



APRIL 22, 2015

ALBEMARLE-CHARLOTTESVILLE NAACP
DEMOCRATIC CITY COUNCIL
CANDIDATES QUESTIONNAIRE
RESPONSES

RESPONSES APPEAR IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Wes Bellamy

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?

We need to review and possibly revamp the current HRC Model. It is extremely difficult for the HRC to effectively combat employment discrimination under its current guidelines. If elected, one thing that I plan to do in the near term is to conduct a SWAT analysis to evaluate where the HRC has been effective, ineffective, and where improvements need to occur. We could then take those results, and discuss with present leadership to search for context. The matter could then go to council where alternative measures that modify the HRC to fulfill its charge in the most streamlined fashion possible would be put on the table.

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

As a former member of the Advisory Board of the Public Housing Association of Residents (PHAR), and an individual who spends a great deal of time working with children and families in public housing, I will work vehemently to ensure that the Residents' Bill of Rights for Redevelopment is upheld. With regards to the budget, there is a relatively small amount of funding available. We need to review its present allocation first. It might be worthwhile to look at how comparable entities are funded to see if an increase is called for. We also should start thinking outside of the box. I would like to see us focus more on grant writing and fundraising. The more money we can bring in through these viable alternative channels, the less pressure there will be on the existing budget.

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?

I would start by going straight to the source. Before acting, I would like to hear from ABRT why things appear the way they do. I am aware that while it initially seemed as if these organizations would not receive funding, and I was pleased to see that a few of them did eventually receive funding. I plan to be committed to ensure that these programs, many of which I have seen do phenomenal work in the community, are treated and rated with equity and fairness.

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 Board of Supervisors, overall, work well together as a cohesive unit to do what they believe is best for the county. In regards to future partnerships, I think both City Council and the Board of Supervisors need to work together to create a more diverse workforce, specifically within our police departments, fire departments, and schools. Workforce issues have to become a priority.

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 is needed in the city. However, we have to make sure that we are not hurting those who are the least financially stable. I would like to expand the dialogue with the community about why the storm water utility tax is needed, how it is currently affecting the aforementioned groups, and how can we come up with a viable solution for everyone.

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?

It is imperative that government provides access to new jobs for our low-income citizens. I will continue to work diligently to ensure that this happens. However, in order for one to earn the job, they must first have the skills necessary to keep it. The right training leads to sustainable employment, as opposed to seasonal or subsidized short-term work. But it can't stop there. Poverty is about more than employment. Counseling (substance abuse,

financial, mental, etc.) and other programs that get at the roots of the psychological toll that poverty takes on our community are just as important. If we don't approach our citizens from a holistic perspective that these types of factors into account, then money, time, and hope will lose traction and the cycle will continue.

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?

It is critical that city leadership reflect the city's diverse population. And right now we are not doing that well enough. To achieve balance, we should review areas of inequality, analyze why they exist, and then work cohesively to address the places where diversity – whether it be race, color, religion, sexual orientation, etc. – could be improved upon. To that end, I would like to see a mechanism put in place with quantitative and qualitative metrics to ensure fairness in our selection process. That said, it is important to note that the best possible person should always get the job – because the decisions that he or she will make as a public servant, will affect us all. Council should make a harder push for equality, but not at the expense of choosing those who are not qualified.

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?

I think the DMC Task Force needs to work efficiently and collaboratively to provide for the needs of the community. I would initially like to see more data about adult interaction with law enforcement and the court systems, and address this issue before moving on to others. While the child welfare system and health disparities are alarming, moving forward in an efficient manner and dealing with these issues appropriately is also important. When we see that nearly 70% of all “stop and frisks” in the city are AA Adults, that says to me that we have a serious problem. I have heard from community members for years that as adults, they would like to see a change in the interactions between minorities and law enforcement agencies. I think we need to start here, and keep in mind that it is not far-fetched to simultaneously hold other agencies accountable as well.

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?

Affordable housing is at the forefront of my campaign. Families across the city are finding it more difficult to remain in the city, due to the inflation of the housing market. I would be in support of additional affordable housing units in the SIA to expand housing options.

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?

