



MCCC 2014 Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Sidney Katz

Email: sidney@sidneykatz.com **Campaign Website:** www.sidneykatz.com

Office you are seeking: County Council **District:** District 3

Years of residence in the district in which you are running: 64 years

Education Information

College, Post-graduate, Technical School or Certificate Program you completed and the degree(s) you attained.

Bachelor of Science in Public Administration from the University of Maryland

Employment Information

Current Occupation: Mayor of Gaithersburg; Business Owner of Wolfson's from 1971 to 2013 **Current Employer:** City of Gaithersburg

How long have you been employed here? Since 1998 as Mayor; before that City Council Member since 1978; Self employed as business owner of Wolfson's from 1971 to 2013.

If less than two years, please provide immediate previous employer:

Questions

In your opinion, what are the key issues facing the business community in the district/county/state you seek to represent?

The business community is concerned about all facets of our community including taxes, infrastructure concerns, ease of doing business, permitting, housing for the employees and more. We need to do a better job marketing our assets and correcting our deficiencies. We need to work more closely with the business community and Chambers to make sure that government is being responsive to the needs of business. We need to have an ombudsman so that businesses that want to locate or expand can move through the system much more effectively and efficiently. Finally, we need to promote economic development opportunities so that businesses will want to be located here and stay here.

What do you believe are the core responsibilities of the position you seek and what will you do to carry these out?

I believe that a Montgomery County Councilmember needs to be proactive about our addressing concerns and also be a problem solver. A Councilmember needs to be someone who is accessible to the public and always remembers that they represent their constituents concerns not their own. I am a consensus builder and proud of the services that I have brought to the City of Gaithersburg over the last 36 years and would like to bring that same level of service to the 3rd

District of Montgomery County. If elected to the Council, I will bring together our residential and business community to achieve our goals.

Please explain your budget priorities and describe your approach to the role you will play in impacting the County/State budget.

I believe that education, public safety and transportation funding are the most important items in the budget. Obviously County government operations are important as well, but we must maintain a first rate school system, provide resources for public safety and first responders and do what we can to maintain our roads and reduce traffic congestion by investing in mass transit projects, Bus Rapid Transit and the Corridor City Transitway. These are most important because this is what entices businesses to come here. This helps with job creation and providing a liveable community for our residents to enable families to have a better quality of life. As the current Mayor and former Councilmember of the City of Gaithersburg, I have worked closely with municipal budgets since 1978. During that time, we raised the tax rate only once in 40 plus years and I am proud to say we are debt free. Budgets are the most important function of any government and must be thoroughly evaluated and have input from the community before making any decisions.

What improvements do you believe are needed to the transportation infrastructure In Montgomery County and Maryland? Please list them in your priority order.

We must approach our transportation planning and priorities on a regional level and work with our surrounding jurisdictions. In addition, we need to approach traffic solutions by including all modes of transportation. For example, we need mass transit such as the Corridor City Transitway, the Purple Line and Bus Rapid Transit. In order to maximize our existing infrastructure, we need to develop a more efficient handling of how our traffic signals work. Too often we find ourselves driving through one light only to be stopped at the next one. Vehicles that are stalled in traffic are not helpful to anyone as they are bad for the environment, cost us too much time and detract from our quality of life.

If elected, how do you plan to address the perception and reality of Montgomery County and Maryland having a less competitive business climate?

Montgomery County is and should continue to be a place where businesses want to be located. Business is the economic engine of our region and we need to work together to ensure that the I-270 biotech corridor remains strong, that jobs are both created here and brought here. Montgomery County has a tremendous amount of resources that should be promoted and leveraged. For example, the County should promote the ICC to bring business from the Ft. Meade area to the Universities at Shady Grove specifically in technology and cybersecurity. The County also needs to be more proactive in Annapolis and work harder to bring resources back to the County.

How do you define economic development?

Economic development is the engine that helps our communities thrive. Economic development is investing in our resources and communities to help establish a robust business climate. It brings us the services we need and the funds to deliver governmental services. It improves our quality of life in many, many ways.

What role should government play to help attract, grow and retain business?

We must become more effective and efficient in our government relations. This includes reviewing and overhauling permitting services, and finding ways for businesses to more easily navigate government services. We need to constantly remember that time is money and become more business friendly. The County should have an ombudsman for each business and work to make certain that the businesses that are presently here remain here. We need to put up a "Welcome" sign and show businesses on a daily basis how important they are to all of us. We need to make certain that

we continue to have the finest schools and much better infrastructure. Businesses want to locate where their executives and employees will have a great quality of life.

What current economic development initiatives do you support?

We need a variety of tools in our tool box! I believe each item needs to be looked at on a case by case method and should be determined what way would be the most helpful for our community and for the business to be here.

What new economic development initiatives would you propose?

The County must do more to leverage its existing technology resources including its fiber network. Under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, the County was able to extend its fiber network by over 130 miles. The County should develop a program to enable businesses to access this network through dark fiber leasing to help generate economic development and bring fiber resources to areas where there are little options for high speed connectivity. This includes utilizing the network to help bring more capacity and data center resources to the County.

Please use this opportunity to provide any other information you would like MCCC members to know.

I am the only candidate in this race with 36 years of experience being an executive, a legislator and a small business owner. I have lived my entire life in Montgomery County. I attended public schools here, graduated from the University of Maryland and raised a family here. Montgomery County is home. Since 1998 I have had the honor and privilege of serving my community as the Mayor of Gaithersburg and before that a Gaithersburg City Councilmember and member of the Planning Commission. I have a background in business and owned a small business that was started by my grandparents in 1918. I have the experience to be effective on the County Council as a leader and a consensus builder. During my tenure with the City of Gaithersburg, I was involved in the planning of walkable communities with Rio, Kentlands, Lakelands and the new Crown Farm Community. Growth helped balance Gaithersburg's budget and over the last four decades we raised taxes only once. I am proud to say that the City is debt free. I understand the needs of our community and will work with you to solve our problems. Thank you for your consideration.