



2009 Albemarle County Board of Supervisors Candidate Interview September 2009

Candidate: David Slutzky (D)

On November 3, 2009, voters in the Rio Magisterial District go to the polls to elect their representative on the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors. This recording is Brian Wheeler's September 9, 2009 interview with David Slutzky (D). Slutzky is seeking re-election and is being challenged by Rodney Thomas (R).

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

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

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

INTERVIEW

Mr. Slutzky, 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?

I am.

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

Well first of all, I have four years of experience on the Board of Supervisors and it turns out that that I think is very valuable. I have gone through quite a learning curve the last four years and I think I am capable of being a much more effective Supervisor as a result of that. But that said I think the most important things for a Supervisor to bring to the table are frankly leadership and an ability to solve problems. I think it's unfortunate when folks just sort of go along for the ride, and that does happen inevitably, but I have tried to be a little bit more proactive than that.

I think I have demonstrated leadership in my efforts to get a Regional Transit Authority up and running and in place as a real solution to a major issue here, transportation. I have done a lot to try and get more jobs and stimulate economic vitality in my first four years on the Board. And I think I have gotten a pretty good reputation from my efforts with respect to protecting the rural areas of the County and to guiding our land use policy decisions. And that's not surprising since I have spent most of my professional life doing environmental issues and I teach in the Urban and Environmental Planning Department at the University [of Virginia] as adjunct faculty. So I guess that's pretty much my answer to your question.

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?

Well I absolutely support the formation of a Regional Transit Authority with the City of Charlottesville. I have been perhaps the catalyst behind that effort for the last few years in my role as Chairman of the MPO, the Metropolitan Planning Organization. I am a big believer that if we are going to tackle our transportation challenges we are going to need it not just by building more roads, although there is certainly a place for roads in this effort. If we were to have a vastly expanded transit system which would only be possible I believe if we had the City and the County sharing the ownership of and guiding the implementation of a Regional Transit Authority, I think that that would be a big factor in solving some of our transportation needs.

But as we are learning through the Places29 effort, the integration of land use planning and transportation planning is critical as well. And in the Places29 effort as well as the Crozet Master Plan and the Pantops Master Plan and the others, we have recognized the need for thoughtful road building if you will where we would add parallel roads, a network of connecting roads, to move folks around so that they are not all having to funnel through our community on [U.S. Route 29].

Perhaps the most important transportation priority in my view is other than setting up the Regional Transit Authority is to create a parallel road to 29. And in the Place29 exercise the citizens identified Berkmar as the obvious location for such a road. Right now it starts at Rio and heads north and it gets to Sam's Club and it stops, because there is a river in the way. Then if you were to somehow get over that river and follow a path straight north you would wander through Hollymead Town Center and all the intense development that's going on up there, you would cross airport road and be able to go on through the University's expanding research park and eventually find your way out on to 29, a good bit north of the airport.

And so that pathway makes sense as a parallel road and I think it is the top transportation priority frankly in our community, maybe even bumping the Regional Transit Authority to the side. That project is not going to get built unless we are thoughtful and proactive in making sure that we get enough funding to complete the road project and to build the bridge. And I think the bridge is going to be the biggest challenge and I have spend a lot of time and effort the last couple of years to try and make that happen and I will continue to do so if stay on the board.

Follow up: And do you want to say anything about state funding and how we fund these priorities?

That's right. The challenge we have is that historically it's been local government's purview to deal with education issues largely, and it's been the state government's responsibility to address transportation needs. We have a General Assembly who's abdicated in their role as the primary funders of our transportation systems. And so as a result localities like us all over the Commonwealth are struggling with how do we address our transportation needs when the general assembly isn't funding it.

I thought that we came up with a pretty creative solution this last session where we asked the General Assembly not to raise our taxes, and we did not ask them to let local government to raise our taxes. We asked them for permission to let the taxpayers, through a referendum, decide if they wanted to raise their own taxes to pay for increased transportation infrastructure. We were denied the opportunity to do that. So our hands are a bit tied. We have very limited ability to fund transportation unless we want to raise property taxes. And nobody wants their property taxes raised really for anything. But the reality is if we expect to address our transportation needs in the future we may have to figure out how to do that with limited enabling authority that we have, and that means probably putting some kind of a service district tax in place.