Charlottesville often proclaims to be a city of second chances, but many individuals feel otherwise. This is an area that we have to improve on, and I am committed to do so. I think we need develop a halfway house and support system for our females who are coming home from prison, we need to create a database of employers who currently hire ex-felons, and lastly we need work closer with groups such as Believers and Achievers and organizations like OAR. I would also like to work with the city, PHAR, and other community leaders to put together a job fair for ex-felons who feel disenfranchised, have paid their debt to society, and now simply want a chance. I think with employment, as well as support in other areas of their lives, we can see the positive impact that these individuals can have on our city.

Kathy Galvin

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?

While I would like to see the Human Rights Commission (HRC) deal effectively with the problem of employment discrimination, for a variety of reasons this is proving to be a slow and difficult process. There are additional ways the Commission could address barriers to full employment. Taking inspiration from the words of Julian Bond:

“The title was the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Then as now, black unemployment is far higher than white unemployment, but I think people forgot that jobs were part of the equation. For another, housing in the United States continues to be largely segregated. Even today, 50 years from the March on Washington, white people tend to live over here; black people tend to live over there. And as long as you live in separate places, you don't know each other. You can't have access to the best jobs. You can't have all the fruits that the country promises for you.”

The HRC should expand its mission by working with the City to remove all barriers to employment such as opening up access to: registered apprenticeships (especially for ex-felons); alternative certifications; better transportation and childcare options, more affordable housing choice and promoting inclusive neighborhoods.

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

I will uphold the Public Housing Residents Bill of Rights for Redevelopment, especially as it applies to modernizing public housing while strategically adding market rate and workforce housing so as to sustain an economically viable public housing authority.

In order to support the public housing budget, we need a well-managed organization that produces and maintains supported housing city-wide and establishes self-sustaining revenue streams for public housing subsidies and programs that foster resident self-sufficiency. That will require a strategy, a timeline and a commitment to using Housing Fund dollars to leverage private investment. I see at least two alternatives for the City to explore in collaboration with public housing residents and all affected stakeholders:

- Turn Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority (CRHA) into a public developer that partners with local non-profit housing agencies and collaborates with reputable private developers to build mixed income housing with mixed use as needed. The Alexandria Housing and Redevelopment Authority will explore this model with City Council, CRHA and residents on May 7.
- Create a Community Development Corporation (CDC) with a mission to build mixed income housing with mixed use as needed. CRHA would then be responsible only for management and resident services for public housing sites.

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?

I have been active and at times outspoken, about eliminating any unintentional bias in the ABRT process.

- We need to be ever vigilant in our efforts to ensure that the membership of the ABRT reflects our community's many perspectives and priorities. I have raised this issue in the past and will do so in the future.
- Having personally worked with city staff to restore funding for MACAA's Certified Nurse's Aide (CNA) training program and, more recently, the African American Teaching Fellows, I believe the City should

assess its application process for any biases that may unwittingly discourage a more diverse recipient pool. The HRC would be a good resource for research and best practices in this regard.

- We need to make sure that all of our community agencies have the knowledge and resources to submit competitive applications. Either city staff or the Center for Non-Profit Excellence could provide the training needed for this purpose. In any event, the City needs to be prepared to invest in building capacity within the community, in collaboration with that community.

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?

I have worked and will continue to work to build trust in all my dealings with the current County Board of Supervisors (BOS.) There is now more mutual respect between us than there was three years ago when I joined City Council. As a result, agreements were reached that have benefited both jurisdictions.

Albemarle County is also experiencing rapid growth in poverty within its growth areas, often referred to as “the urban ring.” This presents opportunities for partnerships that would benefit low-income African Americans, Latinos and others from both city and county.

- The city and county could combine resources to create a regional preschool program, with instructional support provided by the Curry school at UVA.
- A regional transit authority could extend routes and expand ridership for the Charlottesville area transit (CAT). This would benefit all our low income residents, especially those without automobiles or licenses, by making jobs more accessible across jurisdictions. For the past year, I have been meeting with BOS members to map out a framework for such an authority.

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 city's challenge with respect to storm water has been to 1) meet federal regulations, 2) reduce storm water pollution in our rivers and 3) replace over thirteen miles of deteriorating pipes over the next ten years, at an estimated cost of \$10 million. Major infrastructure projects like this must be paid for, and establishing a dedicated funding mechanism is both good fiscal and good environmental stewardship.

