



2007 Albemarle County Board of Supervisors Candidate Interview September 2007

Candidate: Ken Boyd (R)

On November 6, 2007, voters in the Rivanna Magisterial District go to the polls to elect their representative on the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors. This recording is Sean Tubbs' September 6, 2007 interview with Ken Boyd, Republican candidate campaigning for the seat. Mr. Boyd's opponent is Democrat Marcia Joseph.

The audio of this interview is available online on the Charlottesville Tomorrow Weblog http://cvilletomorrow.typepad.com/charlottesville_tomorrow_/2007/09/boyd.html

Complete election coverage is available on the Charlottesville Tomorrow website <http://action.cvilletomorrow.org/cvilleaction/elections.html>

INTERVIEW

Mr. Boyd, thank you for participating in this interview with Charlottesville Tomorrow. The complete audio and written transcript for this interview will be available on the Internet. Information from this interview will be used in the compilation of Charlottesville Tomorrow's non-partisan voter guide. Charlottesville Tomorrow does not endorse any candidates and our goal is to provide information to the public so they can make an informed vote on issues related to land use, transportation and community design.

As you are aware, some of the questions you will be asked have been provided in advance, others have not. All Supervisor candidates will be asked the same questions.

- 1. Please describe your past political experience and what qualifies you to be on the Board of Supervisors.**

Well, I've been involved in this community since I first moved here 26 years ago. I've helped to organize school carnivals when my kids were in elementary school. I was on the— I was a PTA president at both the middle school and the high school level. I was one of the vice presidents and originators of the Parent Council which is an effective organization in the

school system now. I've been a coach. I've participated on boards of local charitable organizations and other organizations. Eight years ago I decided to run for School Board and was elected and served four years on the School Board. I've also served for almost four years now on the Board of Supervisors, so I've had an opportunity to be a leader in this community and to be an organizer and to be someone who is very much involved in it. I have two business degrees including an MBA. I also have a Chartered Financial Consultants Designation from the American College and I think that positions me in a unique place to address one of the biggest challenges I think we face and that is financing the future of the infrastructure and of this community.

- 2. In June 2006, the City and County signed off on a 50-year water supply plan that includes a new dam at the Ragged Mountain Reservoir and a new pipeline connecting it to the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir. Do you support this plan? Why or why not?**

Well, I'm actually very proud to have been part of the legislative team that signed off and put together this 50-year water plan and I'm a hundred percent behind it. I guess if there's one disappointment I have it's the amount of time it is taking to get through the 11 different state and federal regulatory authorities and approvals that we have to get.

- 3. In addition to community concerns about an adequate water supply to accommodate growth and prepare for droughts, recent commercial and residential developments in Albemarle County have had to address inadequate sewer infrastructure. In general, what will the financial impact be on ratepayers for public water and sewer to complete the 50-year water supply plan and update and expand our aging sewer facilities?**

Well, when I went on the Board four years ago, joined the Board of Supervisors, the Rivanna Water Sewer Authority had zero in capital reserves and they'd not done either a flow analysis or an analysis of the age of our infrastructure in I don't know how long. Nobody could even remember when the last time this was done. Since then, now, we have done an age and capacity analysis on it and they're coming out with some new figures about what's happening to our system. Now, in addition to that, we've started accruing and continue to accrue— We have about \$4 million in capital improvements that have been set aside. This is the right way to do things. You have to be able to accrue the monies so that it's not a big hit. You have to understand that your infrastructure is going to age and go over. Some of our infrastructure is as much as 50 years old and what the plan is going to be is they're going to go back and they're going to have to replace and improve some of this infrastructure. Well, the way you do that is you put down new pipes. When we put down those new pipes, they're going to put down larger

ones that can handle a future of growth in the County, so these are the steps that they're going to take.

