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Bio for Tim Holden

My home is in Saint Paul. I grew up on the west part of town and currently live in the Hamline-Midway. I was self employed for over 25 years making payroll in the field of real estate and general home remodeling. I know first hand how the business community works and how it grows. I became interested in politics when the LTR was being planned and wanted to be proactive in the planning and construction process. I became active in a business owners group called University Avenue Business Association. This group of business owners meet regularly to discuss mitigation efforts and how to minimize the effects of construction impacts. The interaction with other property and business owners became alarming and unfortunately some of the business owners once in Saint Paul are no longer located in the city. The problems predicted with the LTR are now a reality. Accidents/Deaths, loss of business, Lost parking, ZERO handicap parking in many locations, slower commutes and the list goes on. Planning was geared toward large development at the cost of small businesses.

With my background in real estate and remodeling I decided to purchase a vacant home in the Hamline Midway area. The home purchased was in disrepair actually it was a category 2 home on the Saint Paul vacant registry. With great effort I was able to create the home that I currently reside in 1631 Blair Avenue.

Problems in Saint Paul are REAL and have been GROWING. We need someone who knows how to solve problems NOT create them. Being a mayor means putting people FIRST. Listen to the people, establish priorities AND then live within your means.

People GET IT politicians not so much.

Business Climate:

2.) *How would you characterize the business climate in Saint Paul?* The business climate favors people living outside of Saint Paul not the inhabitants. See the recent Compass report and Metro Board: both agree: Minnesota has gained jobs everywhere except Saint Paul. **In fact, by 2012 Saint Paul lost jobs** and since 2008 Saint Paul has **only gained an estimated 6,400 jobs**. Not very many under the current administration. MPR reported the **same statistics in 2013, negative or little job growth** when all of the rest of Minnesota was seeing an uptick in private jobs. First question for the new mayoral race is : **“Why is Saint Paul not growing in the economy?”**

3.) *What role do you think the City should have in attracting and retaining jobs, and how would your administration actively solicit new businesses to, and retain existing businesses in, Saint Paul?* **Get out of the way.** Make bids competitive and tilted towards small business. How the City Council treated “Cupcake” over parking and how they treated “Target” was patently unfair. Jobs follow when more smaller venues are encouraged. Compare Grand Ave with Payne-Phalen Avenue. The city stayed out of Grand and meddled with Payne-Phalen. **A good city sells itself.**

4.) *Will you commit to hiring a business advocate as a member of your senior staff, to concentrate on business retention and expansion; new business recruitment; and business impact of proposed regulations on the business climate in Saint Paul?* Of course, especially someone with multiple business experiences. More importantly, with the number of colleges, vo-tech, non-partisan and all other contract schools, we should invite them with **their** ideas. Get the City Council to go door-to-door and know their businesses in their area, not just the vocal insiders.

5.) *Do you support an increase to the minimum wage in Saint Paul? If so, what specific steps would you take to understand the impact of an increase on the many types of businesses in Saint Paul and do you support proposals to mitigate the effects on businesses like a tip credit, a youth wage, a training wage, and/or a phase-in?* **First, one size does not fit all.** When we talk about a minimum wage, are we adding in workers comp coverage, health benefits, retirement benefits? Is it a small business or a huge business with more resources? I support all the different ways to pay people so that they can get a sustainable long lasting job; but, first we need jobs; **not temporary jobs without benefits.**

Public safety:

6.) *What is your strategy to address public safety concerns in the downtown core, including safety concerns in the skyway system and police force presence?* Downtown should have its own ideas on how to achieve their own community policing. This is how to put our youth to work; and, hire them to be a presence in the skyway system. A few college students in uniform with good training would deter a lot of problems without requiring heavy policing and much cheaper.