State laws constrain us in the ways we can raise revenue for storm water utility projects. We can establish a storm water utility fee, but we cannot provide special exemptions based on income, tax status or other considerations. The fee is based on a property's contribution to runoff from impervious surfaces, not on assessed value and can only be reduced if runoff is reduced.

A community can create a separate policy (like the city's real estate tax relief program) outside the storm water fee structure, allowing for relief measures for categories of users. This would be paid for by the General Fund. I would investigate this if the fee is found to be causing hardship. I would also like to investigate ways to provide free or reduced rate technical assistance to reduce runoff.

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?

We must first tap into the potential of our citizens and then provide opportunities. That's why I support the City's “GO Driver” and “GO Office” programs. The downtown workforce center and new workforce development specialist (that I championed) made those career pathways for 20 people possible. We now have alternative certification programs for adults without college diplomas. Graduates have either gotten good positions or on

track for a degree. A special program for public housing residents seeks to “plug” them into these programs once they get their GED.

Second, the only way we can legally require the hiring of local, low income residents is under the HUD Section 3 Program. This program prioritizes hiring “qualified” low income residents on any HUD owned property undergoing redevelopment. That’s why the redevelopment of our assisted housing is an engine for economic mobility. We must be prepared however by growing:

- jobs via building streets, parks and storm water facilities and redeveloping housing;
- minority businesses via the Charlottesville Economic Development Authority (CEDA), the Charlottesville Investment Collaborative (CIC) and Minority Business Council (CMBC);
- access to state registered apprenticeships in plumbing, electrical and HVAC so that low income residents are qualified for the HUD Section 3 program.

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?

I have personally recruited diverse applicants for Council appointments, with mixed success. The City should consider partnering with the NAACP to host a ‘job fair-like’ event to enlist candidates for city appointments. City Council should also make recruiting, retaining, and promoting a diverse city workforce a formal policy and goal of the city’s Strategic Plan. Among other recruiting measures, the city should be:

- Establishing networks with minority colleges and offering internships and mentoring;
- Developing partnerships with minority organizations and community groups;
- Using Web sites that post resumes of diverse job seekers.

Finally, the promotion of minorities from within has not occurred frequently, despite 37 percent of the city government’s workforce being African American. The City Manager should examine the City’s promotion practices and modify procedures as needed.

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?

I support completing the tasks identified in the June 2014 Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Report. As of February 2015, 70% of those tasks had not been completed. Those include: addressing police training; developing new youth strategies; providing parental support; researching probation and parole violations; teacher training; and truancy prevention.

Stop and Frisk actions need an independent review, subject to proper judicial authorization. Child welfare and health disparities identified in the 2011 report of the Commission on Children and Families should be examined, with particular attention paid to treatment for youths traumatized by exposure to violence and drug addiction.

We should stay the course and use the DMC task force’s work to inform these additional investigations and create a firm timeline for completing all of these outstanding tasks as soon as possible.

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?

We must retain 340 units of supported housing in the SIA, in accordance with the Resident Bill of Rights. Given that the SIA currently has a 25 percent poverty rate, adding more supported housing units at this time runs the risk of creating an isolated pocket of poverty. Studies have shown that when African American children live in neighborhoods where poverty fell by 10%, they had higher incomes as adults than those who grew up in areas where the poverty rate stayed the same. (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/26/AR2009072602347.html>.)

That's why I support reducing poverty in the SIA by aggressively using the HUD Section 3 Program to create good construction jobs for local low income residents. That's how we'll grow our own middle class. I also support the idea of adding roughly 400 units of workforce and market rate housing to the 340 units of supported housing over the next 10-15 years. That's how people will still be able to live in this neighborhood once they transition out of poverty. As the poverty rate declines and the risk of future generations growing up in poverty is reduced, then adding more permanently supported housing units for the very low income could be considered.

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?

A truly equitable economy requires sustained investment in job creation and workforce development in neighborhoods most impacted by global economic shifts (namely the loss of manufacturing jobs overseas, such as the Ix Textile plant) and mass incarceration.

