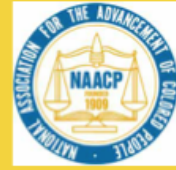




**ALBEMARLE-CHARLOTTESVILLE NAACP
BRANCH 7057**

P.O. Box 1522
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2015 Democratic City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Please limit your responses to 200 words per question, and submit no later than Tuesday, April 21, 2015.

1. How will you finish the job started and allow the Human Rights Commission to actually fulfill its mission to prevent and remedy employment discrimination in companies larger than 14?

I voted for the Human Rights Commission (HRC) with enforcement capability, in part because similar commissions have worked quite well in other Virginia cities. The decision was made to let the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) handle discrimination complaints from companies with more than 14 employees because the EEOC is authorized to serve five times more clients than the local HRC can. This is because the HRC has no jurisdiction over the majority of EEOC eligible employers, including our largest local employer, UVA; nor can the HRC serve the 70% of working city residents who work outside the city limits. If results indicate that city residents working in large companies would be better served by the HRC, I would reconsider that decision.

2. How will you support the public housing budget? If elected, do you pledge to uphold the Residents' Bill of Rights for Redevelopment?

I fully support the invaluable role public housing plays in enabling low and very low income residents to live in the city. Having attended several meetings with HUD officials this past year, I also understand the serious problem that CRHA has with its budget deficit. One way the city can help address the CRHA budget is to facilitate the redevelopment of those units that are disproportionately contributing to the deficit. I do pledge to uphold the Residents' Bill of Rights, but it is imperative that we all acknowledge that if HUD takes CRHA over, we may lose any authority to uphold that document.

3. How will you improve the Agency Budget Review Team (ABRT) process so that it does not penalize organizations with African American leadership or those that support low income populations?

This last budget cycle clearly demonstrated that the ABRT process is flawed when it comes to city-based nonprofits that serve low income residents and play a multi-faceted role in our community. The process was aptly described as trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. We could try to change the process (again), or we could identify those organizations that Council chooses to fund year after year despite the ABRT scoring and provide stable funding outside of that process, on a contractual basis.

4. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors, and what opportunities do you see for future partnership that would benefit the African American community?

The current Board of Supervisors (BOS) is more politically aligned with City Council than in recent years. I believe the time is now to engage the BOS in serious discussions about consolidating services. An interesting trend in the last decade is a shift in the demographic profile of the city and county. For the first time, the average income for the African American population in Albemarle County was lower than the average income of the African American population in the city. This is significant because many of the services that serve low income families differ between the city and county, and more importantly, registration for these services often do not transfer across the city-county border. Low income families

move more often between jurisdictions, and when they do, they and their children suffer from a disruption of services.

Whether it is schools, special education, or social services, the time lost when a child moves across this invisible border is damaging. Years ago, our jurisdictions looked very different, but this is not so anymore and I believe it is time to reopen this conversation to explore options that would benefit both city and county residents.

5. What is your the position on the storm water utility, and how do you propose we fund infrastructure repair without financially penalizing African American churches and citizens on fixed incomes?

The storm water utility was a difficult decision, brought about by federal and state requirements to upgrade our storm water system to meet environmental guidelines. These mandatory upgrades will cost millions of dollars and the options to raise these funds were either real estate taxes or a storm water fee based on impact. Doing the math, the financial impact of raising real estate taxes was much greater for the low and fixed income home owner and to renters who would pay higher rents. The storm water fee targets the problem directly by charging only for the amount of impact that a property has on storm water runoff. Unfortunately, state law prevents us from exempting churches from the fee. However, the city has a program to help large properties, including churches, reduce their impervious surface area and thus reduce their fee. We also have a fee relief program tied to our tax relief efforts.

6. This community has invested in entrepreneurship development programs in recent years but we haven't seen evidence yet that a single Charlottesville resident has been lifted out of poverty as a result. If elected will you insist that taxpayer support for business development come with guarantees that jobs will be created for our lowest-income residents in the process?

