

City Voter Guide

CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Vote on Tuesday November 3



Bob Fenwick
Independent
Challenger



Paul Long
Independent
Challenger



Dave Norris
Democrat
Incumbent



Kristin Szakos
Democrat
Challenger



Andrew Williams
Independent
Challenger



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This 2009 Charlottesville Voter Guide has been co-produced by Charlottesville Tomorrow and The Daily Progress. It is intended to help residents make an informed vote on issues related to growth and development in Charlottesville-Albemarle.

Charlottesville Tomorrow's website includes complete audio and written transcripts of every candidate forum and our interview with each candidate. The interviews were used in the compilation of the voter guide and each candidate was given an opportunity to review their verbatim responses before publishing.









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2009 CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE PROFILES

(Two Seats Available)

In some cases, the candidates' responses have been abbreviated in this Voter Guide. Their complete responses, as well as answers to additional questions, can be found on the Charlottesville Tomorrow website. Additional topics in our interviews included

-  The creation of a Regional Transit Authority
-  Transportation priorities
-  Population growth
-  Use of the 1908 Lower Ragged Mountain Dam in water supply plan
-  The future of the old Martha Jefferson Hospital site
-  The 1990 Three Party Agreement (transportation)
-  The 1982 revenue sharing agreement with Albemarle County
-  Primary responsibilities of City Council

Bob Fenwick (I) *Challenger*



Combat Engineer commander in Vietnam, moved to Charlottesville when Victoria attended UVA Law School, became involved in community activism with www.SaveMcIntire.com when it became apparent city government was not representative of the citizens or responsive to our concerns. Broadened the effort in joining the Coalition to Save McIntire Park when I discovered the same pattern was being followed by city government with both the Meadowcreek Parkway and the McIntire Golf Course. Decided to become politically active when no one else wanted to step up and lead the effort to stop the loss of McIntire Park.

Education: Bachelor of Science, Physics, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., undergraduate and graduate work in Civil Engineering, George Washington University School of Engineering, Washington, D.C., passed EIT exam.

Occupation: Self employed general construction contractor for 35 years, writer, web master, song writer, member of Save McIntire committee.

Age on Election Day: 64

Neighborhood or area of residence: Martha Jefferson

Family: Married to Victoria, 42 years, two sons, both educated in Charlottesville Public Schools, Burnley Moran, Walker, Buford and Charlottesville High School, older son, Austin, recently graduated from Alabama Law School (Roll Tide!) and coming to Charlottesville for US Army Judge Advocate General School, younger son graduate of James Madison University in Physics, 2LT Army Corps of Engineers, currently serving somewhere in Afghanistan.

Favorite Volunteer Activity: Helping individuals who find themselves in a tight spot (see www.HomeWorkwithBobFenwick.com – Mold House), helping with volunteer work with Hospice, community committees to Save McIntire Park.

Bob Fenwick's website & contact info:
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Paul Long (I) *Challenger*



I have had a variety of jobs, and a variety of interests throughout my life. I have always enjoyed traveling. I have supported myself in a number of ways. I have worked in a number of hospitals and healing care facilities, both in professional and semi-professional jobs. I have supported myself as a free-lance writer, worked in restaurants, done sales, worked in customer service for Fortune 500 companies. My parent's generation have been described as "The Greatest Generation" for having lived through the Depression and World War II. I graduated from high school in 1967, came of age in the 1960's; and I feel that my generation lived through the most divisive period of American History since the Civil War.

Education: I have attended a variety of colleges and did a great deal of college course work, but I do not hold an associate or bachelor degree. I successfully completed a variety of courses at Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia and attended a variety of training programs offered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania which led to my certification as a certified addiction counselor. I also completed a variety of courses by the Moody Bible Institute and successfully completed a number of courses at Piedmont Community College

Occupation: I am employed by the University of Virginia Medical Center as a Patient Transporter and as a Patient Companion/Sitter.

Age on Election Day: 60

Neighborhood or area of residence: Venable District

Family: Unmarried

Favorite Volunteer Activity: Working with recovering addicts and being involved in a local Baptist church

Paul Long's website & contact info:

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Charlottesville Tomorrow's website (www.cvilletomorrow.org/elections) features comprehensive coverage of the local elections including news, candidate forum transcripts, audio and video recordings of the candidate forums, and downloadable copies of this Voter Guide. Visit our website for an easy way to identify and contact your current elected officials at the local, state, and federal levels.



Dave Norris (D)
Incumbent

An experienced non-profit professional and community activist, Dave Norris was elected to City Council in May 2006 on a platform promoting affordable housing, environmental sustainability, youth opportunities and social justice. Dave has served as Mayor of Charlottesville since January 2008. During his tenure, Charlottesville has been named the "Greenest City in Virginia" for its population size and is receiving national recognition as a pioneer in the field of Clean Energy, while launching a major initiative to revitalize its low-income neighborhoods. Dave lives in Belmont with his children Eli, 12, and Chloe, 9, both of whom attend Charlottesville public schools.