If we were to go down that path I would only support it if we were to hold an unusual number of public hearings. And make sure that we told the public

exactly what they would be buying for the tax increase that we would be asking them if they wanted to support. And if the taxpayers heard what we had to say and believe that our vision for funding our transportation infrastructure was a good one, and they made it clear that they supported a service district tax then I could support doing that. Short of that support from the public I don't think we are going to be able to do it locally, I think we are going to still have to wait for the General Assembly to wake up.

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?

It's a great question. I am glad you are drawing attention to the Places29 process. I think there are two fundamental issues there that I am going to be paying attention to in addition to obviously the rest of it. Number one is as I have described this parallel road to 29, Berkmar Road Extended, with the bridge as a major element of that road. What we are doing with Places29 is actually getting the attention of planners across the Commonwealth and even in other parts of the country. We are attempting to integrate land use planning and transportation planning into a single exercise. And I think that that's the way it should be done routinely and it's exciting to be part of a major effort in that direction. That exercise has made it clear that the community, the public, wants to have this parallel road. It is the critical link where we are merging transportation planning and land use planning. If we do not come forward with a Places29 plan that realistically could get that road built, then I think the whole exercise has been folly and a lot of smoke and mirrors. And I have some concern that that's where we are.

For example the bridge is the most important element of that parallel road, that is the most important element of the transportation scheme for that master plan. The land right by the bridge is currently in the rural area, the rural area actually sneaks all the way over to 29 right at that spot, right in the middle of our major commercial dense development part of the County. And it's a legacy from an earlier era that was there for different reasons that have little relevance today. What the staff has recommended, and I strongly support, is extending the growth area from where it ends right now a little way south of Hollymead Town Center down to the edge of the river, the idea being that that little swath of land along 29 is in an appropriate place for very intensive development. And if we were to allow for more intensive development in that location, than the Places29 Plan currently calls for, we would likely be able to get private monies, proffer monies, that would fund the lion's share of completing that parallel road and probably a major contribution towards the bridge. If we don't have that swath of land anything other than rural area and neighborhood service use, we don't realistically have a way of funding that parallel road. There may be ways of getting earmarks out of Washington or we could choose to do it, you know on the backs of taxpayers,

but that's the logical way to do it. And I am not sure I could support Places29 if it doesn't recognize the relationship in that particular point of land use planning and transportation planning.

The other piece of this is the issue in Places29, which has actually shown up in each of the other master plans that we have done. There is a lot of anticipated infrastructure that each of these master plans imply when they are complete. In Places29 is far from an exception. It's been estimated conservatively by some that it might take upwards of half a billion dollars to fund all of the infrastructure that's reflected in this plan. Now admittedly it's a long term plan and nobody is expecting all that infrastructure to be built next Thursday. But if the plan itself doesn't address the question of how would we fund that infrastructure, then again I think that the exercise is a bit of folly.

So I am hoping that we can reflect in I believe it's Chapter 8 which is the section of the Places29 that addresses the implementation, I am going to expect that the plan will reflect the County's understanding of the fact that in order to actually build that kind of infrastructure somebody is going to have to come up with the money. And it needs to recognize that we will get some of that money from the feds and some of it from the state and we are likely to get a fair chunk of it from developers in the form of proffers. But it's also unrealistic to think that we are going to be able to build out that much infrastructure without some kind of a tax increase.

And I am not saying that Places29 is where we decide to raise taxes. But if the plan itself doesn't acknowledge that you can't build that infrastructure at our current level of taxation I think we are being disingenuous and it's an unsuccessful effort and I am not sure I would support it.

So my two basic issues with Places29 that I would need to see adequately addressed for me to support it will be a realistic plan for completing that parallel road that I think is the lynchpin of the whole plan and also an acknowledgment of the need to fund the infrastructure.

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

Well the short answer is limited. There are however limited circumstances under which I would support an expansion. I am a big believer in protecting rural areas and as I have seen some of the questions in advance I know I am going to be talking about rural area protection a little bit later. But I have been strong in the last four years in fulfilling my commitment to protecting the rural area by not letting development occur outside of our growth areas. However the precise boundaries that were drawn in 1980 made sense at that point in time, but as conditions evolve and circumstances change there are sometimes good reasons to either adjust to the existing boundaries or to

actually expand the growth area. And while I don't want to expand it just because somebody says well we need to have more land, there maybe specific locations like, for example, that little bit of land right along 29 between Hollymead Town Center and the River. That's a place that probably should have been in the growth area all along. When I went to the public meetings on Places29 early on numerous comments were offered by the public. Why is that in the rural area? I don't understand. It doesn't make sense.

