run by three people, but by one, who is appointed by the mayor and can be removed for poor performance. Proponents say that the current system in Philadelphia empowers voters who can reject ineffectual or dishonest Commissioners. Detractors assert that Philadelphia voters are largely unaware of the duties of the three City Commissioners whose job title does not describe their job function so that the ballot results do not reflect voter's assessments of on the job performance.

Would you vote to amend the City Charter, eliminating the City Commissioners and adding the position of an election administrator that reports to the Mayor?

I believe the City Commissioners and their staff serve a very important function through their role as the conductors of Philadelphia's elections. There is value to having one appointed individual in this position, but people who hold elected office are oftentimes held to a higher standard by their constituents. As someone who had the honor to be run for elected office several times, I know that Philadelphia voters are knowledgeable about pertinent topics, and when an elected official is performing poorly, in most cases, they will make sure they do not get reelected. Given the arguments on both sides, I believe this issue is worthy of further study.

13. SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Per the City Charter, the Sheriff's office is an elective position charged with responsibility for the sale of tax delinquent properties, courtroom security, and transport of inmates. Like the Clerk of Quarter Sessions, another elected office which was recently eliminated by a Charter revision, the Sheriff has been unable to account for the funds which it receives and its foreclosure procedures have been seen as partially responsible for the half billion dollars of property tax delinquencies. Critics of the Sheriff's office maintain that its functions should be administered by administration appointees who can be hired and fired based upon their competence. Defenders of the Office assert that Philadelphia's voters, not the Mayor, should choose who should conduct sheriff's sales, and arrange for courtroom security and inmate transport.

Would you vote to abolish the Sherriff's office, transferring to other City agencies its functions (Sheriff's sales, courtroom security and inmate transfer)?

I do not believe that the elimination of an office that is elected by the voters of Philadelphia is necessarily always the best way to improve government. The Sheriff's office must be updated, specifically when it comes to their operations and future investments in technology to make the office operate more effectively and efficiently. As Mayor, I will work with the Sheriff and his/her office to ensure that funds are fully accounted for, and that smart investments are being made to make their operations more open, transparent, and accessible for the public. Similar to the City Commissioners, as Mayor I will focus on working with the publicly elected officials to improve their operations before advocating for their elimination.

14. ROLE OF NEIGHBORHOODS IN DEVELOPMENT & QUALITY OF LIFE

Philadelphia is called the city of neighborhoods, but many of our basic planning, resource, and development decisions are made with little or no effective input of neighborhoods-vital stakeholders in the city's future. These include overall development patterns, placement and design of special events, major construction, and placement and operation of key public facilities—each of which can have major impacts on adjacent communities. Some measures have been made, such as the design review process is zoning code and open public involvement. But these remain advisory, and most localized decisions and issues are still the purview of district Councilpeople rather than the administration.

What would you do to give neighborhoods more meaningful roles in decision-making and more effective engagement as partners in the city's goals and mission?

On City Council as a member of the Rules Committee dealing with numerous zoning matters, I have always considered the opinion of the local community impacted by the development to be vitally important. In a City as dense as Philadelphia, having a good relationship with you neighbors, both residential and commercial/industrial, is paramount to creating a high quality of life in every neighborhood. The new Zoning Code adopted by City Council has moved this process forward substantially by codifying the input of RCOs into the zoning process. The City Planning Commission has also done much community outreach as a part of their Philadelphia 2035 planning process. As Mayor, my goal will be to further increase the input and involvement of community organizations who are the grassroots of Philadelphia's political process. Your community groups will have access to my Administration, and I will work with your District and at-Large Councilmembers to make sure they are responsive to community concerns.

15. SCHOOLS

Per the Mayor's Tale of the Tape, In fiscal year 2013-2014, Philadelphia contributed \$1,216,319,000 to fund the School District, a contribution which accounted for 42.3% of the School District's revenues, a percentage smaller than Chicago (50.3%), Dallas (57.7%) and Boston (67.2%) but larger than Memphis (38.4%), Baltimore (20.7%) and Detroit (20.4%).

What is the dollar amount of the contribution that you believe the City should make in fiscal year 2016 – 2017, your first year in office, and how you would finance it. Explain your conclusion.

