



2009 Albemarle County Board of Supervisors Candidate Interview September 2009

Candidate: Dennis Rooker (I)

On November 3, 2009, voters in the Jack Jouett Magisterial District go to the polls to elect their representative on the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors. This transcript is Brian Wheeler's September 8, 2009 interview with Dennis Rooker (I). Rooker is seeking re-election and is unopposed.

*The audio of this interview is available online in the
Charlottesville Tomorrow News Center*

http://cvilletomorrow.typepad.com/charlottesville_tomorrow_/2009/09/rooker.html

*Complete election coverage is available on the Charlottesville Tomorrow website
<http://www.cvilletomorrow.org/elections>*

INTERVIEW

Mr. Rooker, 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. Are you ready to start?

Yes I am.

1. Please describe your past experience that qualifies you to be on the Board of Supervisors?

Well, I have lived in Albemarle County for 39 years now and I think I have obtained an extensive knowledge about the County over those years. I am a

graduate of the University of Virginia, undergraduate and Law Schools. I have owned and operated a number of businesses over the past 25 years in legal media, venture capital and real estate areas. I have been involved in employing over 100 people in those businesses over the years.

I am presently a member of the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors. I have served for seven years and previously served as chair for two years. I served on the Planning Commission for the County for four years, including a term as chair. I have been on the Metropolitan Planning Organization which is the area's Transportation Planning Board for the past seven years. Prior to that I served on the Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Committee for about 12 years. I am presently on the Planning and Coordination Council. I believe I have been on that body for seven years also and that was a joint City, County and University of Virginia planning body that meets periodically. I serve on the Albemarle County Audit Committee. I serve on the Transfer Development Rights Committee which explored the concept of TDRs being used in our community. I served on the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir Stewardship Task Force to explore how to better protect the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir and looked into the concept of dredging and how that might be a part of maintaining the reservoir. I have served on the original Albemarle County Fiscal Impact Committee and was on that body for 10 years in 1995 until 2005.

I served on the Meadowcreek Parkway Design Advisory Committee, which was a joint City County Committee, which established design parameters for the Meadowcreek Parkway. I served on the Meadowcreek Parkway County Staff Committee, which was the County Committee which was comprised of staff people and a Planning Commissioner and they had to look at how the County's concept of Meadowcreek Parkway fit in with the overall design and to make certain that the design parameters that were established by the Design Advisory Committee were implemented in the County, and I helped found and served on the Transportation Funding Committee, which was a Joint City-County Committee that was established at the request of the MPO to explore better ways to fund transportation in our community, and I was on the original Charlottesville-Albemarle Transportation Coalition. I think that body of work over the years gives me the background and experience to be a good Board member and continue to serve the community hopefully.

2. Do you support the formation of a Regional Transit Authority with the City of Charlottesville? What are your regional transportation priorities and how do you recommend we fund them in the absence of new state funding and without the ability to raise a local sales tax?

The answer to the first question is yes. I have been serving on the MPO, was a supporter of the Regional Transit Authority. The MPO unanimously voted to move forward with that concept. The County Board also voted unanimously

to support the formation of an RTA. I think that for a long period of time the transit services in the community have been provided by the City, and the County has been a customer of the City in buying transit routes in the County and I think both the City and the County believe that it's in the long term interest of providing more effective transit in the community to jointly operate a transit system. I am also presently serving on the RTA implementation committee which was appointed by the MPO to look into all the aspects and administrative factors that will need to be taken care of in order to form an RTA.

The next part of your question concerning regional transportation priorities... As I mentioned earlier, I have served on the MPO for the past seven years and I was previously on the MPO Technical Committee for 12 years. And I think one of the things that I support is enhanced transit and the RTA is hopefully a way that we can deliver enhanced transit to our community over time. I support an improved system of trails, bike lanes and pedestrians improvements including the current projects on Georgetown Road and Jarman's Gap Road. I support the County policy to require sidewalks and bicycle facilities on all new roads and neighborhoods in the area. In the Route 29 area I support the current priorities of adding a lane to Route 29 South from Hydraulic Road to the 250 Bypass with an additional ramp at Best Buy in an extended taper lane. I support the completion of the Hillsdale Connector, which I think will take, according to traffic studies about 8,000-10,000 vehicles a day off of Route 29 in its most congested section while at the same time providing a very vibrant economic corridor for the city. I support the widening of Route 29 between Polo Grounds Road and Hollymead to eliminate what's been described as the "hourglass" and improve the safety and capacity of Route 29 in that area. I support the completion of additional parallel roads in the area for the local traffic, which is the majority of traffic in the Route 29 corridor. And I also support improved passenger rail service in the area and I voted to endorse the expanded rail service in Lynchburg to Washington via Charlottesville.