We had a similar discussion when we were doing the Pantops Master Plan about the already developed commercial areas over by the I-64 and 250 Interchange. You know it begged the question; if it's already developed, if the cat is already out of the bag why don't we recognize that and go ahead and put it in the growth area. The community in Pantops was very clear that it didn't want to do that. So we chose not to. But there might be arguments for putting certain places like that in the growth area.

I brought out a proposal a few years ago in my [transfer of development rights] TDR proposal, the purpose of which was to protect 94% of the County's rural areas by shifting all those development rights into a new location so that the land owners could sell the development rights and they could be used in a better place. And my vision said that we needed to increase the size of the growth area by about the equivalent of 1% of the County in order to accommodate all of those rural area development rights in a way that would be fair to the rural area land owners and create a valid market. That was an example of, for a good reason, the County might have chosen to expand the growth area. We haven't resolved that issue once and for all, but certainly there was strong resistance/reluctance to expand the growth area that way. But I think it's healthy for us to explore those options.

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?

Run for the hills – no. The reality is every year we start from scratch. We don't have a tax rate and we don't have a budget. It's not like we can necessarily extrapolate from last year's budget or last year's tax rate, but people naturally do. And so I have always felt that what's important in the budget discussion is that the public understand what the choices are that the board has to make. And I asked our County Executive this past year and I will ask him again next year to make sure that he is as transparent as possible. What that meant this year was I said I want him to present to the public and to the Board at the beginning of the budget discussion what the tax rate would need to be to maintain the level of services that we had promised the public a year earlier.

We have a 5 year plan and anticipated a certain level of funding for various things. How much would the tax rate have to go up or down to in order to fully fund our services? I call that a service neutral tax rate and I think that needs to be on the table every year.

I also asked the County Executive to tell us what tax rate would be needed to provide a revenue neutral tax rate, which means the rate that would give us the same amount of money to work with as we did the previous year. And the third thing I said that the County Executive should provide, and I would ask for this again in the future, is what it would take to have our budget based on a tax rate that resulted in the same bill going to taxpayers as they got the year before. And I will call that a tax payer neutral tax rate.

This last year interestingly enough, because of the erosion of property values, it would have required a 90 cent tax rate to be service neutral. And I wanted that to be on the table at the beginning of the budget discussion in the spirit of transparency. As the Daily Progress reported, I said from the beginning I would never support the 90 cent tax rate because it was inappropriate at a time of economic hardship. But I thought it was important that the public understand that anything less than that meant we were cutting something. And I think that that's only fair to the public.

Similarly a revenue neutral tax rate would have been 80 cents last year, where we ended up was at 74.2 cents. Now interestingly enough I was the one that cut down the discussion of going above 74.2 and the reason why I did is because when I went out and met with my constituents this year, unlike previous years where you know maybe half said my priority is funding the schools and infrastructure and the other half said I can't afford the taxes, they are too high, so cut the tax rate. This year everybody said don't raise my taxes.

And so as I have in each of my years on the board, I voted with Ken Boyd and the conservatives if you will as well as Sally [Thomas] and Dennis [Rooker] and Ann [Mallek]. We all voted for the same tax rate. And so I think it's a good example of if you get the County Executive to provide the public and the Board with the right information then when we ultimately decide on a budget, and on a tax rate to fund that budget, the public will understand what they are getting and what they are not getting.

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?

I think it's a great question Brian and I appreciate you including that this year. First of all let's remind everyone. We already have a population cap. It's called zoning. The zoning limits how much density is available in every area of the County. And in fact when I was in Washington I was a political Senior Policy Advisor at EPA. I was part of the funding for the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission when they did a study of how much population would be allowed if we built-out all of the existing zoning in the County and surrounding counties to the max. And it turned out to be just shy of a million people, not just the City and the County, it included some of the surrounding counties but it was way too many people. And the point of the exercise was to recognize that through zoning you get to control population.