Education: M.A., Government, College of William and Mary; B.A., Politics and History, Curry College

Occupation: Executive Director, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Virginia

Age on Election Day: 39

Neighborhood or area of residence: Belmont

Family: Son, Eli (12); Daughter, Chloe (9); 2 Cats (Hermione and Violet)

Favorite Volunteer Activity: Promoting youth mentoring

Dave Norris' website & contact info:

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cvilledave@hotmail.com
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Kristin Szakos (D)
Challenger

I'm a freelance writer and editor, activist, singer, animal lover, wife and mom. I have co-written two books on community organizing. I was Volunteer Coordinator and DNC Delegate for the area Obama campaign, and coordinate local Organizing for America activities. I have been a reporter for the Associated Press and the Appalachian News Express, editor of the Appalachian Reader, and grantwriter and administrator for various local nonprofits. I was president of the Burnley-Moran PTO, served on the city Special Education Advisory Committee and the board of the Charlottesville NAACP, and currently serve on the Trinity Episcopal Church Vestry.

Education: Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa – 1981, B.A. in Religious Studies. Northwestern University, Medill School of Journalism, Evanston, Ill. – M.S.J. in print journalism

Occupation: Self-employed – editor and writer

Age on Election Day: 50

Neighborhood or area of residence: Locust Grove

Family: Husband, Joe Szakos; Daughters, Anna, 19 (20 on September 28) and Maria, 18; Dog, Jacob; Cat, Lydi

Favorite Volunteer Activity: Singing – both in classical ensembles and at area nursing homes with the Hintonaires. (Second place: local coordinator for Organizing for America)

Kristin Szakos' website & contact info:

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Andrew Williams (I)
Challenger (Write-in)

I was born in Detroit MI August in 1986. I lived in California and North Carolina through Middle school till High School. Various experiences along with my 96 year old Godfather's guidance, have enabled me adopt a few ideas. Two of the most important in my opinion is service to others and recognizing the precious interval in time we are in. Though I will be only 23 at election time, I have been privileged to learn to keep an open ear to everyone. I recognize the importance of being able to deal with pressures of the current.

Education: I have some certificates and such but my goals currently are to finish at Averett University with a B.B.A and attain my MBA no later than 2012.

Occupation: My employer is State Farm. In a nutshell, I pay auto claims (Happily).

Age on Election Day: 23

Neighborhood or area of residence: Wertland St. near Venable

Family: My mother and father stay in Troy.

Favorite Volunteer Activity: My favorite volunteer activity is counseling friends and need being in the right place at the right time for anyone truly in need. As many calls as I get to listen to, you would think I was a certified psychologist.

Andrew William's website & contact info:

aristarswish@yahoo.com

Please describe your past experience that qualifies you to be on City Council?

Bob Fenwick (I)
Challenger

Well when I was young, I served as an officer in the United States Army Corps of Engineers for almost 7 years. I had a tour in Vietnam. In Vietnam, I commanded a combat engineer company of up to 180 men and that was for seven months. I was attached to an infantry brigade which was in an infantry division. I was honorably discharged and started a construction company soon thereafter as a general contractor in the state of Virginia.

For 33 years I have run the business and know very well the importance of budgeting, customer satisfaction, and the synergies between local and state governments and private enterprise.

I have been the Vice President of a cancer research corporation and the video about breast cancer, which my wife Victoria and I made, can be seen by following the links on VoteBob.net. For 6 years I produced, wrote, directed and hosted a television home improvement series along the lines of This Old House....Most recently besides continuing my construction activities I have been involved in activities to save McIntire Park.

Paul Long (I)
Challenger

In three weeks, if God allows me to live, I am going to be 60 years old and the reason I say that is because I have been privileged to be a resident of Charlottesville for the past 11 years. I love the City of Charlottesville, it's a great city. I am a native of the City of Philadelphia which is another great city just as historical as the City of Charlottesville.

[For] 14 years I served as an unofficial watchdog for Tinicum Township, which borders the City of Philadelphia....I was very active in preserving a bus route that was run by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority and it was the Tinicum Township's only access to the public transportation system in Philadelphia. And during those 14 years I had the opportunity to develop a knowledge of how urban mass transportation systems work and I received an award for community service from Tinicum Township from my service....

I also served briefly in the Tinicum Township board of health as secretary and I was a certified addiction counselor in the state of Pennsylvania and served in various counseling capacities and other capacities working with people who had substance abuse problems. I believe that, that gave me an insight into our [substance abuse problems] that exist certainly here in the greater Charlottesville area, but it also gave me the opportunity to develop a lot of skills and how to deal with various different people, different ethnic groups and how to be involved in conflict resolution and I think all of these skills would be valuable to a person serving on Charlottesville City Council.

Dave Norris (D)
Incumbent

I am an incumbent on City Council. I have been on City Council for three and a half years...and I do have a record that I am running to defend. I have learned a lot about a whole variety of issues, been fully immersed in any number of community concerns, challenges, opportunities--ranging from water supply, housing, education, environment, infrastructure, transportation, you name it. So I feel like I have had a good grounding. I feel like we made good progress in the last three years on City Council....

We have done all of these things while holding a line on the tax rate and while reducing taxes for moderate income families and we continue to be ranked as one of the best managed cities in the country. We have highest possible bond rating. So I feel like we are in good shape.

However, there's much work left to do to realize our vision of a truly great place to live for all of our residents. We still have too many of our families living in poverty. We have too many kids dropping out of school. We have too many people who can't afford housing. We have major issues to resolve on water supply and transportation etc. So I am running because there are a lot of issues yet to be resolved and addressed and I look forward to devoting my energy and experience and time over the next four years in trying to make even more progress.