Now, financing it— It's going to be a difficult thing. It's obviously going to come through increased connection fees. As much as possible, they will be put off on new users and that's the way it should be, that new homes coming on base should— Even though they're paying for a lot of infrastructure that has just deteriorated over the last 50 years, but I would imagine that the rates are probably going to go up, too, and that's just part of the fact that we have to pay for not only the increased amount of the usage but also for allowing it to get so old and have to have such major upgrades to it.

- 4. In 2005, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved an update to the Rural Areas portion of the Comprehensive Plan. That revised plan calls for the County to aggressively pursue phasing of development in the rural areas, also known as time-based zoning. If elected, would you support a phasing policy? Why or why not?**

Well, phasing and clustering— When the details of the impact on individual property rights is explained, it was overwhelmingly rejected in a very public hearing that the Board of Supervisors had. The people that came out were the land owners and the people that had preserved the rural areas, some of them for centuries. They pointed out to us that they've had had farms in their family for over two and three hundreds years, going two and three hundreds years back and they've preserved that whole area. I agreed with them. I thought that this was imposing too much on their property rights. I agreed with that overwhelming support against this and so I voted against it and I would vote it against again unless I saw any indication that that had changed.

- 5. What is your specific strategy for protecting Albemarle's farms, fields, and forests, our rural countryside? What are your greatest concerns about new development in the rural countryside?**

Well, we need to continue with our current plans and channeling the growth into the development areas and encouraging land owners through education options and other actions that were taken to preserve their land. This would include using the conservation easements, agricultural and forestry districts, the ACE Program and other numerous plans that are offered at the state and through non-profit organizations. I think this is the best plan for us that we can do without stepping on people's property rights. In other words, it's a stick rather than a carrot approach. I'm sorry, it's the other way around. I said that backwards—a carrot rather than a stick.

Follow up: What are your greatest concerns about new development in the rural countryside?

That it will continue. That's probably the biggest concern. You know, it's interesting, though. If you look at the statistics and some of those recent statistics is that the growth in the non-designated growth areas is decreasing and it's declining. It's been on the decline for the last three years since I've been on the Board and that's what we want to happen so I'm going to say that these things are working.

6. How do you feel about an expansion of the County's designated growth areas, currently 5% of the County's land area, to support a transfer of development rights program or to support a developer's request to move land from the rural area to the growth area?

Well, I think that the transfer of development rights program is an intriguing idea and I'm very anxious to see more about it but I really am not going to make up my mind until I've had more analysis that would come from the staff and from a report which we haven't received yet.

Follow up: Can you address the second part of that – “to support a developer's request to move land”?

That's all tied in together. That's actually what it would be.

7. How would you define quality growth for our community?

I would describe that as directing growth into the designated growth areas without degrading the quality of our existing neighborhoods and I emphasize that second part because I'm very concerned as we start getting urbanizing that we do not do any harm to our existing neighborhoods, so this would include, in my opinion, not putting connector roads into existing neighborhoods that weren't designed for those connector roads and for those people; it would damage the quality of life in those communities.

8. What are your transportation priorities for the Route 29 corridor north of Charlottesville and how specifically will the community fund those initiatives?

Well, you're talking about the road or transportation priorities on Places29 and 29 North. I'd have to say that there are lot of priorities up there, but if I had to choose one, my biggest priority would be the Berkmar Drive Extended and I think that we should fund it through developer's contributions.

9. What are your views on working more closely with the City and the University of Virginia to jointly operate a regional transit system? What will you do to promote the use of public transportation, pedestrian trails, and bicycle paths?

Well, I'm one hundred percent behind the initiative that's going on now. We have a study going on to study how we put that organization together. I'm relying on the consultants to come back with a meaningful plan and I can feel that we can get behind that plan.

Follow up: And what about the second part—what would you do to promote the use of public transportation?

Well, that's what I'm saying. I'm sure that the— A byproduct of this would be how we promote it and how we can increase ridership, how we get people out of cars and on that, and I'm going to be relying on the experts in this, the developers that we've hired and are paying money to come up with a plan of action for that and then I think we should get behind it.

