

Cleveland Digital Justice Campaign: Questions for the 2017 general election candidates for Cleveland Mayor and City Council

1. As Mayor or a Member of City Council of the City of Cleveland, will you propose and support City funding of at least \$1 million a year, starting with the 2018 budget year, for Neighborhood Technology Centers to a) provide basic digital literacy training for community residents, and b) help eligible residents to take advantage of existing affordable Internet programs?

By all means. The real issue, however, is getting everyone on the same page and identifying the revenue stream; for, it seems that the city has money for sporting facilities and not much more for anything else, as we have experienced over the past several years. This is one of the reasons why I demanded with the construction of the Collinwood Recreation Center, six years ago, and more recently, the new Salvation Army Temple Corps Community Center, that they be outfitted with computer centers.

2. As Mayor or a Member of City Council of the City of Cleveland, will you propose and support the expansion of the City's free public wifi network to provide Internet access to residents and neighborhood businesses throughout the city, within the next two years?

Yes. This is 2017. We have to understand that we need to provide greater access for our citizens and local small businesses. We need to be competitive with other major cities of comparable size. Free public wifi gives us a leg up and above all helps our residents. We need to make this happen.

3. As Mayor or a Member of City Council of the City of Cleveland, will you propose and support the creation of a City-owned, city-wide optical fiber broadband network to provide affordable, very fast Internet services to Cleveland homes and businesses — as a City utility service, a delivery option for new competitive private Internet providers, or both — within the next four years?

Yes. However we need to identify the cost of that and the internal mechanics of setting that up. Anyone can propose anything, as I have seen and heard over the years in city council. It is another thing all together to fund and manage it where it works effectively and efficiently. I would really like to hear from experts and look at how other municipalities implemented their networks including the costs of implementation and challenges faced. Could we even partner with the County since many of the inner-ring suburbs are confronted with this same dilemma? It is about creating partnerships.

4. As Mayor or a Member of City Council of the City of Cleveland, will you propose and support the creation of a new Cabinet-level executive position, in the 2018 budget year or earlier, dedicated solely to leading City efforts to promote universal digital literacy and broadband Internet access — starting with the proposals described in Questions 1, 2 and 3?

Whether we need a cabinet level position is debatable. However, there is no doubt in my mind that we need a “tech Czar” or a position of equivalency. I would be the first to tell you, I am a dinosaur when it comes to hi-tech innovations and applications. I would say, without any fear of contradiction, that I would put many city employees in the same category. That is why the mayor needs a “tech-czar” or a tech committee to advise, not only his office, as

well as city council and other City Departments as to what systems, applications and technology we should be implementing and how, we as a city government, can be supportive of hi-tech business expansion and growth. This clearly ties into economic development and job creation.

All of us at the Hall are usually dealing with the delivery of basic city services. Hi-tech services are really beyond most of us and we need folks with the expertise and background to advise us and move us in the direction we need to go moving into 2018.

I look forward to working with the Cleveland Digital Justice Campaign as we move into next year in the hope that we can see some positive initiatives and developments.

Thank you.

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