Kristin Szakos (D)
Challenger

Well for my education, I went to Grinnell College in Iowa and worked for a couple of years and then went to Graduate School in Journalism at Northwestern in Chicago, and I think that that was probably the best combination of education I could have to be a City Councilor: a liberal arts education which prepared me for learning a lot about a variety of things, and then a journalism education which prepared me for really getting deeply into complicated issues and figuring out how to synthesize them in ways that regular people can understand them and that I can understand them....I certainly wasn't planning to go into politics, but when I started thinking about running for City Council I thought those are very good preparation.

Just civically in the community, I have raised my kids here. I have two daughters who are 18 and 19 years old. I have generally found myself getting involved in a lot of groups as they have grown up. I was the President of the Burnley-Moran PTO for a while and I was active in the PTO council. I was on the board of a local NAACP when it was still the Charlottesville NAACP. I am a second-generation NAACP member. I am a Vestry member, which is the leadership board of my church, Trinity Episcopal Church. I was also the volunteer coordinator for the Obama campaign for the last year and a half before last November, and continue to be one of the local coordinators for Organizing for America.

Andrew Williams (I)
Challenger (Write-in)

Well this past year I was on the Piedmont Virginia Community College Senate. It's a group that's comprised of student senators, individuals from the faculty and staff and some administration, and we carefully look at...the operations of the school, funds, and even issues such as do we want to change the sexual harassment policy.

I was involved in various student governments. The biggest thing this past year was the Virginia Community College Strategic Planning Task Force. I was one of two students state wide selected to contribute to their strategic planning process which will roll out later on this year and it will last for five years. All of those experiences have led me to be very enthusiastic about the idea of representation.

What is your top priority for action by City Council if you are elected?

Bob Fenwick (I) *Challenger*

Well I think my top priority would be to, in these conditions...to try to increase jobs in the city. Many people recognize me now because my work on Save McIntire. But it is my feeling that the people always should come first. There are people sitting on benches on the Downtown Mall who are willing to work but cannot find work. There are empty storefronts on the Downtown Mall. There are empty storefronts across the City. I focus on the mall because I live about a block and a half from the mall and I walk it every night.

So my top priority would be to increase the infrastructure maintenance. That is probably, I would guess, 30-40 jobs right there that the City should be doing. And you start with something small, you build it and you put people to work. And then immediately, once we got out of this recession, I would turn my attention back to saving McIntire Park.

Paul Long (I) *Challenger*

[My] top priority is bringing new industry, bringing new businesses into the City. I also believe in the creation of expanded public transportation system. That would be one of my top priorities and I also believe that another one of my top priorities would be the creation of affordable housing for people in the lower economic levels in the City.

Dave Norris (D) *Incumbent*

Specifically one project that I have been heavily involved in for years now, even well before I got on City Council, regards our public housing neighborhoods. We have seven public housing neighborhoods in Charlottesville that were built sort of on the old model of public housing which essentially has meant segregating people by class, by income, creating pockets of poverty in our community that have been neglected over the years and have become areas of high criminal activity, or higher criminal activity than the rest of the City. And areas of low educational attainment.

I think it's a huge, huge challenge to re-envision public housing in a city like Charlottesville and to think about how do we change the dynamics of poverty in our community and basically take these seven neighborhoods and - working very closely with the residents of these neighborhoods, because it can't be seen as something that's been done to them, they have to be fully engaged in this...changing the dynamics from isolated pockets of poverty to mixed income neighborhoods, maybe even mixed use neighborhoods....

This isn't going to happen overnight, this is going to be a period of years, but we've got to start and we've got to start somewhere and it's also frankly our best opportunity in the City for expanding our supply of affordable housing. It's 45 acres that we own, the public owns....

There is so much good that can come out of this, but we have a history in this community, Vinegar Hill and other efforts, that have created lot of fear and suspicion on the part of low income families rightfully so, and African American families rightfully so, that we are going to go in there and knock down the neighborhood, put something different in its place, displace the people and never let them come back. And that's not what we want to see happening in that process.

Kristin Szakos (D) *Challenger*

One is civic engagement. As I was working with the Obama campaign one of the things that excited me about that candidate and about the campaign was the commitment to drawing people in not just into getting someone elected, but into a long-term participation in the public process, in caring about public issues, in getting involved in public issues, in pushing for the change that people said that they wanted....

I think when we have done important things in this country, it was when people got involved in civic life. And over the past quarter century we have gotten increasingly uninvolved.

People have gotten very cynical, people have gotten very isolated from each other....And that was why I decided to run for City Council, is that I want to bring that energy to the city level. I want people to realize that they can have a huge impact, each person, on what happens in the city....

The flipside of this very same thing is that we have a community in which about probably 80%-85% of us, and I include myself in this, have a wonderful place to live. It's a terrific city....And yet we have far too large [a part] of our community that isn't able to access the wonderful things that we have in this community....

We have amazing pockets of poverty for such an affluent community. And it's persistent poverty. It's generational poverty. And I think that what I want to see us do in this community - I don't know if you have heard of the project in Harlem, Children Zone, where they - it was really one person kind of had this idea and it has grown incredibly. Geoffrey Canada, where they looked at the whole community and they said, you know our kids are not making it, our kids aren't graduating from high school, they are not going to college, what can we do about this? And they set their entire community to figuring out how to make sure that their kids made it - really their goal was to have their children graduate from high school, or from college at the same rate as other kids....