10. How do we ensure the community infrastructure—roads, sidewalks, fire/rescue facilities and libraries and so on—is in place to support new development in our designated growth areas? Will the County's new cash proffer expectations adequately address the community's needs? Will you support bond referendums to pay for capital budget priorities?

Well, we have a new proffer policy which was just recently put in place and in which I helped design. I was on the Fiscal Impact Committee and, of course, on the Board that designed that and we've just started to see this show up in codes of development in some of the new developments that are coming before the Board. I don't think it's a perfect solution and the reason I don't think it's a perfect solution is because there is no way that we as a local community can pick up the high costs of highway dollars and transportation dollars, so we're going to have to still rely on VDOT for a major portion of that money. Now, we will be able to get some from developers and [what they are] but we're still going to have to rely on VDOT for the major portion of it and that's such a cloudy issue now and has been for the last few years that it concerns me a little bit.

I do support bond issues, bond referendums and, in fact, I think that we ought to move forward with getting some projects identified and a bond referendum on the table because the increasing cost of construction is just— We never can accumulate it on a pay-as-you-go basis. We need to go ahead and spend dollars now wisely with lower interest rates and it'll save us in the long run in the spending.

11. In the last County budget, significant attention was paid by the Board of Supervisors to finding new sources of revenue and to lowering the real estate property tax rate. Some proposed new initiatives were scaled back or eliminated. No reductions were made to existing local government operational expenses for fiscal year 2008. What improvements would you make to our budget process, our allocation of tax dollars, and the funding of new strategic initiatives?

I think that our biggest problem is that our budget needs overhauling, our budget process needs to be overhauled. At my urging, we are now finally after eight years of me advocating this, we're going to start to take a real look at that and we're setting up joint meetings with the School Board and with the Board of Supervisors to discuss how we can better do a job of our budget. In essence, for years, our budget has been based on the appraised value of property and whatever it comes in at and those were good years because those property values were going way up. During those years, I was also instrumental in having the tax rate dropped and on two different occasions, from 76 cents down to 68 cents, and I think that was necessary to provide tax relief for our citizens. I think that's the balancing act that we have to do with our budget process. We have to make sure we fund the needs of this community but that we don't overwhelm the taxpayers so that they can't afford to live here.

12. What is your top priority for action by the Board of Supervisors if you are elected?

Oh, I think I just said it. I think my top priority is going to be the budget. I think it needs overhauling. I think we need to base our budget on needs, not on how much the value of property goes up and I think that we need to be very up front with the public as to what that plan is and we have to recognize that when revenues are high and they are greater than what we expect and need to meet the needs of the community, then we will have tax refunds. When they are low, we'll have to be honest and the taxes will go up.

13. The Board of Supervisors is currently reviewing the proposed Biscuit Run development. At 3,100 homes, this would be the largest single development in the County's history. Do you believe Biscuit Run will be quality growth in our community? Why or why not?

Well, I've been asked this question by a number of press people and as you know, we have a public hearing coming up on September 12th which is next week and I am just not going to comment on this particular project until that's come before us, until I've heard from the public because I think that detracts from the public input process.

14. In your opinion, is the state government adequately funding our transportation needs? If not, what steps will you take to ensure priority transportation projects are actually funded and completed in a reasonable timeframe?

Well, we've already taken steps to do this. Again, it was another initiative of mine and the Board agreed to do it. We started setting aside a million dollars a year more than we had not been setting aside for transportation projects. Another thing that we have done is we've recently consolidated all of our monies to cover— We decided on three priority projects to work on and those three are Meadowcreek Parkway, the Jarman's Gap Road, and Georgetown Road and instead of before we had all these little pockets of money where we were saving— We were accruing money for this road or for that road, we recognized we were never going— We were always getting behind because the amount of money we were receiving was less than the cost of the projects was the going up, so we have consolidated and taken some steps to do that. The additional money is out there for what we think the State is going to offer in terms of matched grants. In other words, they're going to be coming out and saying, okay, if you will put up this amount of money, we'll put up that amount of money.