Next part of the question, how do I recommend that we fund transportation in the area in the absence of new state and federal funding. Let me say first that the entire state is experiencing a crisis in transportation funding that will have a severe impact on our quality of life if it's not addressed soon. Traditionally, the state has funded almost all local transportation projects with federal assistance, principally from gas tax and sales tax revenues and federal allocations. A combination of construction and maintenance inflation and stagnant revenues have drastically reduced state funding for new and ongoing construction projects. The County's secondary road allocations have fallen from \$5 million six years ago to approximately \$1.6 million this year and we are expecting another significant cut to be announced soon. Maintenance funds for this area were reduced from \$13 million to \$7 million dollars this year. Problems in transportation funding appear to be part of a continued

trend by the state to relegate responsibilities to localities without providing localities with revenue sources to meet those responsibilities. So in answer to your first question, the answer is that localities can't solve the transportation funding problems. It is a state and federal obligation.

Some of the things we have done and I think we should continue to do include regularly meeting with our state legislators to emphasize the importance of transportation funding. We have submitted written requests to the legislature each year to adequately fund transportation. We have participated in state committees on transportation, and we recently tried to get legislation enacted which would have enabled our area to hold a referendum to allow voters to determine if they wanted to increase the sales tax locally to improve funding for transportation. Thus far the legislature has failed to act positively on any of those requests. I am regularly in contact with our Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) member Butch Davies and a variety of VDOT representatives to discuss how we might find some funding for important local projects in a time where there's little funding available. We have pursued and been successful in obtaining special grants for funding certain projects such as the Route 250 interchange at the Meadowcreek Parkway, improvements in Downtown Crozet and safety improvements on Hillsdale Drive. Until this year the County had in its budget about two million dollars a year of local funding for transportation, but given the current economic tightening in the County's budget, we have had to eliminate that in the current year.

One other thing we did that I think I alluded to earlier I said I served on the Transportation Funding [Options Working Group], that was a committee appointed by the MPO to study transportation funding crisis and to determine if there are ways that we can locally act to improve that situation. Actually the creation of that committee was my idea and was unanimously endorsed by the MPO. The committee was comprised of representatives from the City, the County, "Five C's," the Chamber Of Commerce, the League of Women Voters, the Piedmont Environmental Council, Southern Environmental Law Center, Charlottesville [Area] Association of Realtors, University of Virginia, UVA Real Estate Foundation, and City and County neighborhoods. The committee was chaired by Leigh Middleditch and met monthly for more than a year and issued a report that was submitted to the MPO, the City, County, VDOT and our legislative representatives. And what it showed was that there was a pretty good unanimity among all these groups in the community that we need better tools to raise funds for transportation. Some of the ideas that came out of that committee were an enhanced sales tax that's dedicated totally to local transportation. And that's what we pursued legislatively, there was a referendum which would have allowed that locally and that was a recommendation from this funding options group. Another recommendation was a local gas tax. Again we would need a legislative authority for that and we were told by our representatives that that was pretty much dead on arrival.

3. The next Board of Supervisors will review the Places29 Master Plan. What do you think are the key ingredients that need to be in that plan to gain your support?

I have supported and participated in master planning of the County growth areas including the current Places29 plan which emphasized integration of land use and transportation planning. I think our community is at the forefront of what is starting to be required throughout the state and that is to seriously integrate land use planning with transportation planning in recognition of the fact that we don't have the funds to build our way out of the transportation problems we have. And so we need to plan and build smarter in ways that put less of a strain on the existing transportation infrastructure. The County's neighborhood model provides for mixed use, pedestrian friendly development with interconnected streets and that concept needs to be embodied in the Places29 [plan] and from what I have seen so far it has been embodied in Places29.