Citizens returning home after prison need drivers' licenses to access jobs. Restoring drivers' licenses is a priority and I have worked with the Offices of the Public Defender and City Commonwealth's Attorney every year to promote such a program in the Virginia General Assembly. A regional transit authority that extends routes for the Charlottesville area transit (CAT) would also benefit our citizens returning home by making more jobs accessible by bus across jurisdictions to those without a license. For the past year, I have been meeting with BOS members to map out a framework for such an authority.

The City also needs to continue to support and expand the policies I outlined above in answering Question 6. These include the workforce center which also provides financial counseling against predatory lending, local and state apprenticeship and alternative certification programs, and GED programs geared towards public housing residents. Finally, we must be ready to take advantage of the HUD Section 3 Program before redevelopment begins.

Lena Seville

1. I fully support Human Rights for all. In regards to employment discrimination, as a City Councilor I would first look to see whether the City's own hiring practices represent the diversity found here. We must start by setting a good example. All discrimination complaints of any kind must be investigated and dealt with quickly.
2. If elected, I will uphold the Resident's Bill of Rights for any possible redevelopment of public housing. Any and all housing within the city should meet basic livability requirements and that ought to include property owned by government entities. I will be available to address the needs of all my constituents, no matter what their income level, skin color, religious background, etc.
3. City funds should be directed towards organizations that are effectively meeting the critical needs of our residents. Training and other support should be offered to those that have good ideas but require assistance with implementation.
4. It is important to work with the County to meet regional goals. Improvements to public transportation would provide expanded access to jobs, health care, education and child care. In addition, many of our low income renters often move back and forth between the City and the County's urban ring. Effective cooperation will improve service provision.
5. The city should not implement any taxes or fees that are regressive or that place a greater burden on low income folks than those with high incomes. The current Stormwater Utility Fee is based solely on amount of impervious surface. That calculation could be changed to include a combination of factors such as impervious surface and property value.
6. Entrepreneurship development is a long term solution to a difficult problem. It has the ability to not just fill existing openings but to create new jobs. In the short term, training programs such as CAT's Go Driver can help match interested individuals with current employment needs.
7. Diversity on city boards, commissions and advisory bodies is very important. There are a number of ways this can be achieved. First, we need effective notification so that interested people can be informed when there is an opening. Then, if Council chooses not to appoint someone, they should still be given the option to participate through a project based subcommittee. We need more of these types of opportunities, particularly for people who have limited time due to family, work or health obligations.
8. By City Council's design, the DMC (Disproportionate Minority Contact) Task Force is limited to the juvenile justice system. As a citizen member of the DMC-TF, I have repeatedly advocated for expanding our scope to include other types of disproportionate minority contact. Many of the same issues that affect minority and disadvantaged youths also affect minority and disadvantaged adults.

The work of the DMC reinforces how important it is to seek out and listen to our city residents. At the public meetings two years ago, I heard comments about unfairness regarding which youths were held and which were detained. I continued to bring up the topic at the Task Force meetings until we finally saw the data which did indeed indicate disproportionality. We have recently received assistance from the Commonwealth of Virginia to further explore this issue and identify exactly where the problem is occurring so that it can be addressed.

9. I am in favor of a wide range of housing types both within the SIA and throughout the city. If people are going to be able to lift themselves out of poverty, the next step up must be readily available. A mixed income community of market rate and subsidized affordable housing is better than housing that has been segregated by income. However, it would be even better to have housing that includes all the many layers in between. I absolutely support the creation of housing that includes affordable options for members of the work force in service, construction, non-profit, start-up, self-employment and other middle to low income industries.
10. We need to maximize opportunities for citizens returning home from confinement. It benefits the individual and society at large. Reintegration starts by ensuring connections to the community prior to release so that there is a readily available support system to create a seamless transition.

Mike Signer

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?

As an attorney at my prior law firm, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale & Dorr, I was privileged to be part of a team representing an African-American woman who, as plaintiff, filed an important employment discrimination case against a federal agency. I believe that employment discrimination in all forms is not only illegal but unethical. As a member of City Council, I look forward to meeting with members of the Human Rights Commission and community stakeholders to understand lessons learned during the HRC's tenure so far about its power, authorities, limitations, and goals.