The School District has not yet released their budget information for Fiscal Year 2016, other than to say that they expect to start their budget request with a deficit of \$80 million. With this lack of information, it is impossible to give an exact dollar amount of the City's contribution to the School District. It is clear however that more funds are necessary both from the Commonwealth and from the City of Philadelphia to create better educational outcomes for our school children.

As Mayor, this process begins by working with Governor Wolf and legislators in Harrisburg to create a funding formula which takes into account Philadelphia's poverty level and the realities of educating children in an urban school district. I will also increase collaboration between City Departments and the School District, so that the City can replace or supplement services for which the District is paying. This money can then be reinvested directly into schools. Increasing school funding from the City will require a multipronged approach.

One revenue generator will be changing the land/improvement value of City properties so that the land value is a greater percentage of the total assessment. This will lead to increased revenue from commercial tax abated properties without raising taxes for the vast majority of citizens. I will also work with our nonprofit institutions, specifically our colleges and universities, to setup PILOTs and SILOTs so that they can leverage their money and expertise to help the School District education our children.

Do you believe that any strings/conditions should be attached to the City's contributions to the School District budget and, if so, what are they?

Increased accountability on the expenditure of City funds is very important, and I was pleased to see that the City's Inspector General will now be conducting investigations for the School District on their funds. Specifically I would like the City and the School District to partner to create new oversight of the City's Charter Schools. The recent failure and closure of several Charter Schools has shown that the current model of oversight is greatly flawed, and with Charters taking a larger chunk of the School District's budget, it is imperative that this money be managed and correctly, and school administrators be held accountable for that management.

16. HOUSING FIRST

Philadelphia has one of the lowest levels of street homelessness of any major American city – 1 in 5,000 Philadelphians lives on the streets in comparison to 1 in 2,700 Bostonians, 1 in 1,800 Chicagoans, 1 in 300 San Franciscans or 1 in 100 Los Angelinos. [Source: Project Home, Saving Money, Saving Lives, 2009, at p. 4] Nevertheless, anyone who has spent time in our public spaces recognizes that there is a significant street population, typically suffering from mental illness or substance addiction, many of whom are likely not homeless. The City has implemented "housing first" programs that place individuals in supportive, permanent housing without regard to continued substance use and/or untreated mental health conditions and spends 108 million per year on homeless services.

If housing is readily available for homeless people, should they be permitted to live in public spaces?

Through the work of Project HOME and advocates like City Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell, Philadelphia has improved greatly in meeting the needs of our homeless population. By utilizing vacant and City-owned land, we have a real opportunity to provide affordable housing for our neediest populations, especially homeless Philadelphians. Treating mental health or medical issues that could be exacerbating homeless Philadelphians'

situations is also paramount. As Mayor, I will work with the Department of Behavioral Health, along with our nonprofit partners like Project HOME to make sure that the needed services are reaching this population effectively, and we are not just housing someone without treating the other issues that have caused their homelessness.

Do you favor sidewalk ordinances to regulate aggressive panhandling and other antisocial behavior?

During my time on City Council, I passed multiple ordinances trying to counteract this type of behavior. Pedestrians shouldn't have to either fear for their safety or be accosted by panhandlers while walking on Philadelphia's sidewalks. With that said, I firmly believe that we cannot fix these situations just through restrictive ordinances. People resort to this behavior because they believe they have no other place to turn to feed themselves and their families. We must make a concentrated attempt to create more jobs in this City for our population who may not have graduated from high school or college.

As Mayor, I will partner with the Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations to make sure that our Community College curriculum contains real skills that these employers need in their employees. I will also work with the School District to create community schools that will serve as the center of each community and provide social services and job training programs to adults in the evenings. Additionally, I will work with the state legislature to amend the Uniformity clause of the Pennsylvania Constitution so that we can reform our business tax system and foster a tax climate that will attract businesses to Philadelphia.

APPENDIX B

HIGHLIGHTS OF COUNCIL CANDIDATE REPLIES TO CROSSTOWN QUESTIONNAIRE

For the full text of each response go to philacrosstown.org.

