

## Burroughs Neighborhood Organization Toledo Mayoral Forum – October 2017

Mayoral Candidates: [Mayor Paula Hicks-Hudson](#) and [Wade Kapszukiewicz](#)

- Introductions after coin toss, Wade is first

[Paula](#): Current mayor, honor to come out tonight and share about herself and what the mayor can do with a partnership with community. Attorney, moved to Toledo a few years back, and has family here. Kids went to Burroughs. Daughter is a teacher in TPS. As a lawyer she is an advocate for her clients, now an advocate for Toledo citizens. Came from being a District Councilmember and understand how communities are valuable to work together to make the best policies we can make. Can't just sit in office or read book, has to actually listen to the people. Look forward to answering and serving as Toledo Mayor for the next four years, to continue the progress of the past two years of her being Mayor.

[Wade](#): Thank you for the invitation for coming tonight. Lucas County Treasurer which does two important things 1. Balance half a billion dollar budget every year and has done that for 12 years perfectly. Auditor must reconcile every day to make sure numbers match. Founder of the Land Bank, Burroughs is the 2<sup>nd</sup> neighborhood in the RISE program. Must do better things to fix roads, have better quality of water, work on parks. Excited to be here to talk about his vision for Toledo.

- Question One: Why are you running for mayor?

[Paula](#): Two years ago, we asked, why? Because we'd have 3 mayors in less than 3 years. To continue momentum our community has, showing in downtown, but in other neighborhoods, she wants to continue that momentum. One of the things are roads – started a residential roads program. There was a bureaucratic issue in what money went where. We've had safe drinking water (safe since 2014). Thirdly, \$3 billion worth of investments have come into the city, 9,500 new and retained jobs due to partnerships with private, labor, non-profit sectors, and wants to build on those investments and take ideas of how downtown was built and spread those out to other neighborhoods. Burroughs has started that, she's running for mayor to continue the work she starting.

[Wade](#): Believes in the future of Toledo, there are some good things going on. Cities that can't meet basic needs, they will struggle, with water, balancing budgets, roads, and safety, he understands that some parts are doing well, but there are also parts of Toledo that are not as well, and he knows we can do better but consolidate on departments in government to save tax dollars and sure those for other things like parks, pools, stuff for children. We must have courage for thinking outside of the box. Toledo 6<sup>th</sup> worst in the country for childhood poverty, unemployment 2 of last 3 months going up at a rate higher than any other city Ohio measures. Lost 100,000 residents in his life, 19,000 in his daughters. Reduce redundancies in departments that we can consolidate with the County that taxpayers are paying for twice right now, so we can move the money for other programs and for programs for kids. There are things we can do, but we need the courage to change and think outside the box.

- Question Two: Like many areas in the city, the BNO neighborhood has seen a number of businesses close up in the past two years. Do you have a specific economic

development/revitalization plan that can help our area? Please describe a specific example of how you would expand and diversify the city's economy.

Paula: Also serving on the Land Bank Board, and working with them, her department are helping to demolish some of the unfixable houses, demolish through Streets Bridges and Harbor. Two programs The Economic Development Loan (similar to store front program), they can help with the gap funding with loans (which can be used for anything that will help the businesses). We must also advertise and work with small local businesses, there is a program to help walk with them to get permits – Small Business Navigator - she has changed it to make it easier and faster for local businesses. Cleveland Cliffs (East Toledo) \$7million investment for iron parts of steel. If we help our small businesses, we can help our neighborhoods.

Wade: Specifically, about what we've done, looking at the past to predict the future, the land bank has adopted the Burroughs neighborhood, and come to it with lots of resources and funds. 2<sup>nd</sup> RISE neighborhood. 30 residents have taken advantage if the renovation matching grant program (up to \$5,000) (\$103,000 in loans) that is bringing up value in the neighborhood. Businesses taking advantage of the business front program by S Detroit/Airport. It is bringing up the monetary value of the neighborhood and can be a turning point for us. Land Bank renovating three of its own properties, too. Tangible examples. Neighborhoods that succeed are those who reinvent themselves and have help doing them, and the city has helped but he can envision more. Economy: We need to make the community a place where people want to be, not where they want to flee, and make it a celebration, to attract the new generation.