Now, what we have to be careful about is that I do not want to take the responsibility of road building off from the State and I'm very fearful that they would love to have us do that but I don't think that's something that property taxes can support and so I want to be careful that we don't do too much and then the State says, oh, well, you're doing fine funding your own roads. We don't want that to happen.

15. What improvements, if any, do you think should be considered by the Board of Supervisors to create genuine public participation in growth and development decisions?

Well, actually, we've just completed a process with our Development Review Taskforce which I chaired and which is an initiative of mine and part of that process we've brought in many members of the community to be part of the committee and it was to make sure that we were doing it. Now, a number of initiatives came out of that and those have been passed along. They were approved by the Board in our presentation and they're in the process of being developed by our Community Development Department and by Lee Caitlin in the communications area, so we have put a number of steps in place to make sure that we do really properly get and enthusiastically get the public involved in this development process.

16. What lessons has the County learned from the Crozet Master Plan? What challenges does the County face with the Pantops and Places29 Master Plans and how will you address those challenges if elected?

Maybe the biggest thing that our staff has learned is how to add, but, of course, obviously the big dispute is over the numbers of— the population numbers that were out there. That was done before my time and I wasn't involved in it because it wasn't in my district and I wasn't on the Board at the time, so I don't have a real good handle about how that mistake came about but there is a mistake that was made there obviously. Now, whether or not that can be adjusted as we do the five-year reviews, I think that's the way we need to approach it because we're doing five-year reviews and we're coming up on that pretty soon. Then we look back and see if the growth is actually matching the maximum amount. The concern is that growth would happen at the maximum densities and there's not an indication that that growth is happening at maximum densities right now so the fear of the numbers may be a little bit more, but what we have to do now is monitor it. I mean, the mistake was made. It's out there. We have to just make sure we monitor it and make adjustments as we go.

Each Master Plan I've been involved with and I've been involved with the next two are unique. First of all, the Pantops Master Plan—I think one of the concerns there is that it was developed so much already and there was so much already in process that we're going to have little impact on it. We've just appointed the community group that's going to be working with that plan after it's approved. It has not finally been approved yet. Then it would come before the Board and I think it's— I think there's some opportunities there to get what the people want to do. Not what everybody wants to see in the plan, but it always has to be a give-and-take type situation.

Places 29—my biggest concern is the cost. It's such a huge huge undertaking and I think what's important is to get the landowners and the business community to build into it, to buy into it, the program. I think that they need to be in a position where they think this is a great idea and are willing to put the re-development and the new development investment dollars in it and that's the way we're going to get the infrastructure done on it. The other thing that concerns me about it is, as I said earlier, I'm very very concerned that we do not infringe on the integrity of some of our existing neighborhoods like Hollymead and Forest Lakes and all along that corridor, Woodbrook, all those things, so I think it's important that we maintain the integrity of those communities.

17. What do you see as the primary responsibilities of the Board of Supervisors?

I just saw that question a few minutes ago and it's been mulling around in my head because there's so many things. I mean, as a member of the Board of

Supervisors, you know, this is probably a 40-hour-a-week job. It really is. There's a lot involved in it, but we have a republic style of government. We're elected by districts to be on the Board of Supervisors and then we are to represent the community here so the highest objective that I think we have is to represent our community. Now, it's not just the district that we're in. Obviously, we have to provide constituent service to those people and that's something I've tried to do over the years is be receptive to the needs of my constituents when they call me and they have problems and there are many things out there that need to be done, but then we also have to be recognized that we have— That we're in charge of the public safety, the education and the general goodwill of this community and we have to hire good people and staff and make sure that we have an adequate staff and then provide the direction for them. We have to lead.

Well, thank you very much for participating in our interview.