



2011 Albemarle County Board of Supervisors Candidate Interview September 2011

Candidate: Cynthia Neff (D)

On November 8, 2011, voters in the Rivanna Magisterial District go to the polls to elect their representative on the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors. This recording is Brian Wheeler's September 20, 2011 interview with Cynthia Neff (D). Neff's opponent is Ken Boyd (R).

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

http://cvilletomorrow.typepad.com/charlottesville_tomorrow_/2011/10/neff.html

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

INTERVIEW

Mrs. Neff, thank you for participating in this interview with Charlottesville Tomorrow. The complete audio and written transcript for this interview will be available online.

Information from this interview will be used in the compilation of the non-partisan voter guide being co-produced by Charlottesville Tomorrow and The Daily Progress. 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 primarily related to land use, transportation and community design.

As you are aware, candidates been provided in advance only the general topics for these questions. All Supervisor candidates will be asked the same questions. We ask that you keep these questions confidential until all candidates have been interviewed.

Each candidate will be provided an opportunity to review the excerpts selected for the voter guide before its publication. Are you ready to start?

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

Well thank you very much and first let me just say I appreciate this opportunity. You know, it's important that we all get a chance to talk about why we're doing this, because some people would think we were insane and so I think going through some questions like this tries to help dispel that rumor.

You know, somebody was giving me grief the other day about they'd read somewhere I'd said it's like, you know, it's kind of like I've been preparing my whole life for this role. And of course they were giving me a bad time. And what I was really talking about is that, you know, as a child of the 60s graduating from high school in 1969 – yes, I'm old – you know, you – you know, the world was a caring, giving, open space. We thought we could really change the world. And, you know, and I did. I was, you know, part of this movement. I was with the Flying Samaritans down in Mexico, you know, treating people on the hills and I really thought we could make a difference. And then like a lot of people I had to earn a living. I've supported myself since I was 18 years old and worked my way through school and I started to deal with the hard realities of – I don't have any money, I have no kind of wiggle room – I need to get a job and be productive. And I ended up being really good at that.

I ultimately – I started in business with a friend, but then I ultimately ended up at the IBM corporation. And I picked that company. They thought it was pretty arrogant of me to come in and say "I've decided to work for you." Because all I'd ever worked for was myself but I thought I was a real catch. And they were – they laughed and – but they hired me, because I think they said "We should put you in sales [laughs] with that kind of confidence." And so, I picked it because it was an ethical company. I picked it because it was one of the first companies that had a woman vice-president, that was the first companies that, you know, that embraced, you know, hiring black employees before there was rules that you had to. They did domestic partner benefits before it was trendy to do so. They really did believe in respect for the individual in those kind of things. So I picked it and it turned out to be great for me. I had about 29 careers while I worked at IBM. I learned that there was really no limits. I could almost do and be who I wanted to be and it was – there was really it was a merit-based system, I was held accountable for results, and I was recognized for results.

The last, you know, decade of my career with IBM I had responsibility for large, global organizations. You know, when we'll be talking about the capital budget and it's like I keep looking to procurement organizations, you know, most people if they haven't worked for large organizations don't know the

power a procurement organization has and really the amount of money they spend. I learned so much.

But finally I decided that in spite of being offered lots of, you know, money and options to stay that I wanted to get a life, you know? I came up in the time when women, if you were going to be an executive, you know, you had a career and that's kind of what I did and I had a great career, but I wanted to go get a life. I moved to Charlottesville. I picked Charlottesville. I spent about a year and a half studying places to move. There used to be this great little website called findyourspot.com. I don't know if it's still there. So if you're listening, you know, check it out. And it was this really comprehensive story that said, you know, here are the things that you like to do. Not just do you like sports, but do you go to games? High school, football, college, professional. Do you want a boost or do you want to go to get – so it was really this intense survey. I filled it out, mid-Atlantic because I have family in this area and it spit out Charlottesville.