- Question Three: The BNO believes in collaboration with neighbors, families, schools, churches, service agencies, businesses, and city government. We set goals at the beginning of each year for our many projects, some of which have developed into annual projects, and we monitor the progress making contacts as needed with our partners. Will you commit, or have a designated person in your department commit, to give us and other neighborhood committees quarterly updates from your office? Will you personally commit to attending at least one meeting her year where we can have an open forum?

Paula: Yes and yes. In fact, Cindy Geronimo, appointed to Block Watch Board, to deal with the civil side and the criminal and safety side of neighborhoods (as well as normal nuisance abatement). She is the contact. Paula always believes in order to do a good job, you must touch base with constituents. She gets a good understanding of what is needed. She loves coming out. "You invite me, I'm there." I believe that's what's necessary.

Wade: Yes and yes. Has comes to meetings and wasn't even mayor, and will continue to do so. Question made him think about transparency. He's all about transparency, and he is 100% about it. He wants us and his office if elected to be open. He wants accountants to work on the books, not just auditors, because we already had auditors and they didn't catch everything. Embrace priority based budgeting. Every year, The Blade asks all the candidates for every little detail, he was the only one to provide all of that information. He believes that the whole truth needs to be revealed in order to run a smooth government. Transparency means telling the whole truth even when it's rough.

- Question Four: We've seen the \$8 million account pop up that was apparently hidden. We see the city having to write a check for some \$230,000 to the federal government for roof grant paperwork snafus. Looking forward, what can be done to lessen the chance of this happening in the future?

Paula: when talking about experience, her 2 years, both of the things were from prior administrations. The roof money was a glitch from 2009, about work about being done, when she came into office, she was able to look down at different issues, expose them, and then fix it. She asked for more documentation to make better decisions. She pushed that further as Mayor. She has been working to fix that issue, and will continue to do so. She promised after the 1% she wouldn't come back for more tax money until she was sure about every tax dollar. She's making sure what you're seeing is accurate. She is making sure that the money is balanced and we are using actual money we have. Everything was because of the administrations before her, and she is not shying away, to make sure citizens are clear that she is not trying to hide it. Toledo's check book is online and public, and she was the first one to call for accountants/auditors.

Wade: Having a third party come in to look at the budget and balancing. Candidates make all sorts of promises. One of the best ways to judge isn't to look at what they say, it's to look at their record, and what they've done. One thing he would like to point out in his past, when elected county treasurers 12 years ago, the old County Treasurer Ray Kest, was misusing public money, and Wade was the one to balance the budget again, and he has experience refunding money and fixing the budget, he was able to fix it and he believes he can do it again for Toledo and prevent it from happening again. He's come into a situation where the budget was compromised and there was a lack of public trust, and he can do it again, even though the City of Toledo is a larger pie. Without even looking at the city, you can look at his record and be confident that he knows how to do things right.

- Question Five: While toxin concentration remains low in most areas, the algae bloom is growing in size reaching north to Canada and eat past the Lake Erie Islands. With the river green and odiferous, this has to be affecting tourism on our beaches and rivers. What are your plans to eliminate the bloom?

Paula: She keeps doing what she has been, 1.) make sure Toledo has safe drinking water by using money for investing into the water treatment plan (\$527millio). 2.) Agriculture runoff (Non-Point Sources) is a big issue, she is advocating at a national level (National Conference of Mayors) to raise awareness to fix this issue. It's not only Toledo, it's also Indiana, Michigan, Detroit, Canada, and we have to reduce the bad nutrients getting into the lake, and acknowledge that climate change is real and is an issue that factors into it, and we wouldn't have blooms if the sun wasn't causing so much heat right now. They have a survey. She's begun legal steps to go after the NPS causers. Will continue to advocate to eliminate the bloom by going after big corporations that their runoff is effecting the bloom.

Wade: A lot of money that we need to spend but he wishes we didn't have to spend it, if our water weren't so discolored in the first place. Not just an issue for environmentalists or health, it is also affecting our economy, it is hurting us at every level. Google image search Toledo water, and you won't like what you see. There is a regatta thing downtown, and a lot of teams had to cancel because of the water. Mayor is right. Agricultural runoff is a big part of the bloom, CAFO's, 700

million gallons, equivalent of all the human waste of Chicago and Los Angeles combined, and will not truly be fixed until all parties in rural Ohio and Indiana get onboard to petition to stop it. For 2 years, he has been for declaring Lake Erie impaired. People say not to call it impaired because it will give our region a black eye, but what else gives our region a black eye is when half a million people can't drink their water as in August 2014. We can do it, but the first step to solving the problem is to admitting you have one and I think we're all on board admitting that now.