Now what ASAP did is they brought to the table a proposal for the County and the City to fund a research project that would try to inform our zoning limits and make sure that they were based on the right issues. Most of my professional life and certainly my 4 years on the Board I have focused on protecting ecological systems that provide value to the community. And in that regard I want to make sure that we allow whatever development we do allow to occur in a way that is the least disruptive of the long term value of those ecological systems. I think we have a responsibility to future generations to protect ecological systems. And so we need to know at what point population overwhelms those ecological systems. And so since it's our responsibility as electeds to protect the "common will" if you will. And I think if that common will is basically meaning the long term viability of our ecological systems then it would be natural that we would want to have zoning maximums that didn't overwhelm our ecological systems.

And so this study by ASAP was I think very productive in that it was an attempt at looking scientifically at the question of, at what point do you start to get a precipitous decline in ecological system service values to the community. And then hopefully your zoning ordinances would reflect that maximum and be protective.

What ASAP originally brought to the table I resisted, which was they were going to have kind of a social science version of this as well, where they were going to ask people what their preferences were in terms of population limits. And I thought that was inappropriate for us to fund and we ended up not funding it, because I felt that if we are going to make good policy choices about zoning and therefore population it should be based on some people's

preferences. It should be based on hard science. The people today might have different preferences than the people that live here in 25 or 50 years and so I didn't want to speak for them.

But in short what I think about the ASAP effort was that it provided useful information for the community to use in considering our zoning changes over time. It's interesting that the study didn't suggest to me that we were immediately in danger of undermining the integrity of our ecosystems. In fact I sense that there was some room for growth still available under that cap.

And there are obviously policy choices that a locality can make that the ASAP study didn't get into that would allow for even more population. If for example you concentrated your growth in a designated growth area like we do. If we did a better job of concentrating our growth in the designated growth area we probably could absorb a lot more population and still not fall off the edge, if you will, with those ecosystems. So it's a long answer but it's a question that I think is a very important one. And I think that it was a productive exercise that the County funded that ASAP provided.

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?

Well, my position all along with respect to the dam, has been that the water supply plan as proposed and the permit we got, that's the right way to go. What you are asking here is a fairly limited question. You are saying what about plan B? What about taking the current dam structure and adding some feet to it, which would provide a smaller reservoir at Ragged Mountain and if we were going to go that route obviously we would then have to do capacity dredging at the [South Fork Rivanna Reservoir]. We would have to increase conservation and hope for the best.

I think that would be a bad idea for a number of reasons. One of them is because the underlying assumptions about our use of water are fairly conservative. I met with the folks in Richmond, the regulators at DEQ and asked them a lot of questions about the water supply plan because I wanted to understand it thoroughly. And they told me that the volume consumption assumptions that we developed initially in the whole plan was based on, assumed that Albemarle and Charlottesville would have the lowest per capita assumption of any locality in the Commonwealth.

I can't say that I would bet on that long term being something we could count on. It's also been suggested that for this plan that you are talking about to be viable that we would have to significantly increase our conservation efforts. And I think Albemarle and Charlottesville is a community where that can happen, but we have picked a low hanging fruit. We have had a couple of

droughts. We have got a pretty socially conscious community here. We have already done a lot more than most places with respect to conservation. And I am not sure that there's a lot more conservation that would likely occur.

Another thing that is unrealistic about the alternative plan is that it is tied to an assumption about future growth wherein it assumes that 61% I believe is the number, of the future users that we are adding on to the supply system will live in the growth area and will be using that water supply system. But it also assumes that 39% of new entrants into our community will be using wells and living in the rural area.

Well it turns out we have a comp plan in the County that contemplates something very different from that. Most of our policy choices are directed towards concentrating new growth in the growth areas and not having it sprawl out into the rural areas. So if we are successful with what we are trying to do that will mean that more of those new people will end up locating in the growth area and drinking the water on the water supply system. And so we might not have enough water if we have a pretty nominal water supply plan.

There are a couple of other issues with respect to the water supply plan that I may as well talk about. Actually I am just noticing on your sheet that we have another question later about the community water supply plan, maybe I should go ahead and hold off till then.

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?

Well, as I have said one of my personal priorities in getting on the Board was rural area protection and as I have said I believe that the purpose for rural area protection is all about protecting ecological systems that provide service value to our community.

It turns out that the City of Charlottesville is a major beneficiary of all of those ecological systems in our rural areas. But yet the City of Charlottesville has little or no role in rural area protection. That's the burden of the County as it turns out even though the City is a beneficiary.