Since 2012, the CIC has graduated 96 individuals, spawned 44 new businesses, helped grow 13 existing small businesses, and created 32 full time jobs. But the CIC is just one tool in the city's investment to create jobs for city residents. Another that I am particularly proud of is GoDriver, a program I initiated as chair of the CAT Board to train unemployed city residents as transit drivers. Twelve residents have already obtained a living wage job through this program. It has been so successful that not only is there a second class planned, but it has spawned GoOffice and GoGreen, both of which will expand the opportunities for unemployed city residents to become financially independent. In addition, the new satellite Office of Workforce Development on Market St., Job Fairs held several times a year, and investment in educational advancement are other tools to enable city residents to rise out of poverty, yet each alone is unlikely to guarantee self-sufficiency.

7. How will you ensure diversity on boards, commissions, and in management positions in the city that have historically lacked diversity. In what concrete ways will you be accountable to change that?

One of the most important roles Council plays is to appoint people to boards and commissions, and I take that responsibility very seriously. I now insist that Council receive a GIS map of the current and prospective board members for any commission for which diversity and geographic decisions are relevant. Diversity in race, ethnicity, gender and other underrepresented groups is always a consideration when we are tasked to appoint new members. The biggest deterrent to diversity is a lack of diversity in the applicant pool. That is why it is important for the city to support civic training programs such as PHAR's internship program, the Neighborhood Leadership Institute, and other programs that encourage civic involvement. As councilors, we try to have our eyes and ears out for potential board members, but with 32 different boards and commissions, it is difficult to get enough applicants. Developing a line of communication with NAACP, PHAR, and others about upcoming openings may help diversify the applicant pool.

8. The City has established the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Task force to provide recommendations for the minority contact in the juvenile justice system. There is interest in the community

for the DMC Task Force to investigate other matters such as the data showing 70% of all “stop and frisks “in the city are African American adults. Should the task force address this issue? Similarly, should the task force also include in its purpose exploration of the disproportionate minority contact in the child welfare system and health disparities that impact African Americans?

The issues you raise here are extremely important and need immediate attention. Council has clearly expressed interest in exploring disproportionate contact between adult minorities and police. The frequency of adult contact with police is much larger, and from a legal perspective, different enough that I believe it would be better to establish a new task force to address this specific issue. The new task force could include current DMC members but would also need to include representatives who are knowledgeable about the adult judicial system. It may be a more natural extension of the current DMC task force to examine the issues of disproportionality in the child welfare and healthcare systems. However, it would be helpful to have members with specific expertise and experience in both the child welfare system and in the health system. One option might be to expand the larger DMC task force and set up subcommittees within it.

9. The Strategic Investment Area (SIA) calls for additional market rate housing in the area south of downtown. The area is currently mostly subsidized affordable housing. Would you support the creation of additional affordable housing units in the SIA to expand housing options?

I would like to see a broader range of affordable housing options in the SIA area than we have today, to include low income, moderate income, and workforce housing. The proximity to downtown, UVA, and public transportation, makes the area ideal for working families and individuals, as well as older and less mobile citizens. Clearly, the ability to live in Charlottesville without the financial burden of a car will enable more people to live in this area, if affordable housing were available.

10. Since 2010 Charlottesville has been a City of Second Chances. Recently the box was removed from city applications. Describe employment initiatives that you will champion to support the citizens returning home after serving time in prison?

I have long been a supporter of Home to Work, a program that enables ex-offenders to pay off their fines, get a drivers license, find stable housing, and demonstrate their abilities to future employers. This City program, implemented through the Parks and Rec department, has had impressive results and I would like to see it expand to other city departments, such as Public Works. I am also proud to have initiated the GoDriver program that trains under- and unemployed city residents to become city bus drivers. While GoDriver, may or may not fit an ex-offenders needs, this model has now been expanded to other job sectors and I believe will continue to offer living wage jobs to a wide variety of unemployed city residents, some of whom are likely to be ex-offenders. I have also been involved with bringing the Delancey model of life after prison to Charlottesville, in which returning citizens live and work in a Delancey house, set up to allow participants to recover from the circumstances that led to their incarceration and leave with sobriety, skills, and a dollar in their pocket.