I mentioned earlier I support certain priorities in the 29 corridor which include adding the lane on 29 South and Hydraulic Road and the Route 250 bypass with the additional ramp at Best Buy in an extended taper lane. All the traffic studies indicate that that is probably the single most important improvement at the biggest traffic choke point in the area to move that traffic freely down 29 and up onto the 250 Bypass once we go in that direction. I support the completion of the Hillsdale Connector which I alluded to earlier, which would take 8,000 - 10,000 vehicle trips a day off of 29 in the most congested area. I support the widening of 29 from Polo Grounds Road in Hollymead to eliminate the "hourglass" and improve safety and capacity in that area and I support the completion of additional parallel roads throughout that area for local traffic. I support enhanced transit in that area to try to take vehicle trips off of 29.

Eventually I think we will need grade separated interchanges at Route 29 and Hydraulic Road. The traffic studies that have been done over the years in the 29 corridor indicate that through traffic is around 10 percent of the total traffic. A lot of people think that there is a huge volume of through-truck traffic, but that's not really shown by the traffic statistics at all. For example a recent study that was done in Greene County, where they have about 37,000 vehicles a day on 29, indicated that about 3% of the traffic in that area was truck traffic and a lot of that is not thru. So I am looking for a Places29 plan that encompasses the things that I just mentioned. I think we need to recognize that a Master Plan to me is like the picture on the box of a puzzle. Imagine trying to put a puzzle together if you didn't have a picture to work from. We need, in our growth areas where we expect to have significant growth over the years, a picture of how we want it to look and how the various public and private improvements that will be made over time in that area will

fit together. Without that, when a private development comes in, you have no idea what piece that provides of the whole, you don't know whether or not there are trail systems planned that ought to be incorporated as part of that project, whether there is a major road that should come by that area and how that should be dealt with in the development, and you don't have a way of actually getting contributions by private developers to the important public improvements that are in the area if you don't have a plan, if you don't know how everything is planned and put together in time.

There have been some issues raised about whether or not the funding estimates that are being made in the plan are adequate and I certainly think that should be looked at, but I think we have to recognize that any estimates of 25 year, perhaps even 50 year, improvements are approximations at best, that whatever plan you come up with is going to have public improvements and those estimates for public improvements are not going to be that accurate because they are not going to be based upon engineering studies. You really don't know what a project costs, you really don't even have a great idea of what it is going to cost until you have an engineering study and that costs a lot of money. So it's not feasible to go out and have engineering studies on every project that you might put in a Master Plan, and you are not going to know what they actually are going to cost until you put out an RFP to get bids. So regardless of what the total is for the public improvements in that area, we need a plan and that plan has to incorporate both public and private improvements.

I wanted to add one other thing about that. A good example is that we are in a transportation funding crisis right now, but if we get a \$10 million dollar allocation of primary road funds five years from now, we need to know where to put that to use and it's only by having a series of improvements in a plan that have been designed with respect to the overall principles of that plan, that are based upon transportation improvements for which transportation modeling have been done, that we are going to know, that a future board is going to know, how to best utilize that \$10 million dollars.

4. In what circumstances would you support an expansion of Albemarle County's designated growth areas?

I would only support an expansion of the growth areas in what I would call special circumstances. I think we had that when the Crozet Master Plan was completed. It indicated that there was an area nearer to Downtown which better fit into the concept of the growth area there. There was an area out along 250 that probably did not fit into the current concepts for master planning for the area and the growth area and I supported making what I would call a growth area swap. We took some land out and we put some land in that made more sense. When the [National Ground Intelligence Center] (NGIC) expansion was approved, there was a resolution of the board

to consider increasing the growth area by about 30 acres, I believe, out in an area that would border the NGIC project and I supported that resolution. That did not approve an increase in the growth area, it approved looking at an increase in the growth area. I think in that resolution, at the time it was passed, we also discussed that there was property that was off of Route 20 that we thought probably didn't fit into that growth area as well as the property on 29 North. In fact when the Pantops Master Plan was approved we took some property out of the growth area. So I think half of that concept was achieved at that time.

Generally, as I said, I don't think we need to increase the growth area. We have a growth area of 35 square miles, that's 5% of the County's land but it's about three and a half times the size of the City of Charlottesville. I think that within that growth area we can accomplish most of what needs to be accomplished by way of effectively handling growth over the next 20 years. To continue to expand the growth area every time an idea comes in for a development means that we would basically be legislating sprawl. We would be pushing new greenfield developments at the expense of filling in developments that have already been approved and redeveloping areas that need to be redeveloped. Economically I think if you provide developers with the ability to plow up fresh fields continuously, that's probably a cheaper way for them to go, but it's not for the community, long term, the best way to go. We have about three million square feet of already approved commercial space, much of it in the 29 corridor. I'd like to see those areas to develop out the way that they were planned to be built out with neighborhood model concepts, and... in a form that will handle substantial growth without imposing undue impacts on our transportation system.