A perfect example is that the County has a program where we give more than \$18 million in reduced taxes, it's called Land Use Tax, to rural area land owners who control 60% of the County's acreage. And we give them those reduced taxes so that they will keep their land rural and not develop it.

The benefit of that land not being developed is both for County and City residents, because it protects ecological systems. But it turns out because of a peculiarity of the revenue sharing agreement, the County actually loses tax

revenue every year on 60% of the County's acreage because the amount of the reduced taxes that we charge the rural land owners to keep them from developing for a period of time is greater than – it results in the County collecting taxes on those properties that's less than we end up having to pay Charlottesville under revenue sharing, because revenue sharing is tied to the fair market value of the parcel, but the taxes we collect are tied to the land use value, which is much lower.

So we literally lose tax revenue on 60% on the County and we choose to do that with this Land Use Program to protect the rural areas. Well the City is the beneficiary and yet they are making us pay them millions of dollars a year over and above the \$18 million we are giving to the rural land owners, and I think that's ridiculous.

So an area of cooperation between the City and the County I think would be for us to have an honest discussion about the revenue sharing agreement in specific about the fact that the City is a major beneficiary of the Land Use Tax break that we give rural area land owners and yet they are charging us a punitive amount because we do that. And I would like to see the revenue sharing agreement modified if the City is willing to do it to address that particular issue. And I have had some preliminary conversations with my friends on City Council and I think they are at least open to the discussion, and I think that would be a very important area for improved partnership if you will.

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

That's a great question. At a time like this where the economy is in a very tumultuous place economy vitality is even more important than usual. People need jobs. We need to stimulate the economy to get things going again. To get property values back, to get families with enough money to be comfortable and not worried. So economic development and basically economic vitality has to be a top priority of the governing body.

In my last four years I have actually, as environmentalists go, been fairly consistently supportive of economic growth. I don't want to see growth for growth's sake, but I happen to value economic vitality. And so I have worked hard to concentrate growth in the growth areas, but then encourage it to occur, and I have worked hard to create jobs. And I had a lot to do with – for example Mr. Crutchfield not moving a few 100 of his workers out of the County. I had a lot to do with our successful efforts to get a grant to stimulate an energy efficiency program that has been estimated will create somewhere

between 900 and 1,500 new green jobs locally. I have done things to try and stimulate economic vitality.

You talk about how important is it? Well, there are localities in the Commonwealth, who would panic if they have dropped below 30% of their revenues coming from the commercial sector. Well, Albemarle County is something below 20% - significantly below 20% of our revenues come from the commercial tax base. The result is our residential tax payers' end up paying a disproportionate burden because of that fact.

So if we were to encourage employers to move into our community and we were to accommodate them it not only creates jobs, it creates economic vitality, but it also would improve our tax ratio and reduce pressure on residential property owners.

Do we have enough land in the growth area to satisfy that potential need? Yes and no. I think it depends upon the business category you are speaking of. The one I am most concerned about is light industrial where I think we have lost a lot of light industrial to more intensive uses in the last few years. And I think we might need to think meaningfully about where we could accommodate light industrial uses here in Albemarle County, and that's going to be one of the challenges going forward.

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?

Brian, it amazes me that we are still talking about the so called Western Bypass. It's clear that we need a bypass around Albemarle County but the Western Bypass is not it. It's only little more than six miles long. It dumps people out on Route 29 in the middle of a growing business community. It doesn't solve any problems and by the way its price tag is still more than a quarter of a billion dollars. There's no way that roadway is ever going to be built. VDOT doesn't consider it a priority. Clearly the General Assembly doesn't, because they don't give us much money at all for our transportation needs.

I gave some testimony at a public hearing at the General Assembly last session and somebody asked me when we were going to complete the Western Bypass and my response was at the rate the General Assembly is funding us it would take about 240 years.

The reality is that that plan, the Three Party Agreement was spot on. There are other transportation priorities that need to be addressed, that can be addressed and that should be addressed. I think that the completion of

Berkmar as a parallel road wasn't, if I am not mistaken, a central part of that discussion back in 1990, but as our growth pattern has developed and as Places29 has unfolded it's clear that that would also be a priority road project that would trump any effort to build the bypass.