And so the community needs to realize the impact that we have on our kids. And I don't think that we are a Harlem, and I don't think that we need to do what Harlem did, but I think that what we need to do is take that same process and say, what do we need to do to make sure that all of our kids have a chance to make it? And then, you know, figure out how we can come together as a community to make that happen.

Andrew Williams (I) *Challenger (Write-in)*

Action. Balanced representation. In this process I have learned many things and spoken with a lot of people and I talk about balanced representation, but I think that balanced representation in Charlottesville will be difficult without a ward system. I would like to see discussions regarding a ward system and at-large election for Charlottesville Mayor.

What is your vision for McIntire Park?

Bob Fenwick (I) *Challenger*

My vision for McIntire Park is exactly what Paul Goodloe McIntire insisted on when he made the generous contributions that resulted in McIntire Park. The land was given with conditions and the City accepted the conditions along with the land. It was given “in perpetuity, to the citizens of Charlottesville as a park and a playground.” The City at that time didn’t say they would accept the land but not the conditions.

Mr. McIntire was well aware of congestion and he had a remarkable appreciation for open space. His business world was the concrete canyons of Chicago and New York. Commercial development in the western part of McIntire Park with the YMCA, which I support and have done a lot of work to try and find a better location for, and in the eastern part with the Meadowcreek Parkway and now in the central part with the proposed botanical gardens with additional buildings and parking and imported non-native plants, was certainly not what he had envisioned. If he had envisioned such he would have said it, but his words were very simple and straightforward: “to be used as a park and a playground.” It is now free and open and the entire community enjoys it and has enjoyed it for generations. I would work hard to keep it that way.

Paul Long (I) *Challenger*

I think McIntire Park should be maintained. I don’t believe in the [Meadowcreek Parkway] being built there. I don’t think the YMCA or even the botanical garden should be built there. Charlottesville is growing and I have talked to people who have lived in Charlottesville all their life and some of them are very disappointed how it’s grown, it’s not like it was 30 or 40 years ago. I think it’s very important that in the area that’s growing more urban, we should preserve open park space and it shouldn’t be touched at all.

Dave Norris (D) *Incumbent*

Well, I think the issue with McIntire Park for me always boils down to the fact that it’s our City’s largest park and right now the status quo for McIntire Park is one in which only a very small number of local citizens, and even smaller number of City residents, use McIntire Park on any kind of regular basis. And right now the way it is today, the eastern half on the park is reserved almost exclusively for golfers and we are about to put a major road in there that’s going to cater primarily to County interests. On the western side of the park, it’s primarily used by [soft ball teams] and little leaguers, most of whom are County residents.

So we have the City’s largest park whose primary users now and in the near future are County residents and the goal for me should be - and I think the goal for the community should be - to figure out how do we open up that park to more of our residents, particularly more of our City residents, and create some amenities in that park that are going to reinforce what parks are for.

Which in my mind are promoting recreation, promoting community building, promoting youth enrichment, promoting appreciation of nature. So that’s the metric by which I am going to judge any proposal for McIntire Park or any of our parks. Is it going to advance those kinds of goals? I certainly don’t think a large new road that’s going to chew up two dozen acres of that park accomplishes those goals.

There are other projects that have been proposed that are in the pipeline for the park, that I do think are going to accomplish those goals. You look at the YMCA, which I am pretty excited about, it will mean the loss of one acre, the building has a one acre footprint, but it’s a one acre piece of land right now that’s used for picnic shelter. This isn’t sort of virgin green space that we are chewing up and those picnic shelters will be relocated elsewhere in the park. And that facility is going to be an invaluable resource for the kids who attend Charlottesville High School next door of the park and provide positive opportunities....

I am very interested on the other side of park, if and when the Meadowcreek Parkway is built, what happens to the rest of the park then? And we are going to be kicking off a master planning process hopefully in the next six to twelve months to engage the community in a discussion about what happens then with the eastern half of the park.

There is a proposal to maintain a golf presence there. There is a proposal to incorporate a botanical garden there.

I know there is a lot of interest in maintaining the wading pool there. There is clearly a strong interest in maintaining the Dogwood Memorial there. It’s the first Vietnam veterans memorial in the country. So we have lot of interest we need to balance and we have a good process in place for bringing all those voices to the table.

Kristin Szakos (D) *Challenger*

My vision for McIntire Park is people using it. I would love to see - well one of the things I think about an urban park is that it offers opportunities for kids who don’t have big yards, kids who may not have a whole lot of green space in their lives to have open space, to be able to run and play and be outside and see trees and grass and flowers and maybe even get poison ivy, God forbid!

And I think that at this point our park in some ways does that very well. We have baseball that’s there, it’s I think probably a majority of County residents. But they need parks too. I have no problem with that. And we have the golf course which is relatively well used; a lot of people play golf there. But there are no bus lines to McIntire Park and so that limits who can go there. It’s in walking distance from the high school, but at this point there isn’t much there for high school-age kids.