- Audience Q&A:

- Audience Member Question: Runs small business. Been here 65 years. Believe in Toledo, but hard to connect with businesses, lots of businesses struggling and closing up on South, Westwood, etc. Never asked the city for any money, just a safe place to run his business. Shooting recently, not conducive to business. What can you do for me and my business so we don't have to move out like everyone else.

Paula: Tough question. Since Mayor, police class every year even with barely resources 85% of gen fund used for police and fire. More classes, moved up so they'll be on the street by end of year to replace retiring. We shouldn't have the numbers retiring because force is younger. Chief Krall is using some of the best technology and processes so we use data-driven policing to be more efficient. We're working from the Smart City Initiative perspective. We have the blue light cameras, and we're looking to have technology that will follow the sounds of the shots. Those are the kinds of things we want to do with a partnership with personnel with technology. Community policing so they can talk to citizens and be where they need to be.

Wade: Focus on Crime. I am not naïve or foolish enough to believe hiring more police officers will solve everything, but we need a basic number. Police to population is 600:280,000 2.1 officers per 1000 citizens. DOJ declared dangerously low. 2.4 officers per 1000. Identified a plan and funds to bring on 40 officers per year. Net increase of 15 officers per year. Gets us right to 2.4 where DOJ says we should be. Won't solve the entire problem, but a step in the right direction, which allows officers to be in the community, not just in the car. They want to talk to citizens, but it's hard to do it when the numbers are as low as they've gotten. I have a way to increase the numbers.

- Audience Member Question: Economic Development elsewhere, but not really in South Toledo. Plans for Southwyck and Southland.

Paula: I can't speak to Southland because it's not owned by the city, but I can talk about Southwyck. We sent our team of economic development folks to a conference to sit down and talk about developing large spaces to get an idea for Southwyck. We think about retail but I'm concerned and not sure if that's the right answer for Southwyck. But we're looking for a developer who will bring real living wage jobs to the table, instead of service sector jobs that are not sustainable. Southland: We have the team that goes out,

we ask how we can help. Her understanding is that the owner of the plaza has some nibbles for what will replace Kroger.

Wade: Southland is a big issue. We look at amazon and other internet giants like them that have changed the world. I worry that the changing market will hurt places like Kroger. We have to be ready and nimble to adapt. Southwyck: Problems, eyesore, shame. I wasn't involved in any of those discussions. About a year ago City close to a deal

**Mayor: No we weren't close**

Wade: okay maybe we weren't, but there were stories that made it seem like that. But I'm more concerned about the value of the houses around the areas, instead of just the dollar amount we can get from development. I worry about the homes around there. I think we should get this into the hands of a private developer as soon as possible because the city obviously is not good at this. Stop waiting to get a return and save the homes now.

- Audience Member Question: Potholes. Streets – Stateview and Westwood, Apple. You said you'd be doing stuff about the streets, now I'm asking when.

Paula: How do we get streets fixed? I'll answer several ways. We got some money, we're fixing some streets. 37 lane miles. Mil and fill machines on residential streets. Potholes filled this year: 54,000. We lost money, we tried to keep police and fire. We've been able to reduce the transfers from CIP to Gen fund. Use Engage Toledo, call 419-936-2020. Between be, Carrie, and Mark, we're going to take down the names of those streets. We're going to do what we can while we have the funds available, this summer was the first time we've had money. Call Engage Toledo, and that will help us. And we'll get to it and take care of it and we'll look at those streets.

Wade: In opening remarks I eluded to the good things happening in the city but that cities that can't meet their basic needs are going to struggle. Questions, reality, it all comes down to money.

Audience Member: Weren't we given grants?

Wade: chuckles, I'm not the Mayor

Audience Member: Yeah but you may be

Wade: Loss of money to the state. I wish it never would have happened, but the fact of the matter is that it's never coming back, or if it does, pennies on the dollar. So what do we do? We know the status quo. To free up funds, we need to fundamentally change the way the city operates. I mentioned consolidations of departments. How Metroparks could run some of our parks. Folks at city hall detest. But I believe if we're to turn the corner we have to do things differently but this is one way.