- *THE TEN YEAR TAX ABATEMENT: QUES. #1 DEMOCRATS*

1. DOMB favors the current abatement program and advocates expanding the abatement to 20 years for all homes valued under \$250,000.
2. GREEN acknowledges that the abatement program has spurred development and advocates a City analysis as to whether the program should be modified but offers no suggestions as to changes.
3. GREENLEE (incumbent) is against abolishing the abatement but notes that it was never intended to last forever. Like Ayers, he suggests that one possible modification is to reduce the amount of the school portion of the abatement.
4. GYM favors modification and notes that the current policy is far too expansive so that it takes away resources that otherwise would support schools. She believes that targeted abatements can make development more attractive to communities that have long awaited renewal.
5. JOHNSON favors continuing the abatement as is. He has not seen persuasive arguments that abolishing or modifying the program would benefit the City.
6. OH favors modification so that it applies to areas not being developed and unlikely to attract development in the foreseeable future. The year term and percentage “may be modified”.
7. REYNOLDS BROWN (incumbent) believes a citywide 10 year abatement no longer benefits all City citizens. She favors scaling back the program and targeting it to neighborhoods in need of growth and development.
8. SQUILLA replies that the abatement program should spread to areas where it is not currently attracting development by “maybe” increasing the term to 15 or 20 years. He also urges an abatement for affordable housing.

- *FREQUENCY OF REAL ESTATE TAX REASSESSMENTS*

1. DOMB states that assessments should occur regularly but not less than every 5 years.
2. GREEN did not provide a recommendation as to the frequency of reassessments and instead urges that the City improve its assessment process and educate citizens regarding the assessment process.
3. GREENLEE calls for reassessments every 3 or 4 years and cautions that annual reassessments lead to mistakes, appeals, confusion and frustration.
4. GYM makes no specific recommendations and defers to “best practices” as to the frequency of assessments but urges that the City should never again let

decades pass between reassessments. She also urges that “we reconsider how we value vacant land.”

5. JOHNSON suggests reassessments every 10 years to coincide with the census and requests that adequate protections be put in place for vulnerable residents and that the tax rate be as low as possible.
 6. OH writes that state law requires yearly assessments but asserts that Phila. does not have the funds or personnel so he suggests assessments every 3 to 4 years.
 7. REYNOLDS BROWN suggests reassessing every 2 or 3 years.
 8. SQUILLA urges that $\frac{1}{4}$ of the City be reassessed every year so as to enable the assessors to do a thorough job on a smaller section of the City.
- *SHIFT FROM WAGE/BUSINESS TO REALTY TAXES:*
 1. DOMB favors the shift and suggests finding alternate revenue sources to reduce the Gross Receipts and BIRT taxes..
 2. GREEN endorses the shift and supports the plan advocated by the Center City District and Jerry Sweeney of Brandywine Realty to decrease the wage tax rate and increase the commercial realty tax rate.
 3. GREENLEE favors reducing wage and business taxes but is against a major shift in real estate taxes absent a study on the effects of homeowners. He also hopes that the state will permit an increase of the commercial realty tax rate relative to the residential rate per the Center City District/ Brandywine Realty proposal.
 4. GYM is circumspect about this proposal. She agrees that taxes should not be levied on things that can leave versus real estate which is stationary but suggests increased taxes on out of town businesses that sell goods here. She maintains that the City’s economy would improve not just by the reduction of taxes. Also needed are improvements in schools and city services to retain a middle class work force able to provide businesses with a skilled work force.
 5. JOHNSON is open to this suggestion of a shift to real estate taxation but makes no commitment noting that details matter. He calls for Council hearings on the question.
 6. OH would not rush to shift too much to real estate. He notes that in the modern economy people can work from home or outside the City even if their employers office is in the City. He believes that the real estate and workforce of NYC, DC and Boston are not comparable to those of Phila. Even so, he urges reduction of rates on wage and net profits, U & O and business receipts taxes
 7. REYNOLDS BROWN states that all city taxes are interconnected and that universal reform should occur within an approach where taxes shift from workers and businesses to realty.
 8. SQUILLA urges the Center City District/Brandywine approach of a greater tax rate on commercial properties to effectuate a shift from wage/business taxes to realty taxes.
 - *SALE OF TAX LIENS:*
 1. DOMB supports the sale of tax liens with consumer protections/payment plan options and suggests considering a NYC model where liens were sold to trusts not third parties.