I am really excited about the idea of having the YMCA there. I think that’s going to bring people into the park in a way that exposes kids to that sort of space. It takes up very little of it proportionately and I think that the payback is great. And so I am delighted about that.

There has been some talk about the botanical gardens....I think it’s an intriguing idea. I am not sure that I want a whole lot of public funds tied up into sustaining it long term. I think if it were privately funded I would feel a lot better about it....

Andrew Williams (I) *Challenger (Write-in)*

I want to see McIntire Park stay the way that it is, I really do. Really I don’t want to see any changes, but based on the circumstances looking at the future, we do have to consider how we are going to alleviate the stresses in the City even with Albemarle County because of the relationship that we have with them. Change is difficult, but if we are going to be proactive or at least try to be proactive, we do have to move forward with that existing plans.

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?

Bob Fenwick (I)
Challenger

At this point, I do not support the plan. It's a good concept but I do not support it because damming has become the default position in this situation. We have neglected, as I've said many times, the infrastructure maintenance and in this question, that is dredging. Much of the discussion which prompts the dam, circles around silting or sediment in the Rivanna Reservoir. What we should do first, particularly in these economic times, is to dredge the Rivanna Reservoir. It is very basic, it is something that should be done. It is a basic, mechanical operation that is done every day in this country. So my position at this time would be to dredge first. That will increase the capacity. As the demand for water goes down, we will see how that shakes out. In a number of years, not only when the economy improves and we're not operating with negative budgets, but we'll have a lot more information to then make a really good decision on whether we need a new dam.

Paul Long (I)
Challenger

Okay I am going to hedge on this, I hope that I am not sounding like a politician, I don't know what the specifics of the water supply plan are. But I am going to repeat what I said before, if I do read over and think of something positive that I should support, the residents of the Charlottesville and Albemarle County want a good, clean water supply then no matter what plan is agreed upon, we have to be going to pay for it. It's not going to come at no cost, but I haven't read the specifics and I need to do that.

Dave Norris (D)
Incumbent

I have said many times I support the general framework of this plan, meaning we need to improve our infrastructure, our water supply infrastructure. We want to keep within our watershed. I don't agree with the idea that we should go back to exploring piping in water from the James River. I also don't agree with the idea that we should go back and look at building a massive new reservoir somewhere else when we have got two reservoirs right now that can be upgraded and should be upgraded rather than building another reservoir, that's going to be very costly and have a lot of environmental impact.

So the general framework of the plan now, I do support which basically envisions keeping within our watershed, linking the two reservoirs. We have got the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir which is a great collection tank for water, has a huge watershed hundreds of square miles, but it's a terrible holding tank for water - silts in, and there is lot of sedimentation there. Meanwhile you have got the Ragged Mountain Reservoir which is a terrible collection tank for water and has a very small watershed, there is very little in terms of streams etc that drain into that reservoir, but it's a wonderful holding tank for water because it doesn't have the siltation or sedimentation....

I think the framework is good, but the particulars need to be revisited, and I am not convinced we need to max out that framework. And if we can show that we can reliably use less water than the current plan envisions, if we can show that there is a way to increase the capacity at South Fork Rivanna Reservoir, cheaper than the current plan envisions by dredging, and perhaps if we can get some flexibility from the state on stream flow requirements, perhaps there is a way to reduce the size of the Dam at Ragged Mountain and perhaps even avoid building a new [dam] and simply enlarge and repair the existing dam, which will save the ratepayers and taxpayers tremendous amount of money and will have much smaller environmental impact than the plan currently envisions.

Kristin Szakos (D)
Challenger

I support most of the plan, and on some of the plan I am still - still up in the air. I do support [retiring] the pipeline that comes down from Sugar Hollow....It would need such repairs and such a long pipeline for relatively little water at great ecological cost....So that part of the plan I think is great.

I think that the idea of having our primary water resource at Ragged Mountain is absolutely critical. It's a natural place for us to have that. It makes sense. It's not great. I am not happy about it. I wish we didn't have to cut down trees. I wish we didn't have to store water. I wish that we could just catch it from the sky and purify it and that would be lovely....

[I]t's mostly the County that needs this water supply, I think more than the City does. And so one concern I have about the water plan, it's the funding of it, and who pays for that, who pays for that increased capacity.

I think one reason to have increased capacity is that we want to be able to draw light industry; we want to be able to draw things that - even as we are conserving individually water use, we want to be able to have that access in the City for industry. So we may grow some in our need for water. But I just want to make sure that at some point it's not the City who is bearing the brunt of this project, both in the property at Ragged Mountain Reservoir, which is City property, and then ratepayers having to pay for the increase.

Andrew Williams (I)
Challenger (Write-in)

I do support taking action, but as far as a new dam, I think that's a last resort. I think it's a last resort and we should definitely consider, ultimately just moving forward with our existing resources and making better our existing resources, and not spending a lot of money unless it was absolutely necessary which isn't too far in the horizon, but I would see a new dam only as a last resort because of the cost.

What are your priorities for economic development and workforce development in Charlottesville?

Bob Fenwick (I) *Challenger*

Well, “economic development” and “workforce development” are terms that planners and politicians use. Everyday people simply say “jobs.” There is not a job in this area that someone can’t learn to do either through school, mentoring or on the job training. When I hired men and women in my construction contracting business it wasn’t so much what they knew that mattered. It was their attitude, their willingness to work and learn while they worked, and showing up when they were supposed to that mattered most.