So I think the bypass as it is currently proposed is never going to happen and we should quit wasting time focusing on it, and focus on how we are going to get all of these transportation elements addressed, how we are going to fund them and let's get it done.

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?

It's a thoughtful question. It's always healthy for elected officials to revisit each of their decisions. I mean there's a point where you have got to move forward and get things done and hopefully that will be happening with the Meadowcreek Parkway and with the community water supply plan. But I think it's always constructive to revisit because circumstances change and community preferences evolve over time. And any project that has a 30 or 40 year old horizon needs to be revisited from time to time.

Having said that you run the danger if you keep second-guessing old decisions because of narrow minded new issues, you might lose the forest for the trees and I think there's has been a little bit of that with both the Meadowcreek Parkway and the Water Supply Plan. But I think it is healthy for the community dialogue to revisit those kinds of projects on a regular basis. But you also need to go ahead and implement them at some point.

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?

It's kind of a semantics question because the reality is it's a contract document. And it was entered into between the City and the County after a referendum was held. And from our discussions with legal council there doesn't appear to be anything that the County could choose to do on its own that would alter the revenue sharing agreement. We might recognize that it's terribly unfair. After all we entered into it with the expectation that it would keep the City from annexing parts of the County and stealing our tax base in a sense, and then I guess it was a year later that the General Assembly declared a moratorium on annexation which still remains in place today. So in some ways we are not quite getting the value for our dollar as it were.

But on the other hand I think that the revenue sharing agreement should be a topic for discussion between the City Council and the Board of Supervisors. As I mentioned earlier there is a real issue of how the City is probably unwittingly punishing the County's efforts to protect the rural area even though that effort protects the rural area for the benefit of City residents. So I think that it's a reasonable topic for us to enter into discussions with City Council over and my hope is that we could agree, both parties agree to modify the agreement in ways that are beneficial to both parties. As far as I can tell, when you say should we be able to revisit it, we are able to revisit it, but I don't know that we have much to say if the City says [no], we are keeping it.

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?

We started to get into this a little bit earlier when you asked if I thought it was a good idea to try and repair the existing dam and add a little bit on to it. That's sort of the plan B that's out there. Let me sort of go back and revisit this, so these two questions may merge together into one.

We have a Water Supply Plan that's been supported by the City and the County historically and we are in the process of getting the necessary support from the government bodies. That plan in a nutshell is to take the existing Ragged Mountain Dam and replace it with a new dam that is taller, creates a large reservoir of water at Ragged Mountain, and then also it contemplates piping water from the Rivanna Reservoir down to the Ragged Mountain Reservoir. The reason for that is the Ragged Mountain Reservoir has a huge storage capacity with a very small watershed, which means it has very little opportunity for sedimentation. So it is a great holding tank for our water supply.

We have an excellent source of water coming into the community through the Rivanna and if we could take the benefit of that and move that water over to the Ragged Mountain Dam we will have an unusually sustainable and local water supply plan. And that was the vision that went into the ultimate decision to support the current Water Supply Plan.

And some folks have come and started to second-guess it. What their motives are I couldn't speak to, but what they are suggesting as an alternative is a combination of using the existing Ragged Mountain Dam and adding some height on to it and then strengthening it. It's over a hundred years old and it has some integrity problems, but let's assume those could be engineered and the thing could be made safe. If you add a smaller amount of height to it, you would have a smaller reservoir up there.

The idea was well that won't get us enough capacity, so we will also increase conservation efforts, which reduces demand, and we would also do volume dredging of the existing Rivanna Reservoir to increase storage capacity there and that somehow between all of those features we have a viable alternative Water Supply Plan.

The problem with that plan B is the following. I went as I had mentioned and met with the folks in Richmond, and I had done my homework on this. There are a couple of problems. Problem number one is if you are going to be doing dredging it's potentially going to cost a lot of money. Now there's been some proposals bandied about that suggest for maybe \$20 million or so we could somehow magically dredge the Rivanna Reservoir. Well, I have read some of those proposals and they leave a few things out conveniently such as what do you do with the spoils that you take out of the water. And what about the need on an ongoing basis, to keep dredging that thing to keep the capacity what it needs to be.