So I started looking into Charlottesville, found out that ironically that a lot of people I know had come to UVA. My next door neighbor the lawyer had gone to the law school here. You know, once you get to a certain age nobody asks anymore what school you went to and so it was this amazing thing every time I said Charlottesville and people said, "Oh I would move back there if I could – it was this great place." So then I came down and I explored, so I decided this is the place I'm going to spend the rest of my life this – I'm going to make this a home. And then I did.

Moved down here, found a great place in Albemarle County, out in the Rivanna district and began to build a life. And I did that by, you know, contacting CASA and said, "You know, I would love to work with abused and neglected children. Can I make a difference there?" I got in touch with the AIDS organization and said, you know, "I lived in San Francisco during the plague, the hardest years of the plague," I – you know they're still a sore spot in my heart from AIDS. And so I care about that. And so, you know, I came and I now chair that board and I've chaired that board for the last couple years and it was kind of on and on I did that. I got involved with, you know, the local Democratic Party and, you know, tried to work on different candidates races and get involved. I kind of made – which I know is really twisted – a study of land use in the county.

I would find myself going to Board of Supervisors meetings voluntarily [laughs], just kind of wanting to understand what was going on. I used to hang out, I'd go – I didn't know a soul the first time I ever went to a hearing. I had lived here two months. Just to try to see what it was and I got a little jaded to be honest. I saw all these people wearing these buttons "Vote yes on North Pointe" – hundred people there, easily, wearing these buttons. And I'm like, "Why would they be doing that?" I mean I've never seen

neighborhoods come together and say, “Yay, let’s put in a big development.” And of course I found out it was the Great Eastern Management Company and I’m like “whoa – this doesn’t fit.”

So I started paying attention, I became involved with Places 29. Not to skip ahead I kind of learned that, you know, what Places 29 was about land use, a kind of land use that was not intuitive or obvious to somebody who was new, but that over time you really said “wow, this does make sense.” And so, you know, I mean I think I really bring this balance of, you know, having lots of other experiences but then having this experience. You know, when people ask me where I live, I live in Charlottesville. And to me, Charlottesville is this 726 square miles, you know, that we’re in the midst of and there’s not a difference between Albemarle and Charlottesville and that it’s this: we live here, I live here, this is my home.

I’ve had lots of management experience. I loved being in management. When I tried to get hired by IBM, I told them, they said “What are you good at?” I said, “I’m a manager.” I, you know, rose up through the ranks of IBM partly because I was a good leader and we got lots of feedback. I mean, we did the kind of 360 reviews where your employees were, you know, not only offered but, you know, encouraged in many ways to give feedback on their leaders. My peers would give it, my bosses would give it and so, you know, I really learned over time the kinds of things to do well. I learned the value of straight talk; I learned the value of decisiveness; I learned the value of working with people that you didn’t necessarily agree with; I learned the value of being held accountable. That, you know, hard work is not enough. Results do matter.

And so I think those are the kind of things when I look at the Board of Supervisors now, I say, “We need a lot more straight talk on the Board of Supervisors,” and I’ll talk a bit about that later but we need more straight talk about what is really happening and what is not happening. We need a balanced perspective. We need somebody who can really seek out the opinions of, you know, a variety of various voices. I think we need somebody to speak out for the voice of – for those who don’t have one. I worry about things like the social safety net and, you know, how are all people in the community, including those who don’t go to the Board of Supervisors meetings for entertainment. And so I think I bring all that. And I bring a passion for doing this. I mean, you do have to be a little insane to run for office. It’s kind of, you know, thankless and, you know, you put yourself up there and let people take shots at you and so you really have to be committed. I want to make a difference and I think I can.

2. What is your transportation agenda for the county? Does it require more money? How will you fund AND implement it?

So that is maybe the hardest question that I've seen on here. It goes to really one of the things that I have found most frustrating. I've heard people say that we haven't gotten our fair share of transportation money and yet I know that the State of Virginia has decided not to fund transportation, I mean probably most people know, you know, we have one of the like the third largest highway and secondary road system in the country and yet we don't really fund for the maintenance of it. And again, third largest secondary road system and there's no money. So one of the things that we really have to do is make sure that people understand who we send to Richmond and the voice in Richmond is really important. Not having transportation funding is hurting us. It's hurting us here.