7.) *What is your vision for these key downtown development opportunities?*

- The empty lot near the Central Station stop downtown: Open it up to creative ideas, if the Knight Foundation is awarding grants for art ideas; let's, open it up to entrepreneur activities **that lead to long term job growth.**
- The former West Publishing/ Ramsey County jail site: Again, open it up to some real developers and quit micro managing the process. **Information technology would be ideal for the site. Financial services and customer service center.**

Balance Budget

8.) *What are your priorities for the City's budget?* Audit all the departments and see where the money is going to. Priorities should be what everyone utilizes; such as parks and recreation, and libraries. Police and fire departments should be looked into and where possible to merge with Ramsey County. **Duplication of services is not cost efficient.**

9.) *How do you view the relationship between commercial and residential property taxes?*

Make it more understandable and fairer. Too many of the commercial properties were hurt with the construction of the light rail and were not duly compensated. Listening to the needs of business. **Property taxes go up and income goes down for families, how is that fair!**

10.) *What changes need to happen to the City's budget to avoid an increasing tax burden on businesses and residents, particularly to replace the City's longstanding Right of Way assessment program?* We are the capitol city and should be duly compensated from the state of Minnesota for the amount of nontaxable state land located here. The explosion of non-profits and college- owned land in our area, has a price. We have to spread the word through our ethnic programming, SPNN, social media and pressure our state legislators to be more fair. This is a statewide problem because of a court decision. **We can't solve it, the state legislature needs to solve it.**

Workforce Development

11.) *How will you work with K-12 and post-secondary educational institutions and businesses to ensure our region develops and retains an educated workforce?* First get a better communication with all the schools, especially the colleges. What about more satellite campuses on the east side, downtown, west side? Why are they only cluster on one side of Saint Paul? Metro State is the only college on the outskirts of downtown. More ways for kids, especially in high school getting credit for doing outside work. **With our technology today, we have far more creative ways to getting students ready for the new workforce, just not the leadership.**

12.) *What do you see as the mayor's role with regard to Saint Paul Public Schools?* Listening and communicating. Supporting schools and families with city outreach services. Having a school liaison with the School Board. Utilizing what we have in place and champion educational goals. Given the richness of the college schools and community resources we should have a workforce that a business would want to hire hands-down.

Other

13.) *What is the biggest challenge facing the city and how would you address it?* Urban poverty and the wide disparity of wealth in the districts. Only four districts, out of sixteen districts of Saint Paul have lost significant amounts of median income since 2008. The last census shows us losing ground on all factors. **Jobs, Jobs, Jobs! A vibrant economy; not, built on only tourism and entertainment.** We need some hard-core expanding technology like the days of Control Data and Univac. **We need to address the digital divide! We want an open door to a variety of businesses, not just back-room deals that limit new innovation.**

14.) *What would be your top three-priorities if elected?* **Jobs, Good-paying jobs, long lasting jobs. All kinds of jobs.** Looking at our budget that is about to explode. Rein-in crazy programs that are costing more than they are worth. I love historical homes; but, citizens should not have to pay for outrageous cost of restoration. Families should be help to fix their homes and those homes that the city is owning need to have a reality check for refurbishing. A home with good bones can be done cheaply, rightly and keep its historical look. The digital divide is another top priority. So many citizens are being left behind without access to a computer.

15.) *What do you think should be the city's top transportation related priority?* Make it work for everybody and make sure businesses have adequate parking to thrive. **Fix the streets!!!**

16.) *Are there any services currently provided by the city that you believe should be cut back of eliminated? Or, are there new opportunities to share services with other entities?* It's time that we look at where taxpayers are paying twice for the same services such us libraries. We need to look at not only Saint Paul's budget; but, how much is going to parks and how are they being funded by other entities? We are rich in opportunities; and some wonderful programs are available and expanded. All neighborhoods should be treated responsibly and have the same access to city hall. We need someone is a mayor to all of St. Paul not just the special interests. **We need less stadiums and more people capital.**

17.) *Is there anything else you would like to share with voters not covered above?* **Saint Paul needs a change!** It has been a one government town for so long that it has become stagnated. **Just look at the rest at the stats. The rest of Minnesota is thriving except for Saint Paul. Ask yourself? Is this what we want for the next 4 years. It's time for a change!** Saint Paul needs new and innovative ideas. Let's tap **all** the resources available and bring in non-partisan ideas, new blood. Another four years of **no growth, wider deficits and falling incomes is a formula for disaster. This is not my prediction, read the reports, the past is a good indicator of the future. Same players, same outcomes.**