

Blacksburg Town Council Candidate Forum 1. October 5, 2009.

Questions asked during the Forum. Note: to see the responses to these question, you can watch the rebroadcast of the Blacksburg Town Council Candidate Forum on WTOB and on the Blacksburg website.

1. What one thing has the current council done right? And, What one thing has the current council done wrong?
2. This is a two part question. As a member of the Blacksburg Town Council, how will you address the longstanding need for affordable and workforce housing? If you believe that Blacksburg's CDBG program has had a beneficial impact on affordable housing?
3. Do you think it is just and fair, and ecologically effective, to charge residential customers on a sliding scale for solid waste disposal, according to the amount of garbage they contribute?
4. Do you believe that town funding for projects such as the Blacksburg Museum and the Oddfellas restoration provide significant benefits to Blacksburg residents?
5. When the Historic overlay was imposed more than 90% of the district's property owners signed a petition asking that all decisions of the Historic and Design Review Board be advisory. Do you advocate making the board's decisions mandatory or advisory, or any other options.
6. Infrastructure: Do you think a totally connected, town maintained and uniformly identified system of pathways for pedestrians and bicyclists throughout town and connecting into campus is important?
7. Would you support a public/private project to add a parking garage in the heart of the downtown?

Unasked Questions: Note: Copies of these questions have been sent to the candidates, and they have been invited to respond to the questions in writing. Given that many of the questions have a similar focus, candidates may choose to respond to multiple questions with one answer. Answers will be posted on the League website on October 20th.

1. Green/Growth: How do you plan to increase revenue to pay for requested green infrastructure, maintain current services, and provide new amenities for the residents?
2. Would you support a Town project upgrading the infrastructure in the Downtown area for utilities such as "sprinkler water," sewer & storm sewer, electrical in order to help renovate downtown properties?

3. The current CEO of Google, recently noted that Blacksburg, mainly because of Virginia Tech, is one of the most "wired" cities because of its technology and technology-based companies. With this change and development, don't you believe it's now time to capitalize on those assets? If so, how do you plan to capitalize on those assets?
4. The Town of Blacksburg loves the saying: "Be local...Buy local" etc. That said, the new Kent Square Parking Garage was built and is managed by a company based out of North Carolina. Do you consider that aspect, "local?"
5. Would you support a smaller Wal-mart?
6. Would you support a smaller Wal-mart in Blacksburg?
7. How do you plan to rectify the South Main (1st & Main) situation which has caused many businesses not to open there?
8. If elected, how would you vote on a proposal to place a smaller big box store at First & Main instead of the larger one that was rejected?
9. Would you be in support of a smaller Wal-mart coming to Blacksburg?
10. Will you support a smaller scale Wal-mart being built in Blacksburg which would serve all residents and keep tax dollars in town?
11. Would you be in support of a smaller-sized Wal-mart coming to Blacksburg, than originally planned?
12. For non-incumbents: If you had been on town council in 2007, would you have supported Ordinance 1450, requiring a special use permit for large-format retail?
13. What are your feelings about the removal of the middle school and rezoning of the property to allow for higher density redevelopment?
14. Are you a member of Burg or Citizens First or aligned with any local special interest group?
15. Do you feel Blacksburg's current council has a "no growth" agenda under the guise of a "smart growth" facade?
16. What do you consider to be the most pressing problem we face and how do you plan to address it?
17. Would you consider supporting Blacksburg in establishing a downtown development district through the VA legislative process where the town can cause many vacant properties to become

occupied?

18. What will you do to increase business and jobs in the "stagnate" Industrial Park that would increase jobs and revenue for the town?
19. How will you balance the need for commercial development which feeds the tax base with the desire of some residents for conditions to remain the same?
20. With the Town's current trend to restrict large retail, commercial and industrial growth, how do you propose to provide adequate new services and maintenance of existing services without increasing taxes?
21. Given current economics, how can you justify not allowing large retail and other commercial projects which create jobs and generate tax revenue for the Town?
22. How do you propose to work with the county to bring businesses to Blacksburg?
23. What do you think about Sam's Club opening in Christiansburg and therefore taking sales tax dollars from Blacksburg?
24. Do you believe that small business owners should receive the same support that the town receives? For example: the situation with Blacksburg Motor Company?
25. Would you be willing to work on having the town provide the farmer's market merchants with a clean, well-functioning toilet during market hours?
26. While historic structures may define the character of a community, is there a limit to preservation when the result is an adverse economic impact?
27. There seems to be a lot of agreement between some candidates. What 1 issue/concern separates you from the other candidates in the race?
28. Why such a focus on business re: the sliding scale on refuse? As a resident citizen who makes a strong effort to not only recycle but reduce waste production w/in my home, it is frustrating to throw out 1 plastic grocery bag of waste each week & have my neighbors completely fill their large blue bin - and we are both charged the same.

I would like to see more emphasis on reduction of waste (eg buy products w/less packaging) than just recycle.
29. Do all Questions get read, even if not chosen for candidates to address, and if so by whom?