If you take the dredging spoils, the stuff you scoop out when you dredge, you need to have a safe place where you can place it to let it dewater, and that isn't that something happens that's cheap and automatic. If for example it had to be trucked to a distant place you would have the cost of acquiring access to that distant place and you would have a significant cost associated with trucking the spoils that far.

But a lot of people said, no-no, wait, there's a quarry right there. Why don't we just put the spoils in the quarry? Problem solved. It's all good. Well assuming the property owner of that quarry was amenable to allowing it to be used for this purpose, and that may be, the reality is that under the Clean Water Act you can't allow water to go from a quarry like that into the aquifer down below if it might compromise the quality of the water in that aquifer down below.

So if you are going to take all these spoils from dredging, dump them in this rock quarry where people have been pounding away at rock for decades, I will bet you there's some fractures zones in that rock and it wouldn't surprise me a bit, or the regulators in Richmond for that matter, if you would have communication with the aquifer down below. So then the question is will you even get a permit to allow the dredging to go there, even if the property owner was willing to do it? And there was great skepticism expressed on that point by the folks in Richmond.

But let's leave that uncertainty aside because there's another issue that's more compelling. The Endangered Species Act as I understand it requires that endangered species be protected and there are some endangered mussels downstream from our reservoirs. In order to keep those mussels

alive, there has to be in stream flows constantly discharged from the Ragged Mountain Reservoir to keep the downstream endangered species protected.

And I talked with the folks at DEQ in Richmond about this issue, and I asked them will we in the worst drought always be able to satisfy that need? And in fact is it even relevant? And they said, well it's very relevant David because you have a permit right now. If you wanted to change the permit to this other plan, you would have to ask for a waiver and there would be a legal process that we would be gone through. There would be public comments and so forth. But DEQ would have to be satisfied that the plan B, the alternative, would be able to protect the downstream in-stream flows. And they said for that to work the alternative would have to have enough storage capacity in the Ragged Mountain Dam so that in the absolute worst drought, particularly in the case of a prolonged drought, that those mussels would still be protected because the Endangered Species Act requires it.

And I asked them the question, well could we, is there enough water, is there a problem; and they said we highly doubt that you could manage the in-stream flow requirements with this alternative proposed Water Supply Plan that's been bandied about. And I said well, why don't you give me a definitely answer? And they said well we will have to run some modeling to project that. And they said some folks have run similar models and those models do not demonstrate sufficient in-stream flows. So we are highly confident that your request for a change of the permit would be turned down, but we can't turn it down based on other people's modeling. We have to do our own and we have to run the models. And I said well go do it, and they agreed that they would. So I am hoping in the next – I don't know if it's weeks or months, but in the not too distant future I expect DEQ will reveal the results of their own modeling, the modeling that they would rely upon in considering the request to change the Water Supply Plan to this alternative that's been bandied about.

And based on my conversations with them Brian they sure didn't seem very likely, they didn't expect the in-stream flows to be enough. And so my suspicion is that all this talk is really leading us nowhere because in the end we are not going to be able to change the current plan. And so I am hopeful that we will get to the bottom of this in the not too distant future, and we will find out, and will move on accordingly.

Follow up: And I just want to be clear. Your position then is that you still support that plan that was approved in June 2006?

I strongly support that plan. If the results of the in-stream flows were to suggest otherwise I might revisit it but the folks at DEQ didn't give me much hope that would happen. I do however support dredging. I think there's a value in dredging for a couple of reasons.

One is I think that it's a shame to waste a good reservoir by letting it silt in. We are losing recreational value and other value by letting it become ultimately wetlands and even in some cases a new shoreline. I also like the idea of having some additional storage capacity beyond what we proposed for the Water Supply Plan just in case we have more of our growth happen inside the Growth Area or just in case we use higher per capita consumption than our assumptions were originally.

So dredging is something that shouldn't be off the table. It should be something that we examine. I just think it should be sort of separate from the Water Supply Plan moving forward. And I do support the Water Supply Plan absolutely.

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

There's so many. I think my personal commitment is to again protecting ecological systems, protecting the long term integrity of our ecological systems, but wearing my hat as a Supervisor, which is not just my hat, but it's the hat of my citizens if you will, I think that a priority in this community is to address our transportation challenges.

We all find education important and there are many other priorities, environmental protection being among them, but I think from most of the constituents I have spoken to, their concern long term that they want the Board to be addressing is transportation. And so my top priority for action, which is the way your question is worded, would be to focus on addressing our transportation needs the way that I have been doing for the last few years.

