**2023 Council At-Large Questionnaire**

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# CANDIDATE CERTIFICATION

Candidate Name Christopher Gladstone Booth

I have read the attached questionnaire responses and certify that the information provided is accurate and the opinions stated accurately reflect my own positions.

Candidate Signature: Date: 01/23/23

Christopher Gladstone Booth

**Please complete, sign and return this form via email in Word format to:**

## info@phillynn.org and Gloria Gilman gmgilman@gmail.com. Also mail a copy with the signature page to

**Gloria Gilman**

**121 S. Broad St., Suite 1710**

**Philadelphia, PA 19107**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Although many of the questions in Section III below call for a simple yes or no answer, please feel free to provide an explanation for any of your choices. If you have not yet come to a final decision, or don’t currently have enough information to provide an informed answer, please so state.

## II. BACKGROUND

1. What, if any, elected or appointed government office(s) have you held?

Currently a Committeeperson 22/21

1. With respect to your other qualifications for the office of At-Large Council member:

1. What community or policy issues have you worked on, and in what capacity? (Please provide the names of two or three individuals who can provide information about your previous work.)
   1. The 6717 Project involving Pleasant Playground and the proposed 4 story, 41 unit apartment building to be built next door. The developer needed a variance from the ZBA and the near neighbors were against it. Even though we lost and the variance was granted, the ruling sparked an investigation into previous rulings by the ZBA; thus creating Question#1 on the ballot during May’s election which stated that ‘two people from the neighborhood (near neighbors) should assist the ZBA’s decision when granting variances in their neighborhood.’

It was passed!

* 1. Currently serve as a Board member of East Mt. Airy Neighbors and The Woodford Tennis Club, founded by my father, Gladstone C. Booth. Also had the honor of to serve in leadership as President of the Morehouse College Philadelphia Alumnae Association.
  2. What other endorsements have you received?
     1. I have support from my State Senator, Art Haywood.

* 1. How do you plan to win?
     1. Hard work. (I used this method to get elected as Committee person.)
        1. Work with the Ward Leaders and Committee People and sharing my platform on the issues that affect our constituents.
        2. Create a strong, consistent line of communication with ward leaders and constituents to inform and help interpret changes in policy and legislation that directly affect their communities.
        3. Be with the people/for the people. Be the voice of the people in Philadelphia by making sure that their voices are heard.

* 1. How much money have you raised?
     1. Just started the fund-raising process. My team is in the process of lining up potential donors.

f. How much do you expect to raise? As much as I can.

1. What three things would you most want to accomplish if elected?
   1. Education – Increasing the number of qualified teachers to teach in the SDP. There will probably need to be incentives in place to lure qualified teachers to The District.
   2. Education/Violent crime reduction. Violent crime reduction starts with education; using more role models to teach the children.
   3. Stopping the flow of illegal guns; making it much more difficult to obtain a weapon, even legally. Must create a better relation between the people of Philadelphia and law enforcement; more police walking the beat thus more community engagement by law enforcement with the community.
   4. Significantly reducing Philadelphia’s carbon foot-print.

## III. ISSUES

### A. Economic Development

**What do you see as the current economic picture of Philadelphia and what would you do to make economic development more just, fair, and equitable for all Philadelphians?**

Would you back legislation to:

1. Impose an impact fee on businesses failing to pay workers $15/hr to reimburse the City for the costs of relieving poverty? Yes.

1. Take $200 million of City pension funds now invested in risky securities to invest in neighborhood economic development projects, through a public bank or otherwise? Yes

1. Create a program to provide technical assistance and start-up funding for cooperative, worker-owned businesses and housing? Absolutely!

1. Take whatever steps are needed to create and fund a Bank of Philadelphia to hold all City deposits and invest them locally? Absolutely. Bismarck, ND I know has done just that but their bank is state owned. Other states and I believe San Francisco are attempting to do the same. Philadelphians and Philadelphia money in a Philadelphia Bank? Great idea. It will also allow Philadelphian’s money to be invested in areas aligned with their values. We must invest in ourselves.