2. GREEN mentions the shortcomings of a Rendell initiative to sell realty tax liens and urges sales of liens for wage/business taxes. He also suggests that the City aggressively use a new state enabled collection tool of pursuing out of City property owners by liening their non Philadelphia realty.
3. GREENLEE is not comfortable with sale of realty tax liens and is concerned that low income residents have a fair opportunity to make reasonable agreements
4. GYM is against the idea and, like Wyatt, maintains that mass land sales will affect the success of the land bank. She also observes that the liens sold in the 90's remain uncollected so that they block redevelopment because the City cannot clear debt which it no longer owns. Gym makes four recommendations as to how the current system could be improved.
5. JOHNSON (incumbent) suggests sales of liens only on vacant properties. He characterizes current collection rates as unacceptable and calls for increased usage of payment installment plans, pushing vacant properties to sheriff's sale, and staffing and funding the Revenue Department.
6. OH does not believe that lien sales are a good idea in every case but describes his bill requiring referring cases to third party collectors where the City has merely sent notices for more than a year post delinquency subject to a poverty threshold
7. REYNOLDS BROWN favors "narrow use of tax lien sales" for properties owned by speculators and out of towners who fail to maintain properties or participate in the community and instead hold on for speculative profit.
8. SQUILLA states that tax liens should be sold with protections in place but does not detail what protections should be enacted.

- PGW HEARING

COUNCIL SHOULD HAVE HELD A PGW HEARING: DOMB,
GREEN,GYM,JOHNSON, SQUILLA

COUNCIL SHOULD NOT HAVE HELD A HEARING;

GREENLEE : "I think Council handled the PGW situation correctly".

OH : The reason why Council did not hold a public hearing is that not one member believed in the sale enough to advocate for it and Council should not use its limited time examining issues it does not believe in.

REYNOLDS BROWN "Narrowly no . . . the deal as presented should (not) have received a hearing."

- *ELIMINATING COUNCIL APPROVAL OF LAND BANK SALES:*

1. DOMB says eliminate the provision but ensure a clear public approval process permitting community comment/input.
2. GREEN asserts that under the Charter no City property can be acquired or sold without Council approval.
3. GREENLEE writes that Council is elected by the citizens and understands community needs so that Council involvement should be retained.
4. GYM does not answer the question and instead observes that the legislation passed by compromise and hopes that as the Land Bank starts running it can

build trust in Council and with other stakeholders so that its procedures can then be reconsidered.

5. JOHNSON asserts that Council approval of the sale of City owned land provides an important check on unelected bureaucrats. Johnson is however dissatisfied with the pace of City land sales and suggests that large assemblages be targeted for sale, that the Land Bank operation be fully funded, and that its operations be centralized.
6. OH believes that if a land sale negatively impacts an individual or neighborhood they should be able to speak with their District Council members.
7. REYNOLDS BROWN Council approval of Land Bank sales is necessary for transparency, community involvement and a public forum.
8. SQUILLA Council involvement is necessary because “We are the last step to protect the community”.

- *PERMANENT INSPECTOR*

FAVORING A PERMANENT INSPECTOR GENERAL: DOMB, GREEN, GYM, JOHNSON, OH, REYNOLDS BROWN, SQUILLA

GREENLEE does not answer the question and instead notes that attention should be addressed to a number of City offices have duties that conflict with the Inspector General's including the Controller and Chief Integrity Officer and to finances and resources of the Inspector General's Office.

- *NON PARTISAN ELECTORAL REDISTRICTING:*

FAVORING REDISTRICTING BY A NON PARTISAN COMMISSION: DOMB, GREEN, GYM, NEILSON, SQUILLA

CONTINUE REDISTRICTING BY COUNCIL:

GREENLEE believes redistricting should continue to be performed by Council because City Council knows what populations need and, by way of example, notes that Council intended in the last redistricting to create a Latino Council district. JOHNSON writes that Council, as representatives of the people, ensures that residents' interests are addressed in the redistricting process.

OH states that unless a computer divides the City the redistricting task will be political and is not certain as to whether a commission appointed by elected politicians and judges would be an improvement over the current system.

APPOINT COMMISSION: REYNOLDS BROWN would explore having an independent commission remap districts but states such an important decision warrants public input.