

Candidate Qualification / Position Statement For *Coalition for a Better Memphis*

Name: Jim Strickland

Website: www.votejimstrickland.com

Candidate for: Memphis City Council, District 5

Why do you believe you are qualified for this position?

As a lawyer, I have experience in being an advocate for my clients' positions. Gathering facts and researching the law are necessary elements to my profession. Armed with the facts and law, I must persuade a judge or jury to agree with my position. These qualities are needed to successfully address issues on the Council. A council member must research matters by meeting with knowledgeable persons and looking at the best practices used by other municipalities. Also, no matter how worthy one may think their position is, nothing passes the council without convincing six (6) other members to agree. Council members must also convince the city administration of the worthiness of their positions.

Also, as a lawyer, I have learned to mediate settlements—to bring parties together and reach an accord. Often times these parties have different visions and strongly dislike each other. The City Council is elected by a diverse populace with different backgrounds and political beliefs, and the Council reflects those differences. I have the ability and demeanor to bring people together and find common ground.

With almost four years of experience on the council, I am much more knowledgeable than I was prior to election about city government and the realities of what can be accomplished by the city council.

Unique Qualifications.

I have extensive experience with zoning and land use matters. As a lawyer, I represented neighborhoods prior to my service on the city council in zoning disputes before the City Council. As a member of the Memphis Shelby County Board of Adjustment, I was the “neighborhood voice” with respect to zoning variances and billboard matters. These experiences made me uniquely prepared to understand the concerns of the citizens and protect neighborhoods by approving only those developments that fit the character of the neighborhood and add value to the community. My service on the Board of Adjustment also broadened my knowledge of municipal codes and the Office of Code Enforcement.

As a former president of the Memphis Botanic Garden, I have experience in improving a city asset without increasing the burden on taxpayers. I was involved in the creation of the Live at the Garden concert series. This series and increased private donations have greatly improved the Garden’s facilities and grounds and allowed the city’s financial contributions to decrease from 39% of total funding to 24% during my tenure on the Board.

I also believe that the diversity of support I have received from Democrats and Republicans demonstrates my unique ability to unite people of different philosophies, experiences and backgrounds.

During my almost four years on the council, I have been a leader and/or sponsor of the following:

Crime and Public Safety

- Led the effort to increase the number of patrol officers, which has greatly assisted in the substantial reduction of crime in our city. Major crimes are down 36% since Jim was elected to the City Council three years ago.
- Helped organize the effort to lobby state government to adopt tougher sentencing laws, particularly for violent crimes.
- Led the push to require annual background checks and better training for lifeguards. As The Commercial Appeal noted, “The furor produced new safety and background check procedures. The City Council Personnel Committee headed by Jim Strickland was quickly on the case. The mayor [Herenton] had little to say about it.” [Editorial, June 4, 2009]
- Led the effort to replace poor management at the Sexual Assault Resource Center.
- Worked with law enforcement, crime victims, and scrap metal dealers to strengthen the scrap metal ordinance.

Taxes and Budget

- As Memphis Magazine points out, "Strickland has evolved into council's most persistent voice for greater budgetary discipline." (August 2010).
- Led the defeat of two property tax increase proposals and was the only vote against the 2011 one-time assessment.
- Supported the property tax freeze for low-income seniors.
- Was the only vote against the \$57 million cut to Memphis City Schools in 2008 and the simultaneous increase in spending for city government of \$42 million.
- Led the fight to reduce the city's budget in 2009 and 2010 to pay MCS its court-ordered funding. "A logical way to raise most of the money -- but one that would require courage on the part of the Council -- would be to follow Councilman Jim Strickland's recommendation to roll back raises given to employees in 2008 and 2009." (The Commercial Appeal, Editorial, September 4, 2010)
- Sponsored and passed a Resolution seeking court-ordered mediation in November 2010 to settle all funding disputes between the city and MCS. In an editorial entitled, "Listen to Strickland," The Commercial Appeal called the proposal a "very sensible solution" and recognized that it would save "taxpayers more legal expenses." [November 11, 2010]
- Led the elimination of the city's pension plan that allowed employees to retire after only 12 years of service.
- Managed the compromise in 2010 as Chair of the City's Healthcare Committee between the administration, council, and employees to raise the health insurance premiums over a two-year period.
- Voted against solid waste fee increase and water rate hike.