1. Create a system of participatory budgeting that would allow City residents to control allocation of all or a portion of the funds allocated in the City budget? Yes

### B. Education

**What are the root causes for the current state of Philadelphia Public Schools and what would you do to address these issues?**

Specifically, would you back legislation to:

1. Regulate charter schools by making their budgetary practices transparent, ridding them of conflicts of interest, and stopping them from cherry-picking their student bodies? Would you be willing to attach that plan to a budget rider? Yes

1. Make the School Board an elective office, or otherwise deepen community participation in School Board appointments? Yes. The more the community participates in our children’s education the better. Parents need to be as involved as the possibly can.

1. Compute the cost/benefit ratio for the School District of all proposed KOZ zones before they’re approved by Council? Yes. You can never have too much information. It is good to know what you are working with, but we must look deep into public benefits before council approval. Council needs to be armed with that information.

1. Increase direct City funding for the School District? If so, please explain. Yes especially when the funding from the State is inadequate. As an educator, I realize that a good deal of what is missing in the SDP curriculum is budget driven. Too many programs have been eliminate or reduced that I believe are essential to a child’s overall development.

### C. Criminal Justice

**What do you see as the current state of the Criminal Justice System in Philadelphia and what would you do to address any perceived problems/issues?**

Would you back legislation to:

1. Fully end the stop and frisk program? No…. In some instances, it is justified. Better training and guide lines for law enforcement to discern when it is justified.

1. Change the Charter to create an oversight board to keep a check on Philadelphia prison conditions? Yes

1. Increase post-release counseling for jobs, housing and other support services? Absolutely

1. Bar employers from denying jobs to ex-offenders without a specific job-related basis? Yes

### D. The Role of Community in the Economic and Political Systems in Philly

**What do you see as the role of the community in our political and economic systems and what would you do to make it more fair, just, and equitable for all Philadelphians?**

Would you back legislation to:

1. Bar or limit privatization of City property and work done by City employees? More specifically are there any circumstances under which you would sell PGW? No. I would not sell PGW. It needs oversite and regulations. Those regulations would be difficult to enforce if PGW was privatized. (I believe there was an unsuccessful attempt to sell PGW under the Nutter admin.) The concern would be that a private owner could increase the rates to levels that would be detrimental to Philadelphians.
2. Move Pension Fund investment decisions in-house? Yes

1. Reform PIDC, the City’s main economic development funding agency, so that its Board has a majority of public and community members, rather than Chamber of Commerce appointed members? Yes, but a mixture of both.

1. Require the City to withdraw subsidies from corporations that fail to provide jobs or other benefits to City residents? Yes. In order to do business in Philadelphia you must invest in Philadelphians.

1. Publicly finance City elections? No

### E. Housing

**What are the root causes of the current Housing Crisis in Philadelphia and how would you address these issues?**

Would you back legislation to:

1. Create a rent stabilization program? Yes.

1. End, limit or curtail Councilmanic prerogative over land disposition? Limit

1. Create or support more affordable housing, both rental and home ownership? Please specify. A “Rent-To-Own” program is most ideal. It would give people an elevated sense of the value in the property that they live in. By owning a property Philadelphians will feel more invested in the neighborhoods that tey live in. Nothing but positives will come from that.

1. What would you do to curtail or limit the effects of gentrification in our neighborhoods that is displacing long term and low-income residents? I would make sure that the current residents are aware of the

actual property values. That may make them rethink the sale of their homes. I would also let them know that if they are experiencing hardship with maintaining their property (back taxes, maintenance) that there are resources available to help them resolve their issues; that the sale of their property is not their only option. I would also encourage the current residents to get active with the various community organizations in their area.

### F. Environmental Justice

**What are the major Environmental issues in Philadelphia and what would you do to address them?**

Please answer the following specific questions:

1. Would you use the City’s power of the purse to prevent SEPTA from continuing to build and use natural-gas fueled power plants in the City? I would use the power of the purse to push SEPTA toward using electric and other fuel efficient buses. It would be tracked with incentives if they significantly reduce their carbon footprint.

