

Blue Ridge Apartment Council

Candidate Questionnaire - If you are elected to the Board of Supervisors ...

1. What will be your top three (3) priorities?

To pursue highest priority transportation projects to solve our local transportation problems, while following a locally driven transportation planning process.

To pursue county efforts toward education and economic development which represent the values of our citizens and our comprehensive plan; to support success of locally owned businesses and entrepreneurs.

To continue the multi-generational local effort for environmental protection, for green building, to provide an environment which can sustain our grandchildren.

2. What specific efforts will you make to engage the City of Charlottesville's elected officials, appointed officials and executive administrative staff to forge compromises and develop real solutions to short and long term regional issues, such as public services and transportation, as opposed to an "us" vs. "them" mentality?

I will continue my effort to communicate directly with councilors on joint issues and to work in our regional agencies such as the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission and the Rivanna River Basin Commission, on which I represent the County as an elected official.

Last year I was a County representative on the fire and rescue committee which studied in depth the efforts of cooperation and "functional unity" between the EMS agencies of the two jurisdictions.

There are many issues on which we are waiting for the City to complete their decision making process. If we can reach resolution on the property easements and cost allocation for the water supply plan, and the completion of the Meadow Creek Parkway, then citizens will feel more confident about our future success.

The Meadow Creek Parkway was a city initiated project to which the County agreed to join. The County saved up road funds for years before carrying out the project. Having spent fifteen million dollars, the County citizens are justifiably eager to see the project completed.

3. What specific efforts will you make to stimulate local job growth and economic development? Education, infrastructure, facilitate process

Goal: Encourage collaboration between business and education

Several conclusions were reached at the second business-school summit this year: critical thinking and personal work skills are the core attributes our students need at graduation. Potential employees need to be ready to learn the information of a particular employer, and to be self-directed, to work with others, to have good work skills. Experiences in the workplace during the high school years are essential.

Goal: Invest in capital projects within our capability to pay.

As a board of supervisors, we need to face up to our responsibilities as a county to invest again in infrastructure. Every citizen and local government continues to be concerned about the future of our economy. We should follow the lead of so many other localities in Virginia to prudently invest in capital projects which will bring about swift returns, increase the investment of tax-paying businesses around them, and raise the standard of living for all.

Goal: Improve process for applicants to meet county standards

Since the Development Review Task Force of 2005 -2007, the County staff has been working on clarification and better directions for our application process. Recent changes reflect improvements on initial consultation in a face to face meeting, a single point of contact throughout the process, and shortened time lines for responses to application submissions.

4. Given that over one-half (50%+) of BRAC's listings of rental housing currently being offered meet the standards of affordable housing and given that home ownership is often either not appropriate or unachievable for most households with income levels significantly below the Area Median Income, do you believe that the Charlottesville, VA MSA has a demonstrated need for additional publicly supported affordable housing programs or are private rental housing providers and other in-place housing assistance programs adequately serving the community?

I do not predict that the County will become an owner-operator of low income housing units.

The County does address lower income levels in our voucher program. If Albemarle County were awarded more housing vouchers by HUD, we would have residents who could use them. Our voucher numbers have fallen over the years as rents increased and a total federal dollar cap was applied to the program. There are many more applicants for housing vouchers than Albemarle County has available. I do know that it is difficult for lower income workers with families to find housing in the County due to our market rents.

I understand that the rental market has evolved over the last five years, as more units for students have been provided close to UVA grounds. The demand for student housing in the country has fallen. I hope this means that these more rural units are available for families.

5. Given the budget shortfalls most localities are facing as a result of contracted real estate and sales tax revenues combined with state and federal budget reductions what specific areas of proposed budget reductions and/or revenue increases would you envision and support?

Decisions must be based on the facts to date, which show a local increase in sales tax and personal property values while real estate property values continue to fall slightly. I would be happier with a real estate value recovery, especially in commercial property. What we cannot control is the federal and international situation, and this creates uncertainty and anxiety.

After four years of cutting staff and services in what was already a lean local government, there are only small economies which can be achieved by further restructuring. That effort is under way, as our staff continually works on efficiencies to achieve the operational savings we have this year. We are facing the point, however, when we should act to build some high value infrastructure within our current budget, to take advantage of low construction costs and low interest rates. If we delay, we will see our facilities cost much more in the future, which will demand higher taxes then.

The Commonwealth budget puts great strain on local tax payers. While claiming glory for not raising taxes, the General Assembly has effectively passed the buck to localities on education, comprehensive services, justice and courts, jails, agriculture and extension services, sheriff department costs, and soon to come: transportation. The debate of 2012 will be the state's desire to push secondary road construction and maintenance down to localities. For the thousands of miles in Albemarle, that tax burden will be astounding.

Please return your response to the Candidate Questionnaire **no later than Monday, October 17, 2011.**

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