“Economic development” and “workforce development” focus on jobs and jobs depend on a pro-business attitude from city government. I believe a level playing field for all employers, no matter how many employees they have, even if the boss is the only employee in the business, is the best tonic for Charlottesville. If a large employer came into the city the planners and politicians would fall all over themselves to provide bonds, tax breaks, incentives, these kinds of things. If the City really had a pro-business attitude it would do the same for the small businesses....

Paul Long (I) *Challenger*

I would like to see the City of Charlottesville reinvent itself. Charlottesville is a great city and I have great respect for the University of Virginia...but I think the City of Charlottesville should be more than just the University of the Virginia. I see the whole warehouse district, I guess that’s south of the Downtown Mall—I would like to see the City of Charlottesville actively encourage businesses to move in the City and I am talking about fortune 500 companies moving into the City.

We have a great University that’s training brilliant young minds.... [But] if they are interested in say, law or if they are interested in fashion or design or any other numbers of discipline—once they obtain that education, they can’t come back to Charlottesville because those kinds of jobs don’t exist in this City.

I think that the City of Charlottesville should actively encourage different types of businesses to move in or expand the tax base so that we don’t have to go to the General Assembly begging for permission to raise the sales tax. That also will give the young people in the Charlottesville surrounding opportunities if they have the ambition, they have the motivation to continue their education that once they received their degrees or their training and they want to stay in the Charlottesville area. They will have a fair chance of getting a job in their field and be able to stay in the area.

Dave Norris (D) *Incumbent*

In terms of economic development, we want to continue to focus on development of our commercial corridors. Downtown Mall—we have invested about six million dollars at the request of our Downtown business community. About six million dollars in renovations to the Mall, both with a new brick surface but also new lighting and there’s a new wi-fi system down there, there’s new benches, there’s new granite banding, there’s some new trees, it is a total overhaul of the Downtown Mall infrastructure. That was a major economic investment that’s going to pay off we feel in over many years to come.

We want to see West Main Street—the pace of development there pick up because there’s still a lot of empty store fronts on West Main Street. There’s still too many empty store fronts Downtown. We want to see some of our other commercial [areas]—Cherry Avenue, Preston Avenue. Again, that’s in terms of economic development, that’s a priority for me.

I was in a meeting last week or two weeks ago in DC where there was a lot of conversation about green jobs and about how we retool our manufacturing sector in this country to take advantage of some of these new investments that are coming down the pike in terms of clean energy, renewable energy, energy efficiency etc....We have been hemorrhaging manufacturing drops by the thousands in this region in the last decade and are there any opportunities to bring some green jobs, remanufacturing kind of jobs here at Charlottesville, take advantage of this new green energy economy. That’s a major part of our economic development.

In terms of workforce development it’s been an area of interest for the City primarily because, again we have too many of our families living in poverty or just above the poverty line. Depending on how you read the statistics, it’s anywhere from 10% to 15% to 20%, 25% of our citizens living below the poverty line. We know there’s many children in our schools that are living below the poverty line. The best avenue out of poverty is a good job and the best way for people to get jobs is: a) make sure they stay in school and graduate from school and have a good educational background; but b) make sure they have access to training workforce development kind of opportunities to be able to climb the ladder

and not get stuck in low-wage dead-end jobs.

We want living wage career ladder jobs, so we want to work closely with our business community. Charlottesville was recently named one of the best cities in the country to grow a business and we feel like we have got more work to do to attract the kind of jobs that are going to provide those living wage career ladder opportunities.

Kristin Szakos (D) *Challenger*

Green jobs - as part of the federal and state initiatives for economic development through green technology and manufacturing. I want to make sure that as we work to get jobs in the community, that they are jobs that provide a living wage. I think tourism is wonderful and I love living in a place that people want to come and visit. But tourism itself often generates only jobs that are relatively low wage....

So I would like to see light industry, I would like to see a concentration of locally owned businesses. I am not really for pulling in things like chain stores or, you know, franchises [that are] are locally owned...I think that we really need to sustain our local businesses. And I think that that includes helping local businesses that exist, not just new ones, but actually figuring out ways that we can make this a good place to do business, for local businesses. Because a dollar spent in the locally owned business stays in the community a lot longer than a dollar spent on a national chain or an international chain.

So I also think that, around a lot of universities there are spin-off industries around some of intellectual work that goes at the university [in] research and development. And there is not as much of that here as I would like to see. There are ways that the University can help build that. There are ways that the City can help do that, and the County. And I would like to see us work harder to try to do that, because we have a great resource in the university and a lot of great minds thinking great thoughts and I would like to kind of incorporate that into our economy....

Andrew Williams (I) *Challenger (Write-in)*

Economic development -- I would like to see it balanced across the board, meaning across all 8 precincts. Workforce development, making sure that existing infrastructures, existing initiatives oriented around workforce development, whether it be businesses, whether it be incentives for businesses, [we] should carefully monitor all those elements around workforce development and figure out how to contribute to ultimately a stronger system, a stronger infrastructure. The more people work, the more jobs [that are] available the more money is going to be spent in the local economy.

If you could focus on one area for improved partnership with Albemarle County during the next two years what area would that be?