Consolidation

- Appointed by Mayor Wharton to the Memphis/Shelby County Consolidation Commission which spent nine months studying consolidations of governments across the country and drafting a charter incorporating efficiencies which would spur economic development and reduce waste in government.
- Although consolidation failed to pass in suburban Shelby County, the consolidated economic development office provided for in the draft charter served as a model for the Economic Development Growth Engine (EDGE) program actually adopted by Memphis and Shelby County this year.

City Services

- Exempted all vehicles not older than four years from the city's annual inspection.

- Approval of the city's first skate park, which will be located in Tobey Park.
- Sponsored the prohibition of the roadside sale of animals and the establishment of a fund to accept donations for the Memphis Animal Shelter.

Neighborhoods and Environment

- Led the push to clean up Washington Bottoms (near Poplar and Cleveland) and the removal of abandoned buildings, which "became a haven for squatters, criminals, arsonists, and even vermin." (The Commercial Appeal, September 30, 2010) The private owner paid for the removal.
- Saved the Overton Park Greensward from being used as a 20-foot deep detention pond.
- Led the establishment of a comprehensive Lick Creek drainage study and the funding of underground detention/garage in Overton Square.
- Part of the team that successfully worked with the State of Tennessee to have the Overton Park Old Forest designated a State Natural Area.
- Re-established the city's Recycling Committee, which has partnered with Shelby Residential and Vocational Services (SRVS) to implement paper recycling collection for city offices outside City Hall and developed a Green Event Certification program to encourage recycling at large public events.
- Advising a group of private citizens who want to form a conservancy for Overton Park, which will result in a much better park at reduced cost to the taxpayers.
- Approval of zoning districts that require higher quality development for the University/Highland Avenue and Midtown districts.
- Voted against the drug store at Union and Cooper.
- Led the defeat of a billboard in New Chicago and a pawn shop on Summer Avenue.

Ethics

- Sponsored and passed the strongest City Council ethics ordinance in the history of the Council.
- Improved the whistleblower protection for city employees.
- Reimburses the city for all lunches he eats and refuses any gifts offered as a result of his position on the Council.

Quality of Life

- Worked with Health Department officials, the restaurant association, and other

interested parties and sponsored the ordinance that legalized and regulates Mobile Food Trucks in the city.

- Has personally responded to thousands of constituent requests and communications, helping people with trash pick-up, filling pot holes, repaving streets, speed bump requests, removal of graffiti, and zoning issues.

Name three specific things you would like to accomplish if elected:

1. Keep the Crime Rate Decreasing
2. Clean Memphis by removing blight and litter
3. Increase the number of jobs in Memphis

Have you ever been delinquent on your property taxes? Yes _____ No X

Have you declared bankruptcy? Yes _____ No X

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? Yes _____ No X

If you answered "yes" on any of the above items, please list the year and provide details. -

List other elected positions you have run for and the outcome of the election:

2003 Memphis City Council District 5 – lost

2007 Memphis City Council District 5 - won

Current Employment

Company: Kustoff and Strickland, PLLC

Length of Employment: 13 years

Brief Job Description: I am a lawyer in private practice. I represent individuals and businesses in civil matters.

Education

Please list all college/advanced degrees attained.

<u>College/University</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Graduation Year</u>
University of Memphis	B.B.A., magna cum laude	1986
University of Memphis	J.D., with honors	1989

Additional information relating to your educational background (optional): _____

How long have you lived in Memphis? 34 years

Where did you grow up? Louisville, Kentucky

Marital status/children: Married/2

Please identify up to five organizations that are actively supporting your candidacy and provide a contact (with phone number) for each.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Please list your association memberships and identify any leadership positions you have held in the past.

1. Tennessee Bar Association
2. Memphis Bar Association
3. Memphis Bar Foundation
4. _____
5. _____

6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Please list up to 10 current or past civic/community memberships.

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. St. Vincent de Paul soup kitchen volunteer | 1989-present |
| 2. Kiwanis Club of Memphis | 1994-present |
| 3. Memphis Botanic Garden Board (President) | 1997-2007 |
| 4. Sunday School Teacher | 1998-2006 |
| 5. Alpha Omega Veterans Services, Inc. (volunteer lawyer) | 1999-present |
| 6. Habitat for Humanity Board | 2000-2004 |
| 7. Leadership Memphis | 2004-2005 |
| 8. University of Memphis Tiger Scholarship Fund Board | 2005-present |
| 9. University of Memphis Alumni Association Board | 2007-present |
| 10. Youth Basketball Coach | 15 years |

Other Contact Information:

Campaign Chair: self _____

Treasurer: Paula Casey _____

Any other information you would like to share with the voters:
