

SEIU LOCAL 521 CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

CAMPAIGN PROFILE

Candidate Name: Micah Posner
Office/District: Santa Cruz City Councilmember
Campaign Address:732 Riverside Ave., Santa Cruz, California, 95060
Campaign Phone:831 227-4772
Fax: None
Occupation: Owner/ Worker of Collectively Owned Business
Employer: Santa Cruz Pedicab, a project of Pedaler's Express
Proposed Ballot Designation: Small business owner
Elected offices currently/ previously held: None
Other campaigns for elected office: None
Appointed offices currently/ previously held: None

NAMEPHONEEMAIL

Labor Consultant*: _____
Campaign Consultant: Bruce Van Allen (volunteer) 831 429-1688 bva@cruzio.com
Media Consultant*: _____
Mail Consultant*: _____
Fundraising Consultant*: _____
Field Consultant*: _____
Pollster*: _____
Campaign Manager: Jacqueline Seydel858 254 3024 jacqseydel@gmail.com
Scheduler*: _____

Anticipated Budget:\$26,641.00 (in accordance with the city voluntary expenditure ordinance)

Funds Raised to Date: \$ 8,300.00

Current/Prior union membership: Two Coop Businesses. No Unions. My wife, Akiko Minami, is a member of the Teamster's Union as a clerical worker at UCSC.

Other organizations you belong to: People Power, the Sierra Club, Temple Beth El, Monarch School (public, but run by parents), Westside Cooperative PreSchool (WPENS), Friends of the Rail Trail, the Hub for Sustainable Living

PUBLIC MATERIALS PRINTED UP TO DATE CAN BE SEEN ON MY WEBSITE:
micahforcouncil.org with the exception of the invitation to a neighborhood gathering and the
yard sign (which are attached).

Biography:

My father was a Freedom Rider. He spent 60 days in jail in Mississippi.

I grew up in Riverside California, where he was a Reform Rabbi.

In 1986 I moved to Santa Cruz to attend UCSC. In 1989, I joined the original Steering
Committee of People Power (see peoplepowersc.org) as part of my commitment to the peace
movement and my objections to the first Gulf War. Also in 1989, I co-led a successful campaign
to stop a road through the Great Meadow at UCSC.

1991: Graduated UCSC with a degree in Creative Writing.

In the early 1990's, I rode my bicycle across the United States, climbed significant peaks
throughout the world, taught Mountaineering for Outward Bound and worked as a farmworker at
Santa Cruz Organic Farms.

1993, Employed as the 6th Annual Bike to Work Coordinator.

1994: Co-founded Pedaler's Express Delivery Service as a worker owned collective. We didn't
know anything about Cooperatives but felt it was the right thing to do. In 2002, the Coop had 8
Worker/ Owners and two apprentices.

2004: Became the first paid Director of People Power, Santa Cruz County's Advocacy Group
for Sensible Transportation. Grew the group from 60 to 400 paid members. Collaborations with
labor groups included organizing a bicycle giveaway with the UTU during the bus workers strike
and loaning out our bicycle powered generator for SEIU rallies at the Courthouse. People Power
(and I personally) played a significant role in the election of John Leopold as Supervisor of the
1st District. I twice endorsed and worked for Tony Madrigal. Supervised the approval of the Rail
and Trail project (currently in the design phase) and the Arana Gulch path (to be built by Fall of
2013).

2005: Married Akiko Minami.

2006: Fathered Tamarah Minami.

2008: Akiko and I bought 2/3 of a property as Tenants in Common with our neighbors on 732
Riverside Ave. The back 1/3 of the property gets turned into Fairytale Farm by Karsten and
Debbie Wade.

2008: Received Community Hero Award from United Way for my work in transportation.

2010: Fathered Emunah Minami.

2012: Resigned from People Power to start Pedicab Business and run for Council.

2012: Returned to Pedaler's Express to start a collective Pedicab Project: Santa Cruz Pedicab

General

1. Briefly describe your top priorities and the policy areas that will be of most interest to you as
City Councilmember.
Reduce the cost of housing and encourage small scale development by lowering parking
requirements and raising maximum building heights.

Encourage micro economic development by assigning a single staff member to act as liason for new business permit applications.

Foster civility downtown by housing the homeless (as per Mayor Lane's proposal) and changing focus towards modifying the behaviors of the homeless via social workers and other programs. Adopt a stance of mutual respect with the homeless.

Champion sensible transportation and planning. Immediately begin building the rail trail and plan to implement a light rail service to connect with state and nationwide rail services via Watsonville Station.

Immediately develop alternatives to desalinization so as to allow for growth to occur at UCSC and other places, if the proposed desal plant is not approved by voters or the Coastal Commission.

What public administration or leadership experience do you have? Please explain the programs you have developed and implemented for the benefit of the public.

I have been the director and primary administrator of a grassroots public interest group (People Power) for 10 years. Under my leadership we implemented a valet bike parking program, a youth outreach program (Greenways to School) and built our membership from 60 to 400 people countywide. We successfully lobbied for a wide variety of projects including neighborhood traffic calming measures, bike lanes and the city's climate action plan. Two of our biggest successes (the Arana Gulch bike path and the County wide rail with trail system) are currently in the design phase.

I am currently the Board President of the Hub for Sustainable Living, a 501c4 which serves as an umbrella for several projects including Greenways to School, the Fruit Tree Project and the Bike Church. Our budget is \$200,000.00 annually.

2. What do you think are the three largest challenges facing the City today?

Our local cost of housing is too high relative to the access we have to decent paying jobs with benefits in the city limits. This is especially true of rental housing, which has not gone down in the Recession.

We do not have an economical or environmentally sound plan to handle an increased water demand at the University and other locations.

Our social fabric is strained to the breaking point- with increasing class divisions, often breaking down along generational lines. While the origins of this problem are from state and nationwide sources, it manifests itself locally in an increasingly tense relationship between the city's poor and the middle/ upper classes.

3. How will you effectively represent the city and its workers?

I will use my experience and connections as a community organizer to stay in close touch with the communities of interest that make up the political structure of the city, including its workers. I will use my knowledge of the city's staff and my experience as a lobbyist to form city policy (in both a macro and micro scale) to insure that it is meeting the needs of workers and

other constituents, as per the above example of reducing parking ordinances so as to reduce the cost of housing and encourage micro level development. I will use the prestige of the position of council member to rally people around important issue including the rights of workers (temporary and permanent, documented and undocumented).

Policy

3. Under what circumstances, if any, do you favor privatizing existing government services?

When the position does not exist among current staff, and it is unreasonable to train and/or recruit staff to fill it. OR if current staff do it not want to perform a particular function. For example, Pedaler's Express used to deliver council and planning packets to councilmembers/ Commissioners homes. Planning/ City Manager Staff did not want to perform the overtime deliveries with any vehicle and certainly not by bicycle. Another example would be to hire a consultant to design a specific Capitol Improvement Project (a King Street Bike Boulevard for example) for which the consultant had specific expertise and was to work for a limited time period.

4. In the event that any public services were to be contracted out, would you support or oppose the requirement that the private contractor would have to offer its employees comparable wages and benefits?

I can't think of a situation where I would support contracting out when a city worker with comparable job qualifications who wanted the work was available, but in the abstract I would support the idea that the private contractor would have to offer comparable wages and benefits.

5. What rights and benefits do you believe the city should afford its part-time and temporary employees?

Temporary and part-time workers should be part of the union. They should receive social security, disability, sick and vacation time and other standard benefits. I would work with the SEIU to lower the threshold for providing health benefits to part time and temporary workers. The city should not use temporary and part time workers as a way to lower its personnel costs, as is being done in many other municipalities.

5. Do you support the right of part-time and temporary (extra help) workers employed by the city to unionize and to bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions?

Yes, these are the most vulnerable workers. They need the union more than anyone. Also, we want to contradict the potential of city managers using part-time and temp workers as a circumvent using union workers, which happens in many other workplace situations.

6. If elected, would you pledge to work with SEIU to protect secure, defined benefit pension plans for public employees?

YES.

Budget

7. What are your top three budget priorities?

Insure that current benefits are protected for city workers, including social security for temporary workers.

Fill vacant positions, especially in departments with high vacancy levels like the garage.

Insure that the projected medium term budget is sustainable, even in the event of a continuing Recession.

8. Would you vote to use the city's reserves to maintain services that the city provides at current levels? If so, to what extent would you vote to use reserves to maintain services? If not, under what circumstances would you vote to utilize the city's reserves?