5. If you were to provide direction today to the County Executive on the development of the next Albemarle County annual budget what would you tell him?

That he needs to take into consideration that we are in perhaps the most difficult circumstances that we have faced since the Great Depression. Of course, Bob Tucker knows that and thus far has responded extremely well to the circumstances that we find ourselves in. I just read yesterday morning in the Wall Street Journal that 33 states are now furloughing employees and Virginia joined the ranks of those this week.

Our budget this year was balanced and we have to have a balanced budget unlike the Federal Government. We need to balance our budget each year and if we find that our revenues are down during the year, we have to cut expenses appropriately and make certain that we do. This year's budget was balanced by planning to have 55 less employees than we had in 2007. To accomplish that, Bob Tucker created a program to cross-train employees so as employees left their employment with the County, normal attrition, they

could be replaced internally without increasing the total headcount. We cut \$100 million dollars from the Capital Improvement Program and we have no new initiatives in the budget. And still have a complete hiring freeze in place in the County.

I would tell Bob to make certain that our resources are being deployed in a way that will best accomplish the strategic plan that we have in the County. I would tell Bob to make certain that education and safety are areas that we continue to fund adequately, the kinds of services that people in Albemarle County have come to expect. I view education and safety as the two primary services that the County delivers to its citizens. I would tell Bob to carefully look at the efficiency study that we had done in the past year and make certain that all of the recommendations in that study that can save the County money are being deployed.

6. In August 2009, Advocates for a Sustainable Albemarle Population (ASAP) released the first report in their research seeking to identify an optimal sustainable population for the community. Should the Board of Supervisors explore policies that would cap the County's population growth at a number below the potential build-out population? Why or why not?

The County presently is growing at about 1% per year, which is a thousand people per year additional coming to Albemarle County or being born in the County, net born versus deaths in the County. Our statistics show that we have a car for every person in the County, and that's also true in the City and so when we add 1,000 people, if the statistics continue to hold true, as we add 1,000 people each year, we add a 1,000 cars to the road, we add the congestion that they bring, we add the pollution that those vehicles bring etc. So I think it's imperative that we have in place measures to protect quality of life and to plan adequately for that growth.

I supported the County funding of the component of the current ASAP study which deals with determining the limits of our environmental systems in the County to handle population increases. I also personally provided an endorsement of ASAP's work in the community to assist ASAP in obtaining private grants for their project. I think it's important that public officials understand the effects of population on our environment, our quality of life and more information on this issue is better than less information. That having been said I do not view this, from the County's perspective, as an effort to stop population growth. I don't think we have the legal capacity to do that. I think the rhetoric in that regard has been misplaced. I view ASAP's work as a way to better inform our land use decision and planning efforts. I don't view it as a cap on population.

7. Should the community invest in repairing or enlarging the existing Lower Ragged Mountain Dam built around 1908 as part of the 50 Year Community Water Supply Plan? Why or why not?

Let me ask you this Brian, you have got a later question that was given to me as I walked in today on the community water supply plan and I am not really sure of the distinction between these two questions.

Follow up: This question is referring to existing infrastructure and whether investment should be made in the existing 1908 dam.

Well, what I think we should do is what is called for in the plan, which I think calls for a replacement of the lower dam with a higher [dam], that's downstream a little bit, and is a higher dam that would provide for additional capacity at Ragged Mountain.

We have the fortunate situation in the County that on a daily basis, about 96% of the water that comes into the South Fork [Rivanna Reservoir], for example, is let go downstream. And that means we only use about 4% on a daily basis of what flows into the County. So where we are vulnerable is in times of drought when that flow slows down or stops due to drought. Where do we have the storage capacity in the community to last for a long period of drought? And the water supply plan envisions that Ragged Mountain is the best place to have that large bathtub to store water in the future for the community for drought conditions. I think that's a wise decision and Ragged Mountain has a small watershed and therefore will not sediment in. And so I think you could probably go 1,000 years with an enhanced Ragged Mountain Reservoir that would not silt in.

