

YCSD Note:

Michael Sabatino is a founding Board member of YCSD. He has taken a leave of absence from the Board for the duration of his campaign and did not participate in the drafting of this questionnaire.

1. Briefly summarize your campaign platform for this election.

- What are your top 3 priorities in office, and how do you plan to achieve them?
Education, Smart development, business and Job growth. What is the first legislation that you will try to enact if elected to office? **Steep slope ordinance**

2. Redevelopment

Yonkers is in the midst of extensive redevelopment plans that will alter the city for generations to come. Tell us what you know about the following matters.

A. Urban Planning

The Yonkers Planning Department is currently working on a comprehensive downtown Master Plan which will include rezoning of the central downtown area prior to the issuing of permits for any new development projects in that area.

- What are your thoughts on this plan? **Looking at the plan it is off to a good start although I think it needs more green space and less high-rises.**
- What is your vision of community involvement in the implementation of this plan? **We have to encourage people to attend public hearings and provide seminars to continue educating them on the issues like the demystifying series.**

B. Sustainable Development

How do you define sustainable development? **Growth in a planned manner that improves air and water quality, makes better use of mass transit and preserves natural resources. Sustainability policies provide the key to many of these objectives.**

Do you think sustainable development should be a goal for Yonkers? **Yes** If so, how would you implement it? **They should address government operations, community energy and water use, sustainable land use policy, sea level rise mitigation, green**

- **construction standards and solid waste management. The League of Conservation Voters has an excellent Plan and I would agree the most of these suggestions at this link should be goals <http://www.nylcvf.org/yonkers/resources> pages 3 – 5**
- **What are your top three sustainability goals for Yonkers? Establish an Office of Sustainability , Ensure adequate open and accessible public space, preserve the view sheds of the Hudson River.**
- **What is your opinion of a structured program for energy savings as part of new or renovated construction for residential or commercial buildings, particularly for homeowners? We should partner with the energy companies that will do audits on homes and recommend changes to be made to make residential and commercial spaces energy efficient.**

3. Climate Protection Agreement

Yonkers is now a member of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, and as such has committed to taking the following three actions:

- *Strive to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol targets in their own communities, through actions ranging from anti-sprawl land-use policies to urban forest restoration projects to public information campaigns;*
- *Urge state governments, and the federal government, to enact policies and programs to meet or beat the greenhouse gas emission reduction target suggested for the United States in the Kyoto Protocol --7% reduction from 1990 levels by 2012; and*
- *Urge the U.S. Congress to pass the bipartisan greenhouse gas reduction legislation, which would establish a national emission trading system.*

(see: <http://usmayors.org/climateprotection/agreement.htm>)

If elected, how would you help ensure that the City of Yonkers meets these goals? Yes

4. Historic Preservation and Adaptive Reuse of Buildings

Like many older cities, Yonkers has existing building stock that can be adaptively reused instead of demolished. Some of these buildings are potentially historic.

- If a choice must be made between rehabilitation, adaptive re-use or demolition, what criteria do you believe should be considered? **Its historic significance if any is important if not historic , an assessment of the structure for adaptive reuse should be considered.**
- Describe your thoughts on government's role in historic preservation initiatives. **It's important to preserve our history and find ways of promoting what our city has in the way of historic sites. If done right it can add to our economic development.**

5. Environmental Review

In New York State, most projects or activities proposed by a unit of local government and all discretionary approvals (permits) from a NYS agency or unit of local government require an environmental impact study under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

- Have you ever participated in the SEQRA process? Please describe your experience. **Have attended public hearing and read portions of the SEQRA**
- Have you read and commented on an Environmental Impact Study (EIS)? **Yes but have not read them in entirety but have commented on portions**

6. Low Income and Affordable Housing

- Does Yonkers have enough low income and/or affordable housing? **Not enough low income and existing abandoned structures should be consider for reuse affordable housing locations should be considered throughout the city Right now it is clustered in only certain parts of the city.**
- If not, how would you work to remedy this? See above
- Should developers be required to include a certain percentage of low income housing in their projects? **Yes** If so, under what terms? **15%**