Bob Fenwick (I)
Challenger

I think I'd say having the County accept us as we are. It's not the people of our community that cause a problem. I wouldn't be able to tell one group from another in any setting. It's the political leaders. Right now the County leaders are pretty much having their way with the City leaders. I would focus on ensuring that Albemarle County political leaders realize that Charlottesville and Albemarle are two different communities. Not just realize it, but act on it.

They have land to develop, we don't. They have much more open space than we do. Our politics are different from theirs. I say respect our differences. Don't try and bulldoze us on important decisions like the Meadowcreek Parkway and the dredging and damming issue and force taxpayers to commit to hundreds of millions of dollars in spending that might not be needed. It certainly is not needed at present. The County should realize that what's good for them, which is the Meadowcreek Parkway, is not necessarily good for us. To the County leaders and some of the City Council members, McIntire Park is simply vacant land. To the citizens of both communities, McIntire Park is the hub of our social community and has been for generations. And I would help to encourage the County to realize that.

Paul Long (I)
Challenger

That would be affordable housing. I was amazed, when I decided to run for City Council...I was amazed at the amount of people who approached me and to express their opinion about the anger and the frustration they have about the lack of affordable housing....

I think there are a lot of people who are working in these kinds of jobs that I am talking about, whether they are at the various hotels, whether they are service jobs at the UVA Medical Center, wherever. All things being likely, they are not going to be able to afford a \$200,000 house or condo. They are not going to be able to afford the \$1,500 or \$2,000 a month rent. And these people are hard working people, they are not asking for a hand out. They just want an affordable house to buy or an affordable apartment to rent....

I am of the age bracket that I remember my father's generation, they had the GI Bill of Rights that they could approach, they had the Federal Housing Authority and that explained a lot of the suburban development that occurred in the 50s. Some of what I am saying is above the purview of City Council, but there should be mechanisms that everybody that's working in any capacity should have the funding and the access to mortgages where they can buy a house.

Dave Norris (D)
Incumbent

You know there are so many areas where the County and the City have a lot to gain from working closely together and it's hard to name just one, but one that we have already started working on which I think is going to bear a tremendous amount of fruit in both the City and the County in the next two years is with energy. The clean energy initiatives that we are both working on where we are about to enter into a partnership called LEAP (Local Energy Alliance Program). We have gotten some startup funding through a major grant from the [Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance] (SEEA) and it was a very competitive grant....

And this is an initiative that will allow the City and the County to work closely together to help our citizens, our homeowners, our business owners to save on average... The goal is to help 30% to 50% of our property owners save between 20% and 40% of energy use. Reduce their energy use by 20% to 40% in the coming years and so it's a very ambitious goal.

That's very deep market penetration and would result in tremendous cost savings for our citizens, for our homeowners, for our business owners, it will result in lower carbon emissions. It's a win-win all the way around and it's going to require us to work closely with the County to get that moving and look forward to the results that it will accomplish.

And it will create jobs. That's the other important thing, the business community is behind it, there's a lot of home builders, people who do home renovations, people that do energy audits, people that do HVAC work etc. Renewable energy, solar panels, etc, who are happy to see us moving in this direction because it means jobs, it means new business for them and it's going to help us recycle more dollars in our community.

Kristin Szakos (D)
Challenger

I think long-term planning is something that we have done, and it's something that...we need to work on closely and continue to improve the way that we bring people in. I think there is a lot of distrust or miscommunication. And I think sometimes it's - one causes the other in both directions, between the City and the County, not so much between the City and County governments, although occasionally there too, but between the people in the City who think, oh the County government doesn't care what happens to us, or the people in the County thinking, oh the City government doesn't care what happens to us. We really are a community together and I think that I would really like to see us work together to try to present a united front in some of these things.

That was my one. But let me just add three more. I think economic development is huge. And I think at that at the federal level there are going to be tax incentives in various things that will help with economic development around green energy, around green manufacturing....I think that we need more work for people who either don't go to college or into trades....[W]e have the University and we have lots of professions here, but we also need to make sure that we have adequate employment for people who come through our high school and don't go to college.

I would also like to see us working together on environmental protection and conservation. And there is one other thing I would like to see the County and the City work with cities and counties throughout the Commonwealth. There is a thing called the Dillon Rule, which is a state law that says that you can't - this is kind of an oversimplification of it, but that you can't really do anything new under the sun. If you want to do something that's not provided for in the Constitution you have to go and get permission from the entire General Assembly. So some of environmental things we tried to do recently in the City, we have had to get permission from the General Assembly, which wastes their time, wastes our time, it slows down progress....So I would love to see us cooperate and work together to try to get that changed. And I think if we do that across the state then we can get a change, because almost every locality government hates it.

Andrew Williams (I)
Challenger (Write-in)

Definitely the transit. Congestion between Albemarle County and Charlottesville is an issue now, but it would be a bigger issue if there's not a joint decision that would contribute to both Charlottesville's and Albemarle's residents. Ultimately, yes, we are separate entities, and there has to be a compromise, but most importantly a decision made to move forward with initiatives that [are] oriented around alleviating the stress.

Do we have appropriate resources in City government to achieve the objectives in the City's strategic plan? In what way, if any, do we need to make changes? What impact will your recommendations have on staffing and the annual budget?