I would continue to take a leadership role in pushing for a Regional Transit Authority, for expanded bike and pedestrian paths, to get people off of our roads. And I most certainly would continue to promote good alternative road systems like the Berkmar Extended Project and the Meadowcreek Parkway, so that we can ultimately address our transportation needs.

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

Well your question centers around the word strategic. We have a strategic plan. We have created an expectation among the citizens for what their future will look like around here. We have promised a lot of infrastructure to address needs that the community has articulated. So if we have a plan that includes significant infrastructure needs, if we have a plan that includes

education as a top priority, which it does, we are going to need to be able to fund those needs.

And so you say in your question what impact would my recommendations have on staffing in the annual budget and what changes would I make? I think every Supervisor has the responsibility to take a look at what we spend our money on and make sure that it is focused as much possible on fulfilling the expectations of our strategic plan. That means we need to concentrate resources on things like economic vitality, transportation, education absolutely. And we need to be careful not to spend money on frivolous wants.

I will remind you that when the Board was confronted with taking the Crozet Library from a 1,900 square foot building to a larger building, I thought it was a great idea to make that happen, but I couldn't believe we decided to build a 20,000 square foot building. I suggested at the time that that was wasteful. It was millions of dollars more expensive than building a 10,000 square foot building to replace the 1,900 square foot building. And then I thought that that was kind of thing the County Board should be doing to advance the strategic plan but while being careful with the tax payer dollars. I was the only one that voted against that library in that particular case.

I voted against taking money and using it for these [athletic] turf fields. I objected to the turf field expenditure for two reasons. One; I objected to it because I thought that these fields weren't necessarily safe and I was uncomfortable with them. But as an entirely separate issue, the lion's share of the money being raised for those turf fields was coming from private fund raising and it seemed silly that the County would spend tax payer money on something that's going to be largely funded by private fund raising anyway. We should have those dollars available implementing our strategic plan.

There are a litany of choices that the County Board has to make when we make budget decisions that have to do with staffing and ultimately it's about implementing the strategic plan. And I think the more we keep focused on just those things that the strategic plan contemplates, and not drift into other areas that we would simply like to see happen, I think we will be able to most efficiently and effectively use tax payer dollars and achieve the plan and vision that we have for the future.

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

Again an interesting question. As I see it, and I might view this differently than others, I think supervisors have a job, where we are supposed to gather as much information and insight as possible on all the matters in front of us that pertains to the budget process, that pertains to priorities of polices such

as land use decisions or transportation planning. The supervisor's job is to go out and gather information, learn as much as we can, invest the time, use our good minds and our experiences in the world to really come prepared to the table to discuss policy choices and funding choices that the Board has to make.

We also have a responsibility to represent our voters. And a lot of times people describe me, unfairly I'd say, as you know this 'tax and spend liberal guy', because they hear me talk about taxes. I talk about taxes in the context of transparency. I want to make sure that the voters have an informed understanding of the issues that we are considering.

A good example though is that this last budget year I gathered a lot of information going into our budget discussions about our tax rate and our budget. And I identified some wasteful spending items. Some of which I have just described. I identified a list of funding priorities that I thought were consistent with what we had promised our voters. And then I went out and talked to my voters, and most years as I said, you know the voters tell me, oh you know, some of them want this and some of them want that, and some of them want taxes cut, some of them want infrastructure funded; this year it was just one voice coming from the community. I can't afford to pay more taxes, not this year.

And so even though I brought to the table an honest discussion, a transparent discussion so that the voters would understand what we were doing when we set out budget the way we did, that there would be some significant reduction in staff, that there would be some significant reductions in services, and there wouldn't be sufficient reserve in case things got worse, which I fear will happen. That was open and honestly discussed and on the table.

But in the end I think as a Supervisor I have to reflect the will of my voters, and I got such clear signals this year to not raise taxes that I led the charge to limit the taxes to a tax payer neutral tax rate. And I am concerned about the impact that that might have if revenues erode further. But that's also my job on the Supervisors, and that's to reflect the will of my voters. And I think I do a pretty good job frankly of doing my homework and coming to the table prepared to discuss, but I also think at the end of the day I do vote the will of my voters, at least I hope I do.

Thank you.

Thank you.