The South Fork [Rivanna] Reservoir is a wonderful resource, a beautiful natural facility, we need to maintain it adequately, but it does silt in about 1% per year. So I think that the best place to add capacity in the community is at Ragged Mountain. Adding capacity at South Fork which, was not actually approved by the Department of Environmental Quality or the Corps of Engineers, we did look at expanding capacity there with a bladder on South Fork. And they indicated that that was not the least environmentally damaging alternative that we could pursue. Enhanced capacity at South Fork by dredging, for example, would have to recognize that you would have to dredge again at some point because it's going to continue to silt in.

8. If you could focus on one area for improved partnership with the City of Charlottesville during the next two years, what area would that be?

I would say completion of the current water supply plan. I think that that is the most pressing issue that is being jointly worked on by the City and County. I think that the drought that we had five years ago indicates that we are today

subject to the vagaries of weather and we need to get a plan in place and implement it that does not expose our community to the threats that drought can bring.

Other areas that I think are important...I think we need to complete the Meadowcreek Parkway. It's a project that the City and County have been investing in for over 20 years and it's at a point now where it's moving forward in the County. There are few issues that need to be resolved in the City, but I think that that's an important project for Downtown Charlottesville and for the area.

It's important I think also to note the number of areas where we presently cooperate. A lot of times that seems to get lost in discussion. Everyone is interested in better cooperation, but, for example, the efficiency study that the County had done noted that City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County have more cooperative efforts in place than any other two jurisdictions in the state of Virginia.

The Planning and Coordination Council, which I mentioned earlier, is a joint City-County planning effort. The Metropolitan Planning Organization is a regional transportation planning committee. We have a regional bicycle and trails plan. [Charlottesville-Albemarle Technical Education Center] (CATEC) is a joint City-County operation. The jail authority is a multi-jurisdictional operation. Rivanna Solid Waste Authority is a joint operation. Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority is a joint operation. The Airport Authority is a joint operation. The Ivy Creek School is a joint multi-community operation. Juvenile Court is a multi-jurisdictional operation.

So we have a huge amount of regional cooperation going on in this area. The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission is a multi-jurisdictional planning effort. One other thing, I think that we have a continual effort to cooperate across a number of fronts. I think we need to continue with those efforts and look for enhanced opportunities of cooperation. One other area I would like to see is for us to explore with the City a universal park and recreation plan pass, so that all of the people in the City and the County can use the facilities that we have. During the period of time I have been on the Board the County has added more than 18,000 acres to the County park land and this represents a wonderful outdoor opportunity for city and County residents, but I think we need to look at ourselves more as one community in that regard and make certain that all citizens in this community can share the abundant opportunities we have.

Follow up: And by pass you mean pass that people could purchase to access the parks in both localities?

I probably didn't describe that. It would be a one charge pass that would allow anyone in the City and County to use facilities in either jurisdiction.

9. What are your priorities for economic development and workforce development in Albemarle? In a follow up, do we have sufficient land for office, commercial and industrial development within the designated growth areas?

I think we need to continue to work with the University of Virginia as it seeks to expand its research facilities in the Fontaine Research Park and the University [North Fork] Research Park. That's the type of growth and development that will be an attractive addition in our community, will provide high paying jobs. With the [National Ground Intelligence Center/Defense Intelligence Agency] (NGIC/DIA) expansion at Rivanna Station there will be significant increase in private government contractors that locate here to be close to that facility. I think many of those will want to locate at the University Research Park.

We are also I think the leader in healthcare in the state. With the expansion at UVA Hospital and the new Martha Jefferson hospital campus, many new healthcare jobs will be added. It's important that we continue to plan well for growth that is coming into this area, protect our important environmental and aesthetic features and invest in education and enhancing our citizen's quality of life. Those are the reasons that our community has been recognized as one of the best places in America to do business by nationally recognized services. Just to go over a couple of the services that recognize this area as a great place to do business...We are ranked number one by Southern Business & Development Magazine as a really cool business market. We were ranked as the 18th best city for living and launching a business by Money & Fortune Magazine. We were selected as the best workplace for commuters in 2006 by the Department of Transportation. We were selected as one of the best places in America to work by Business Journal in 2005. One of the best small places to do business by Forbes Magazine two years ago. We were selected in 2009 as one of the best job cities in America by AOL. They just had a list of 10 cities which were not ranked in any particular order. We were selected by Forbes Magazine and the Miliken Institute as the 12th best small place in America for business and careers. And Forbes magazine recently ranked the Charlottesville area as the nation's 11th best small metropolitan area to do business. We were the only metropolitan area in the state that got so recognized.