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

I believe that residents of our public housing communities are as equally valuable as every other member of the Charlottesville community. As a City Councilor, I will examine the budget requests for public housing with the same empathy, care, and discipline that I will apply to all budget requests. As a general matter, I do not take or make pledges in this campaign, but I can say that I believe in the paramount importance of a sense of community and of voluntary involvement in decisions involving public housing, and that these variables will be paramount in my decisions.

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?

The ABRT process is an important means for providing even-handed accountability to the share that nonprofit organizations receive of the City's budget. With that said, the ABRT process is not perfect, and as a City Councilor I will always look for ways to improve it. No organizations, with African-American leadership or otherwise, should ever be penalized in the ABRT process. If I learn of discriminatory statements or acts toward African-American leaders, low-income groups, or other vulnerable or historically disenfranchised communities, I will decry such behavior and seek to prevent it. Further, I will seek to make non-profit groups aware of their formal right to make a response directly to the Council if they believe they have been wronged.

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?

As our closest regional neighbor, I will frequently look to Albemarle County as a partner in public police. I have several friends and colleagues in Albemarle government and will hope to build on these relationships as a City Councilor. Specifically, I will seek to restart regularly scheduled meetings with the city manager, county manager, and the president of the University of Virginia or her designee. I think there are many opportunities for increased collaboration that will benefit the African-American community, including creating a regional

public transportation body to increase transit options for new economic development opportunities for low-income residents, and heightened cooperation on economic development, including for residents who may not have higher degrees but who desire more workforce training—such as the potential move of CATEC to the PVCC campus. Regarding economic opportunity, Albemarle County has both the land and the employers to create diverse employment opportunities for all residents of the city and county. Further, as counsel to Governor Mark Warner, I worked on improving state contracting with minority-owned businesses, and I will seek to enhance the access of minority-owned businesses in the City to purchasing decisions by major entities in the County.

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?

While I was not on the Council at the time, I was concerned about the precedent that would be set for future budgeting decisions by the determination that the storm water infrastructure needed to be paid for through a special fee rather than the general fund. At this time, I have not formulated specific proposals about future infrastructure repair funding, but I can say that I will be concerned about the regressive effect of new taxes and fees on the most vulnerable members of our community.

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?

I believe that all nonprofits receiving funds from the City should be subject to rigorous assessments for effectiveness. I have worked on a pro bono basis with entrepreneurs coming out of the Community Investment Collaborative and know that many are very proud of the economic success that has been boosted by the program's funding and training. I am also very supportive of the Charlottesville Works program. As I propose in my City of Opportunity Plan, I believe that improved purchasing systems by the City's largest institutions could put more funds toward small businesses run by lowest-income residents. I also propose in my plan that the City negotiate with large incoming employers (Costco and Wegmann's being two examples) to try and ensure that more stable jobs with benefits will be created for City residents.

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?

I believe that Charlottesville's diversity is our greatest strength. City Council plays an important role in appointing the City Manager and members of boards and commissions. Not only do I believe that diversity is important in these roles and entities, I think that we should do more to increase diversity in other City bodies, including the Charlottesville Police Department. Openings on commissions and boards are already currently advertised to African-American churches and other organizations, but we can and must do a better job in ensuring that these actions leads to actual diversity. As a City Councilor, I will personally reach out to leaders of the African-American community to encourage them to apply for boards and commissions. As far as accountability on my commitment to diversity, I will be accountable to City residents and stakeholders in every Council meeting and through all other forms of community engagement.

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?

I have read the 2014 report of the DMC Task Force on juvenile justice. I believe that the disproportionate level of minority contact in “stop and frisks” is a topic of great concern; I would want to confer with the members of the task force to understand their position on the strengths and weaknesses of the Task Force and its capabilities before deciding whether its mission should be expanded, both to “stop and frisks” and to the topics of child welfare and health disparity issues.

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?

Our city needs more affordable housing, period. I do think that additional affordable housing in the SIA would be a good idea.

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 am a strong supporter of “ban the box” initiatives and am very glad that Governor Terry McAuliffe recently acted to ban the box in Commonwealth employment actions. I believe that the strongest actions we can take will be with major local employers. I believe that our Economic Development Authority should directly work with major employers to ensure that they are not penalizing applicants for having served time.

Dede Smith

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. holds Job Fairs several times a year. Investment in educational advancement is another tool 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 receives 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.