- Audience Member Question: Some communities around the country are looking for alternatives to jail for non-violent offenders, because jail is the most expensive. For example,

my church men's group tries to mentor ex-cons that we come across. Other methods other than jail.

Paula: There are a number of orgs that are doing just what you're saying. First Weds of every month at One government Center. Offenders re-entering the community connected with job support, substance abuse agencies. Reentry coalition of NW Ohio. Folks that have gone through the system. Also looking at diverting people from even getting into the system. Rather than arrest, Mental Health or drug addiction is diverted to rescue crisis, drug treatment, etc. They hold the charges and they go away if successful through diversion programs. Looking at ways to keep people from getting into the system.

Wade: I think you're right, and I agree with the Mayor. Our society has come a long way over the last 40 years. The issue of the jail has gotten bogged down to a lot of different stuff but ultimately I believe we need a new jail, even a federal judge has said so, I'll take their word too. That's why there is the discussion about the jail. Essentially the county is being ordered to have a new jail. Commissioners know more. I'm glad not at Angola, Mayor and I spoke out against it. But it's my understanding that it will be a campus of some sort where there is incarceration, but also at the same place, a place for services for people who need them. I worked for Compass, and I can't imagine a single person in jail, save a stray, who isn't struggling with some drugs or mental health or something else. On the site, the campus will have places for help.

- Audience Member Question: Consolidation clarification? What do you feel about the city buying up land?

Paula: The thought process for Southwyck was to have it developed and into someone's hands. The city had a loan on the property. But you think about the other land we own. I don't want to spend any more money cutting grass on things we own that are vacant etc (\$1million this summer). The idea is to have land for development. For example, if Jeep wants to expand, we can hold that land so they can bring more jobs.

There are different systems between Toledo and Lucas County, and the ones that can come together have come together for the common good. Plan Commission, Health Department. Seems intuitive that you can save dollars, but also costs money to combine because of systems, IT systems, etc. So not as quickly as in a minute he'll be able to take care of, but something we can work on.

Wade: I have some departments in mind. Not a big coalition, but rather the individual departments consolidated when there is one in Toledo and one for Lucas County that do the same thing but charge taxpayers twice. I think at the gut level Toledoans believe we're better when we cooperate. Regional Water System is an opportunity for that. A lot of different ways for city and county to come together but not talking about UNIGOV or changing the government style or anything else. May have merit but take way longer to happen. What I'm talking about could happen tomorrow with the right political will. That's why I've focused on departments.

I agree that the city should not be in the business of buying up property. To defend the Mayor Southwyck did happen before she was in office. I don't think government is good at that, and private sector folks

could do it better, and frankly when we do have places like Southwyck, I think we need to get rid of it asap.

- Conclusions:

Paula: Thank you for opportunity to talk and hear you and why I'm asking for your vote Nov. 7. I want to continue things we've started, we've made progress, I want it to continue, I believe in a city of hope. Started with \$11 million transfer from CIP to Gen and couldn't fix roads, but now we can. I've been learning about the water so we can fix it. The city is coming back and good for young people, people are coming back. I've hired three young people who have come back home because of the vibrancy. West Toledo is coming back and South Toledo will to. We're going to work with you to make our communities stronger. I believe we can come back and I believe I'm the better candidate for this. That's why I ask for your vote. Hopefully you see that we have made progress, things are moving, and I want to continue that moving forward. Thank you so much I always love coming here and so glad we didn't have the bench but chairs this time (joke)

Marcia: Yes, we learned! (in laughter)

Wade: I've been fortunate enough to be in public life for a number of years but in every step of my public life I've always looked for ways to be innovative and to be a reformer. I've tried to change complex orgs and systems. On Council I started the pharmacy card, treasurer I started putting money for the Huntington Center. Low interest rates for small businesses. 42 small businesses to keep retain about 400 jobs in the last 10 years. Created the Land Bank out of whole cloth. Hundreds of thousands of dollars into neighborhoods. I believe in that, when orgs adapt. When the city adapts. The results we have are fine but I don't believe they take us to that level. My 11 year old has seen city shrink by 20,000. They're not at that age, but they'll think about where to go to school and where to have their lives. Right now it looked like they might have brighter futures elsewhere. If they want to move, I'll help them, but I don't want them to move. Thank you for taking the time.