7. Job Development and Retention

- What would you propose to keep Yonkers existing small businesses flourishing in the current economy? **This is a tough question to respond to; it's essential that we keep these new business in the downtown area flourishing with the economy being so bad I don't know what the answer is but would welcome hearing ideas.**
- Should developers be required to give Yonkers' residents priority for jobs? **YES** absolutely

8. Tax Subsidies for Development

There has been much discussion in New York State about the role of Industrial Development Agencies in development projects at the local level. Westchester County has an IDA working in Yonkers. Yonkers itself has the Yonkers Industrial Development Agency (YIDA), as well as

other Local Development Corporations (LDCs) that were formed by the YIDA and the City for various development initiatives. Yonkers, often working through these bodies, offers financial inducements and tax subsidies, such as Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTS), for developers. Decisions on tax subsidies are frequently determined by the YIDA, etc., which is chaired and appointed by the Mayor.

- How do you propose we track accountability for the agreements made regarding jobs, tax payments due, and community agreements made by developers in their contracts with the city? **Well the least expensive way in this tough economy is to set up a volunteer review board that can work with the different city departments to help keep these agreements on track and bring it to the attention of the lead agencies so that they can hold the developer to comply with what was agreed.**
- How transparent and representative are these bodies? Are they an effective development tool? Are they necessary? **yes**
- Share your thoughts on IDAs, LDCs, and what role, if any they should play in Yonkers redevelopment. Give specific examples. **I need more education on this**
- Do such entities provide a necessary service or would municipalities be better able to handle development projects without them?
- How can we ensure that these deals offer a significant return on taxpayer investment in PILOTS, real estate tax breaks, mortgage recording tax rebates, etc? **We have to get developers to partner with the city and give back to the community by supplying materials, labor or donated services to help maintain our public buildings and infrastructure. Every developer should be financing the infrastructure needs to complete their projects and it should be done sustainably.**

9. Neighborhood Character and Quality of Life

Quality of life is an important topic to Yonkers residents. Please comment on your top three items after reviewing the bullet points below:

- **Open Space.** Does Yonkers provide enough open space, parkland and recreational facilities to its residents? If additional open space is required, how would you fund and implement it? Share your thoughts on local government's role, if any, in preserving and providing public open space, access to the Hudson River waterfront, nature preserves, "greenways" or wildlife corridors, etc. **I would explore what grant monies are available to help and what private and government organizations fund such project. Local government needs to encourage the preservation and expansion of these open spaces.**
- **Air and water quality.** Does the city/county adequately protect the quality of its air and water? If not, what do you propose? What challenges do you see in instituting more aggressive local efforts to reduce pollution, and how would you deal with them?
- **Stormwater Management.** What is your opinion of the City and County's Stormwater Management Programs? **It can be better with all the flooding recently we have to get the Army Corp of engineers in here to assess what needs to be done along the SMR and BR. All development projects need to include adequate stormwater management on their properties especially when tree removal occurs on their development sites.**
- **Wastewater Treatment.** The Westchester County Wastewater Treatment Plan in Ludlow processes 65-70% of the county wastewater. Do you think this is too high a burden for Yonkers and what changes would you ask the county to make?
- **Community engagement.** How would you improve community participation and education in the above matters? **We need to have more regular meeting with the neighborhood assn's around the city to engage more participation. Quarterly joint assn meetings should occur.**
- **Traffic.** Are there ways to solve the traffic bottlenecks in Yonkers?

- **Parking.** Current Yonkers zoning regulations require a certain number of parking spaces per dwelling unit. Should these regulations be revised and under what circumstances?

10. Government Transparency and Civic Engagement

Cite your experiences with the Open Meetings law and FOIL (Freedom of Information Law) and their implementation.

- Do you think the current laws are sufficient and accomplish their intended purposes? **For the most part yes**
- What is your opinion of the Yonkers Ethics Code and its enforcement? **Need more information on the Code itself**
- Do you think that there are currently any Conflicts of Interest in Yonkers or County Government that have not been addressed or corrected? Please specify, and explain how such occurrences could be prevented in the future.
- How do you view the role of the general public in government? Is more or less community participation called for? **More; that is the only way we get to understand the needs out in the community. I am advocating setting up a community advisory board with key people in each neighborhood that can report to my office on issues that are of concern.** Please be specific. Do you envision specific ways in which to increase or decrease the public role as it exists now? **See my above response.**

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