1. What will you do to support and promote the use of solar and other renewable energy sources in the City? Give incentives to Philadelphians who choose to use solar power. Work with companies who are willing to decrease their profit margin in order to make it more affordable to consumers.

1. Do you support a plan for City government or the entire City to be fossil-free by a particular date? If so, how would you accomplish that goal? Yes…. Ideally.

### G. Health Care

**What can the City do to provide and support adequate and affordable health care for its residents?**

Specially answer the following question:

1. Would you support the construction of a City-owned Northeast Health Center?

### H. Taxes

**Would is your plan for a fair, just and equitable taxing structure for the City of Philadelphia, addressing specifically your position on real estate, corporate, and individual taxing rates?**

Specifically answer the following:

1. Would you increase taxes if the programs you wish to fund cannot otherwise be paid for? That would depend on the program and the need of the City.

1. Which taxes would you propose raising?

### I. General Statement

Use this space to provide any further information that you would like us to consider about your candidacy, not covered by the questions above.

Allow me to introduce the next citizen (who desires to represent you) as a member of the Philadelphia City Councilperson At-Large

I am a graduate of Morehouse College. I believe each one of us has the opportunity to change the corner of the world we occupy. My name is Christopher Gladstone Booth, a TK, aka, teacher's kid.

Who is Christopher Gladstone Booth? I am a proud father. In fact I believe that my greatest and proudest accomplishment is that I raised two wonderful adult children, Adam and Joanna.

Philadelphia born and raised, I grew up in East Airy and South Philly; spending my Saturdays at the Christian Street YMCA, swimming for their swim team while also growing up at the Pleasant Playground. I attended EC Emlen and JS Jenks Elementary and then attended the W.B.Saul High School.

As a child I grew up at Catholic Church at Little Flower St.Therese now known as Dare To Imagine.

I was blessed to have parents, both products of HBCUs who firmly believed in the value of a college education. Consequently I attended Morehouse. With his Morehouse degree, I went on to build a distinguished career with the federal government working for the Dept. of Agriculture, the Dept. of Defense and the International Technology Services Division. I retired early to take care of my sick Mother and Father. It was after their passing that I was inspired to enter the classroom and the world of education. Remember, I am a teacher’s kid. My experiences over the last six years in the Phila. Public School System up close and personal as a classroom teacher is what has ignited my passion and my activism to do more. My activism has included serving as a Board member on the Woodford Tennis Club. His Father was one of the Founders of the Oldest African American Tennis Club in Pennsylvania Additionally, I serve as a member of the Pleasant Playground Advisory committee and a Board member of East Mt. Airy Neighbors.

Why am I running for City Council At-Large? It is my firm belief “ If you want to see what’s going on in your community, TEACH SCHOOL!!!!!! “ A child’s zip code should not determine their success. Further, City Line Ave should not be a dividing line for a child’s educational success or life expectancy. I believe I am uniquely qualified to serve and meet the requirements of City Council At -Large. I will bring to the political stage my long-term experience in government, my love for children and improving their life chances in education and my love for our city. No one person can solve the multiple challenges facing our City. However, everybody can do something. My TOP THREE PRIORITIES 1.EDUCATION: City Ave should not determine whether a child succeeds. Education is what connects communities. 65% of crimes committed in Philadelphia are committed by Black males. Yet the % of black teachers is less than 2%. The absence of black male educators in our schools is a huge problem. 2. CRIME PREVENTION MATTERS: Philadelphia is suffering from “URBAN PDST”. We can no longer continue to place bandaids on gun violence; an issue that requires surgery. 3. BOOST PHILADELPHIA’S WORLD CLASS CITY STATUS. I seek to enhance and elevate our City’s rich legacy as a historical and cultural destination; and make Philadelphia a more livable City. A city that is safer for all our residents and families who choose to live, work, play and raise our children. 4. REDUCE OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT.

Philadelphia Neighborhood Network, I need your support. I promise you will be pleased by your endorsement!