Bob Fenwick (I)
Challenger

Well I think we do have appropriate resources. The City has plenty of money....If the City Council wants to do something, they will find the money to do it. Now on the flip side of that, on the east end of the Downtown Mall is a building sitting empty. That's the transit building. That's been sitting empty three of four years. So there are decisions City Council makes... it's almost like they think our money is Monopoly money and that's how they spend it.

They want to raise taxes. I say this is unnecessary. I say spend the tax money as if it's coming out of your own pocket. And that might make them hesitate just a bit. So no additional taxes. We have plenty of money. We just have to apply it in the right places.

One way you can do this is to make sure the department heads are well aware that the City wants to save money, and for a department head that came in under budget, that would be included in his personnel file and it would make a difference when somebody came up for a raise or promotion, and it would just start a new way of thinking about spending money in the City.

As far as staff, this is not the time to be laying people off or firing people. So I would really not go for that. And I'd like to see the annual budget stay like it is. I'd like to see it lower, but that may not be possible given the circumstances. I would like to see the annual budget stay where it is.

Paul Long (I)
Challenger

I don't believe that the City of Charlottesville has the appropriate resources to achieve the objectives and the reason for that is because simply the whole issue about the City of Charlottesville not being able to raise the City sales tax to meet local objectives. This is a problem not only the state of Virginia imposes on this City, many other states are imposing this on their cities....

If the local residents are willing to pay the tab, and pay increased taxes, by the vote of their City Council, they should be allowed to do that, and of course if the residents disagree they can always vote the Councilmen out in the next election. But I think the City Council should have much more authority in raising taxes, different kinds of taxes and different mixes. Now I am not a lawyer and I don't know whether the City Council has the authority to do it. I do not know whether they would be interested in doing it or not, but I think the City Council should have the authority to impose to wage tax on the City residents.

Dave Norris (D)
Incumbent

I do believe we have appropriate resources. You know we have a pretty ambitious vision for the City. The City Council has come up with a vision statement that I am very proud of, but it's not an overnight vision. This isn't where we expect to be in 2010, this is a 20-25 year vision for our community. We feel like we are making good progress in working towards that vision and implementing our strategic plan.

The City is a pretty fiscally conservative municipality, and this is one of the reasons why we have been able to maintain the highest possible bond rating. The analysts who look at municipal finances, who look at municipal budgeting, look at municipal financial management, have looked at Charlottesville and given us their seal of approval because we have taken a pretty responsible approach when it comes to managing our taxpayer dollars....I think generally speaking there's not a lot of fraud, waste, and abuse in our City budget, we are pretty tight with the money.

There are very few cities, very few communities in Virginia, in this economy and with revenues declining that have not chosen to either increase their property tax rate or not chosen to slash basic services. We are one of the few that has been able to avoid increasing taxes, increasing the property tax rate, and avoid slashing basic services. It meant some difficult decisions. For instance this year we were not able to give our City employees a raise, that's hard because we know times are tight, but I think a lot of people felt like well at least they have a job and they have good benefits. So for the short term they can get by without a raise....

I am very pleased with the fact that we have been able to increase our tax relief program even in spite of all the new

investments that we have been making, in spite of the fact that we have held the line on the tax rate, we have actually increased tax relief for low and moderate income homeowners. There are many families in Charlottesville today who are paying less in property taxes, not just a lower rate but actually paying less in taxes, now than they were three years ago because of our tax relief program. We have only one or two localities in the state that have a program like that and I am very proud of that fact.

So I think whenever we look at new initiatives for the City, for staffing etc, the first question should always how do we do it within our existing resources. There are some challenges like transportation...where we don't want to have to take money away from our schools or take money away from some of our other critical community services in order to do something that state has committed to do over the years.

Kristin Szakos (D)
Challenger

We have appropriate resources in city government to achieve the objectives of the strategic plan, but not enough. I think you know it's always that way. And I think that that's how you can kind of tell you are in a good position is if you have the basics, you have just enough but you would really like more. And I think that's where we are.

I think that this is certainly about as hard a time as we are going to have. I think for the next few years it's going to be really tight and I think we are going to have to figure out ways that don't involve raising the budget significantly, unless we try to find ways that lower it to compensate for those. I think there are a lot of things we can do that can be either revenue neutral or of such impact that it's worth an expenditure. But I think we need to be very careful about that....

I don't want to overhaul the budget my first year on City Council. I think I will spend my first year really learning a lot....I don't really have an answer yet. But I think that it's something that I want to be very careful about, and yet I don't want to be so afraid of spending money that when we have an opportunity to make a huge impact that we just don't spend the money. I think sometimes we can be penny wise and pound foolish and when we have a chance to do something important we need to do it.

Andrew Williams (I)
Challenger (Write-in)

As far as the City meeting their strategic plan, it's difficult to say, due to the fact that we had this economic crisis nationwide. I do believe that we can still meet those goals if we carefully monitor how we are spending funds and reallocating funds making sure that we are getting the highest investment, the highest return for our investment, it will be challenging.

And as far as staffing and the annual budget, I wouldn't want to take away anything from the staff and their families and clearly it's necessary because they wouldn't be working and ultimately contributing to Charlottesville in my mind, but ultimately how we spend our funds is very important to look at and to monitor performance, to see if we need to make changes.

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County Voter Guide

CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

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