So I think that we afford a high quality of life here. We have an excellent education system and I think those things are draws for the kinds of

businesses we want to have located here and I think we need to continue to emphasize those things in order to make this an attractive place for people to live and work.

Second part of the question dealt with do we have sufficient land for commercial and industrial development within the designated growth areas. And I mentioned earlier that we have a designated growth area of about 35 square miles which is three and a half times the size of the City of Charlottesville. So I think generally the answer to that is yes. We have three million square feet of approved unbuilt commercial [space] in our growth areas today and that is a stock of available commercial space that will last this community a long time. We have areas that can be redeveloped to add commercial space. There is a current expansion as I mentioned earlier being applied for at the University Research Park. Fontaine Research Park is applying for an expansion. Those are already approved developments in the growth area that are going to add land and redevelop in ways that add density.

We have been, I think, a leader in job creation for the state for a number of years. Our tax base and our population have increased at a consistent rate. We have regularly [had] one of the lowest unemployment rates in the state and nation. So I think that the one exception may be that people who have small businesses that are looking for inexpensive light industrial locations may have some difficulty finding a spot in Albemarle County and I think that that is as much a zoning text problem as it is a land area problem. What has happened over time is that the zoning ordinance allows light industrial property to be used for multiple uses including business offices. What we have seen over time is that light industrial property has been built out as business office or rezoned to retail in order to take advantage of a more lucrative financial opportunity. We need to rethink that. If we have a goal of making certain that we have lower price light industrial property in the community, we need to make certain that property that is so zoned stays in that use.

10. Do you support the Three Party Agreement reached in 1990 between Albemarle, Charlottesville and the University of Virginia which identified a sequence of transportation projects to be completed before the construction of a Western Bypass of U.S. Route 29?

Yes. I think the Three Party Agreement you are referring to contemplated the construction and completion of the Meadowcreek Parkway, the construction of grade separated interchanges on Route 29 at Hydraulic Road, [and] at that time Greenbrier Road and Rio Road, and then finally the construction of a Western Bypass only if those improvements were in place, money was available and the traffic conditions warranted building a bypass.

That agreement was based upon a very careful analysis of the traffic, the current conditions at that time as well as the projected conditions. What the traffic studies that were done around 1990 by the Sverdrup Corporation showed was that more than 90% of the traffic in the corridor was local, that if you built a bypass and you didn't do other improvements, the 29 corridor would operate at an F-level of service. If you built the grade separated interchanges, along with the widening of 29 which has been finished, and the Meadowcreek Parkway, 29 would operate at a B-level service without building a bypass. So you are looking at a situation where you could spend \$250-\$300 million dollars to build a bypass and leave 29 at an F-level of service or you could do other improvements that are probably substantially less expensive and get 29 to a B-level service.

11. Given the long funding and implementation period for multi-jurisdictional projects like the Meadowcreek Parkway and the community water supply plan. What are the advantages and disadvantages to the current Board of Supervisors revisiting previous Board's decisions regarding such projects?

I think it's important that when you have projects that go through a long planning process, long periods of financial commitment and require multiple agency approvals, that unless something happens that significantly impacts the reasons for approving those projects, you need to see them through. Because every project will have often a vocal minority that raise issues about the project long after it's adopted, long after it's approved, long after money has been invested in it... In the examples that you gave there were significant periods of public hearings, public information meetings, surveys, huge amounts of time for people, for public input, and those projects emerged from a long process of public participation. Once you get to a certain point I think it is very detrimental to the community to not move forward on plans that have been adopted following a long public participation process, following an investment by the community, and following an approval, often a tedious approval process from regulators.

That having been said, I think you always have to have an open mind that if some very, very significant thing happens you might have to rethink any commitment, but I think there has to be a very significant new piece of information. To take that a little bit further, I think it depends upon... the examples I gave are projects, I think, that have gone through long periods of approval, long period of investment etc. When you are looking at other decisions that may have been made by the community, that are not very far down the road, in which there hasn't been a significant investment, there hasn't been a long period of public participation, there haven't been years spent obtaining agency approvals, those decisions can be more easily reviewed.