I would do so if a projected budget realistically allowed for the city's reserves to be refilled (at whatever rate, however slow).

9. Would you propose or support any new revenues (taxes, fees, etc.) to maintain services that the city currently provides?

Yes, I support raising the hotel occupancy tax from 10% to 12%.

I support raising water rates to create new programs in conservation, gray water use, and water sharing among districts that would allow for growth at the university and other locations.

10. Do you support or oppose a return to majority vote standard to approve local government special taxes and bond measures?

SUPPORT

11. Please describe the circumstances under which you would support the creation of any new tax preferences (i.e., tax "breaks"), what kinds of accountability you would require, and how would you propose to pay for them.

As far as I know, the city does not have the capability to provide tax breaks.

UNIONS

Working with the Union

12. If elected, which of the following will you commit to for the purpose of building a strong working relationship with SEIU?

YES NO

- Call for and welcome SEIU input on relevant policy matters
 - Alert SEIU when matters that will impact SEIU members are to come before the council
 - Attend SEIU leadership and worksite meetings when invited
 - Work with SEIU to develop legislative proposals
 - Work to appoint qualified union members to appropriate Boards and commissions
 - Ensure direct access to you and your staff (including during contract negotiations)
 - See Below
- Abide by the policy of the previous city council to not meet with the union without another councilmember present?

I think that this is a crummy practice (I question the idea that it is a legal policy) and I would work to change it. I would need to learn more about the legal specifics of the “policy” to know in which cases I would honor it. I would certainly want to continue to have personal relationships with leaders of the SEIU and other unions with or without another council member present. If the Council was in an active negotiation I would need to be careful not to undermine the positions of other council members, especially if I was in the minority.

13. Which of the following actions would you take to support workers engaged in union activity such as bargaining and organizing?

YES NO

- Walk picket lines
- Mediate with employers
- Mediate with building owners
- Write letters of support
- Fight for proper enforcement of current labor law
- Hold a press conference
- Speak at rallies

Additional actions or comments: As an grassroots activists for 20 years, I am quite comfortable with all of the above tactics. The main reason that I want to run for Council is to expand my sphere of advocacy to labor and other issues. I want to serve as your advocate on the city council.

14. Would you cross a picket line?

No, not without first getting permission from the Union involved. In fact Pedaler's Express once lost a client (Barry Swenson Builders) because we refused to deliver blueprints across picket lines.

Workers' Rights

15. **Do you publicly support or oppose the position that workers should be able to freely choose for themselves whether they want to unionize without the intimidating effects of any employer interference? This includes publicly supporting and encouraging employers to remain neutral on the question of unionization. What have you done in the past or what will you do in the future to demonstrate your support or opposition?**

I will always support and defend a worker's right to unionize. I would attend union organizing rallies; speak at union meetings, and write letters of support. I would personally meet with employers to encourage them to stay neutral or be supportive of organizing efforts.

16. **Do you support or oppose publicly supporting and actively encouraging employers to negotiate in good faith, collective bargaining agreements with their workers and to abide by the terms of those agreements?**

I support collective bargaining agreements and would work with the SEIU to insure that companies receiving large contracts with the city based on their union membership and/or fair wage agreements do not get around collective bargaining agreements, union contracts, or comparable wage agreements by the extensive use of non-unionized subcontractors.

17. **Do you support binding arbitration? This would entail the use of a neutral third party mediator who would settle disputes relating to contract, bargaining or other disagreements between the union and management. The arbitrator's ruling would be legally binding on both parties.**

Yes.

18. **Would you publicly support or oppose card check recognition and neutrality agreements between employers and the workers who are fighting to organize a union?**

I support card check recognition as a way to create a more civil discourse around organizing. It seems to me that using card check recognition and neutrality agreements in the stead of federal minimum standards for workplace elections are better both for workers and management in the long term as they reduce unnecessary tensions,

Initiatives/Endorsements

19. Have you or will you publicly endorse in the 2012 5th District Supervisor race? If you will or have publicly endorsed in this race, who will/have you endorse/d?

I personally endorsed Eric Hammer for 5th District Supervisor race in April, way before anyone thought that he had a chance of winning. People Power also endorsed him after working with him to create a safe routes to school SLV policy.

20. Have you or will you publicly endorse Proposition 30? If you will or have publicly endorsed this initiative, how will you endorse?