12. Should Albemarle County officials be able to revisit or renegotiate their past decision on the 1982 revenue sharing agreement with the City of Charlottesville? Why or why not?

Well I think commentary on the revenue sharing agreement needs to take into consideration the history of the agreement. Barracks Road was once County property and was annexed by the City. At the time the revenue sharing agreement was signed, the City was interested in annexing the commercial area along Route 29 North out to Rio Road. The Virginia Supreme Court had just upheld the annexation by Harrisonburg of substantially all the retail base of Rockingham County. Until the last week of the negotiations, the City had held firm on its requests for a formula that would have given it 25 cents on the County's real estate tax dollar as opposed to the current 10 cents, and the final deal was set at 10 cents only in the last couple days of the negotiations.

So the real value of the deal at the time was to avoid annexation of a large part of the County retail tax base, keeping in mind that the annexed land would have shifted both real estate in sales tax revenues from the County to the City. With that history in mind, the revenue sharing agreement was probably a good deal for the County at the time it was signed. Shortly after the agreement was signed, the Virginia General Assembly enacted a moratorium on annexations in Virginia which has remained in effect. In hindsight one could argue that the County purchased insurance that became unnecessary.

Today with the moratorium in place we are not perhaps getting our money's worth for the annual insurance payments being made. Of course, the moratorium on annexation could expire in the future which would again make the protection afforded by the agreement important. In talking about changing the agreement, I think we need to understand that we have no more legal right to unilaterally reduce the payment than the City has to cause it to be increased. Any amendment would need to be agreed to by both parties and approved by a referendum of County voters.

We have approached the City over past few years when I have been on the Board about their openness and discussing the potential amendment to the agreement, and they have not been very interested in having those discussions. I do think we should continue to try to get them to the table on that. We also have to keep in mind that the City has a unilateral right to revert to town status and become a part of the County which it might be forced to do if revenue sharing were to cease. Revenue sharing amounts to about 30 cents on the City's tax rate, so the City's effective tax rate without revenue sharing is about \$1.25 per \$100 evaluation. The County's effective rate is about 62 cents. So the City's annual education cost right now is about \$3000 per pupil higher than the County's. If we force the City to revert, I would expect the County taxes will significantly increase while City taxes might

decline. So County residents who have pushed for the County to break the revenue sharing agreement should consider that carefully, it may not actually be in the long term best financial interest of the County.

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

I do support the plan. As a member of the Board of Supervisors, I voted in favor of the plan. I also sat on a small group that discussed this plan significantly before it went forward for public comment and [the group] was convinced that it was the best plan for the community at that time. We have really had hundreds, if not thousands of hours of discussions, investigations, meetings and after all that public input, the plan was supported by the far majority of the public who commented on the various plans being looked at, that was approved by the four public bodies and every environmental organization in the area at that time.

Obtaining approval for a significant water supply plan from state and federal agencies is a massive undertaking. Years ago, the community thought that building a reservoir at Buck Mountain would be approved, but it wasn't. Property was purchased including a number of condemnations, then the EPA changed its view on building new impoundments, an endangered species was discovered in the Buck Mountain Creek, and we were unable to go forward with the Buck Mountain dam. I have talked to regulators a number of times over the last seven years and they indicated that it would be unlikely that the Buck Mountain Reservoir could ever be approved because under the current decisions concerning what options have the least environmental impacts, it's very unlikely that a new impoundment can ever meet that test when you have the ability to build a pipeline to the James [River].

There seems to be a perception in the community that we could string together any number of other options to create an approvable plan and that's just not the case. Any such plan would have to go through the same process we just went through and there is no guarantee that it would be approved by the regulators as we saw with Buck Mountain. To the regulators, the primary competitor for the Ragged Mountain dam plan was a pipeline to the James River - not dredging. And one of the reasons I greatly support the local plan is because it allows us to obtain our water locally. I have a concern about the quality of water that might be piped in from the James, I have a concern about pharmaceuticals and things like that being flushed into the James upstream, and those things are generally not well removed by water treatment.

The proposed plan allows us to obtain our water supply in a way that has [plans] for environmental mitigation contained within it. I think our

environmental mitigation plan far exceeds the state and local requirements. So any plan that's adopted, you would have to not only have a plan, you would have to have an environmental mitigation plan and part of the plan includes significant downstream flow enhancement requirements. There is a significant amount of engineering study that has to be done on any plan to make certain that you are meeting the EPA and DEQ's downstream flow requirements, and the thought of trying to string together a number of other options that may or may not satisfy the total water needs of the community, but do it in a way that also provides environmental mitigation and downstream flow requirements, I think, is a daunting task.