I will publicly support Governor Brown's tax increase proposal. How could I not do so? I have kids in public school.

21. Have you or will you publicly endorse Proposition 32? If you will or have publicly endorsed this initiative, how will you endorse?

I will publicly oppose Proposition 32, which is a blatant attempt to reduce the power of regular working people to effect elections while upholding corporate influence. If I am endorsed by the Central Labor Council, I will include links to the Council's stance on both of these issues on my website.

Other

22. Is there anything else you believe is important for the members of SEIU to know about you and your campaign as they continue the process of evaluating the candidates and deciding who to support for the City Council?

I co-founded, and currently work with, a cooperative business with equal pay and consensus based decision making. Though I understand the present day realities of pay disparity and unequal benefits between workers and management, I do not philosophically agree with it. I would, and have, worked to reduce hierarchies and pay disparities whenever practical. I believe that America is on the verge of losing our middle class and I will work locally to do what we can to prevent that. This could include issuing proclamations by the Council on the larger issues such as Health Care Reform and Immigration Policy.

As an grassroots, member-based activist, my base of support is independent of large corporate influences. If elected to council I will be in a position to listen carefully to the needs of workers and work as your advocate, without the self-imposed limitations that

effect some of the councilmembers.

As an well known environmentally activist, I will be in a position to maintain and strengthen a strong blue-green progressive alliance alongside my mentor, Bruce Van Allen.

Over the course of 20 years I have built up a reputation for integrity, courage and determination with regard to transportation issues, but there are a lot of things I care about other than bicycling. I am running for City Council so as to expand my advocacy efforts to a much wider range of issues including the rights of workers, the cost of housing, increasing public access to government, and local campaign finance reform.

My wife, Akiko Minami, is a working class immigrant and activist who has led the move to include social justice in the curriculum of the UCSC Farm Apprenticeship program. She has promised to make sure that I don't compromise my values under the pressures of political leadership, and she's not someone to mess around with.

Lastly, I appreciate your flexibility with regard to turning in this survey. My mother died suddenly in Los Angeles and I spent 10 days down there without access to my usual email account.

CANDIDATE PLEDGE – SUPPORTING THE RIGHT OF WORKERS TO CHOOSE A UNION

Section 923 of California's Labor Code states it is the public policy of this state that "It is necessary that the individual workman have full freedom of association, self-organization, and designation of representatives of his own choosing, to negotiate the terms and conditions of his employment, and that he shall be free from the interference, restraint, or coercion of employers of labor, or their agents, in the designation of such representatives...."

Employers have the power to fire, promote, change work assignments and other wise reward and punish their workers. There are many responsible employers who respect the rights of their workers and obey the law. Unfortunately, many employers abuse their power in the workplace to deny their workers the right to freely choose a voice on the job by joining a union and bargaining contracts determining the terms and conditions of their employment.

Each year workers seeking to organize a union in their workplace are fired although the law says this is illegal. After years of litigation, employers are required to rehire these workers and pay back wages minus any income the worker earned after being fired. Employers pay no other penalty. Workers receive no compensation for the harm done to their lives and careers. And unions receive no compensation for the impact of such illegal activities on their organizing drives.

Even after workers overcome employer interference and vote for a union many employers then refuse to bargain a contract in good faith.

SEIU asks you as a candidate and elected official to exert moral leadership and to actively support public policies that protect the right of workers to freely choose a voice on the job by participating in a union and to bargaining with their employers.

As a candidate and elected official I hereby pledge:

1. To publicly support and actively encourage workers who are organizing a union with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).
2. To publicly support and actively encourage the position that workers should be able to freely choose for themselves whether they want to gain a voice on the job by unionizing without the intimidating effects of any employer interference. This includes publicly supporting and encouraging employers to remain neutral on the question of unionization.
3. To publicly support and actively encourage the position that no taxpayer money should be spent interfering with the right of workers to freely choose a union.
4. To publicly support and actively encourage a fair and fast process for determining worker support for unionization including secret ballot election or card check recognition.
5. To publicly support and actively encourage employers to negotiate an agreement with the union within 90 days after a majority of workers express their choice in favor of forming a union.
6. To publicly support and actively encourage employers to negotiate good faith collective bargaining agreements with their workers and to abide by the terms of those agreements.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: Micah Posner 8/13/2012