So yes, I support the plan, I think it's gone through a huge level of vetting and it's something that we need to work together as a community to get in place.

That having been said, I served on the Rivanna Stewardship Task Force and part of what we looked at was how dredging might be better used to help maintain the current status of the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir or even improve itself, and I think we should study that and determine how we can maintain that facility. The potential to use that facility in the future as a major storage area should be retained, and that includes looking at the legal issues that might arise from allowing wetlands to emerge within the reservoir. Because a hundred years from now this community may need another storage area for water and we need to be able to reclaim that if that became the case.

We have problems in the reservoir today with hydrilla and I think we need to study how we can best go about removing that. That's a plant much like kudzu that grows in water and it grows at a very rapid rate and that is a problem throughout the south in reservoirs. I think we need to look at ways that we might better trap silt coming into the reservoir, slow down the rate at South Fork, to slowdown the rate of sedimentation.

One other thing I think needs to be mentioned about the water supply plan is you see the number, a \$142 million turnaround, and there had been some increases, there probably will be some increases in the cost of the Ragged Mountain dam and may be some increases in other components as you get closer to actually building projects, having engineering studies and putting out RFPs. I think that would be the case whatever your water supply plan does, but sometimes the critics of the current plan fail to mention that by far the majority of the plan is not the Ragged Mountain Dam, it's other things that need to be done regardless of whether or not the Ragged Mountain dam is increased in size.

We need to replace in some way the pipeline between Ragged Mountain and the Sugar Hollow Dam, that is more than 90 years old, leaks like a sieve, is in easement areas that are not legally well defined. If you don't build the

pipeline from Ragged Mountain to South Fork, which is 9.5 miles long, you are going to need to replace a 13 mile pipeline from Ragged Mountain to Sugar Hollow which is probably going to be as or more expensive. A large part of the plan is upgrading the treatment facilities and upgrading the current pipes that go from the storage areas to treatment facilities. Regardless of whether or not our storage bathtub is Ragged Mountain or South Fork, that work needs to be done. So often there is selective information circulated about the current plan that sometimes doesn't serve the public's interest.

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

My top priority is a general one, I think and that is to protect the quality of life of our citizens and indeed try to enhance the quality of life of our citizens on a number of fronts. We have a vision for Albemarle County that the Board of Supervisors has adopted. I participated in establishing that vision. We have a strategic plan to try to implement the vision and we have adopted a number of strategies that are contained within our approach to try to enhance quality of life for our citizens. I think we need to try to deploy what right now are very limited resources in the best ways possible to do that.

I will say that I consider the highest priority to be education and safety and at times of limited resources, when we need to perhaps draw back in other areas, such as the ACE program, which was cut into half this past year, the funding for that. We need to recognize that education and safety are areas where we need to focus our resources to make certain that the delivery of services in those areas is not diminished.

15. Do we have appropriate resources in County government to achieve the objectives in the County's strategic plan? And a follow-up, in what way if any do we need to make changes and what impact will your recommendations have on staffing and the annual budget?

I think we are going through a period of time right now with the economy where we don't have adequate resources to achieve all of the objectives in our strategic plan and as I mentioned earlier, when you go through those times, I think you need to then focus on the areas you think are the most important and make certain that the quality of services in those areas is not diminished.

One of the problems we have as a local government is we have huge unfunded mandates in the state and federal government. My last estimate on our total unfunded mandates was at least \$45 million which is a huge part of our budget. I see actions being taken by the state now that would probably increase those unfunded mandates. There was recently a Supreme Court case on the Individual Disability Education Act that I think will have a

significant effect on the cost of providing education services to local governments. The top thing on my wish list would be that the Federal and State government fund their mandates. I think if they did that, we would have adequate resources to achieve virtually everything that is within our strategic plan.

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

I think our primary responsibilities are to hire the County Executive, to make land use decisions in the County, and to adopt and see that the County budget is implemented. Those are the broad areas and in order to perform our duties in those areas in a focused way we have done things like adopt a strategic plan, a vision statement...and every time we take an action in the County it is compared back to our strategic plan to see whether or not it is actually achieving some of the goals established in our strategic plan.

Thank you.