But I think over and beyond that I don't think that we have had a really candid conversation with people about the whole thing of what not funding – what not finding funding for basic needs in the county is hurting us. I personally am looking forward to the next, you know, kicking off at the end of this month the Comprehensive Plan review. I think we have a unique opportunity, because I think this is a critical point. I think the frustration level has grown exponentially among residents that are saying, "What's going on here? Do we have a plan?" And I've been involved and I'm not sure we do. I know that we had a transportation plan for the neighborhood I live in called Places 29. And I know it kind of got thrown out of the window, but it's like even that Places 29 the answer I was always given, so like why aren't we widening 29? There's no money.

And I think people really need to understand what the lack of funding for transportation has done for our community. It means we're not keeping up with infrastructure. It means we're not really focused on the quality of life for our folks. It makes me absolutely crazy when I look at Pantops. Pantops – we're continuing to construct homes on Pantops when we know we have a traffic problem. And there's a part of me that says at some point when do we say, "Maybe we need to cease for a while until we can get some of this infrastructure done. And the fund that I think we have to talk to our citizens and the businesses in this community and say, "Is it okay that we just bring Pantops to gridlock?" I mean, I met with the new police chief the other day and I think they're quite concerned about how emergency vehicles are going to get up to the new hospital. And you know, the impact the impact that it's going to take for the police now to focus on that hospital that they didn't have.

We're already spread really tight with police. You probably know at any given evening there's like nine tops for 726 square miles. It's those kinds of things that we have to get in front of our citizenry and say, "Look, we have all these wonderful things here, but here's what's not working so well: we don't have

great police coverage.” And there’s an impact of that. Maybe it’s something we can live with, maybe it’s not, but we have to collectively decide. Likewise I think the biggest one is transportation. Well, transportation/education. We may talk about that. But I mean people need to understand what not funding these things means and where this funding comes from and where are our options.

The other thing that especially – which is – I know a lot of people would be surprised, but in places where I’ve been knocking on doors in Forest Lakes, in Hollymead, and off Proffit Road, and off Polo Grounds Road and over in Stony Point, people want to ride their bikes to work. And, you know, somebody like me I look and say, “Whoa, that’s a long way to get to UVA,” but they really want to ride their bike. And I – a guy the other day, an older guy, was looking at this Vespa that he had just bought and he said, “You know, I just threw away this money.” He says, “All of a sudden I realized I’m terrified, you know, to get on Proffit Road or to get on 29.”

And you know that’s not going to be for everybody, but I think we’re not making progress towards these goals of alternate transportations. We just kind of don’t talk about them because we erased the whole thing away – at least every meeting I’ve ever been in. There’s no money. And so I think we have to have a conversation about what does this “there is no money” means and start really building a priority list and I think it’s a balance.

3. How should the city, county and the University of Virginia work together to enhance our community’s unique character and economic vitality?

Again, this is like an absolute great question. It’s one that really resonates me and the first I go to is that we work together [laughs], I mean it’s question mark. If I could digress for a minute, there was – I was at a meeting actually looking at the Comprehensive Plan as they were doing some of their initial public meetings. And I got into a dialogue with a former mayor of the City of Charlottesville. And we were – and I asked her, “So why are we not making progress on the Meadow Creek Parkway? What can we do to kind of move that ball forward and really work together to kind of – because this is our problem now. This isn’t just the county’s.” “Well it was you county people.” I said, “Really? You know what my address is? Charlottesville. Charlottesville 22911. When people ask me where I live, it’s Charlottesville.” I said I don’t need a passport to come into the city. We’re one place. You know, I don’t understand these artificial constructs we’ve put up between us because they are inhibiting our progress. And the same thing with UVA.

We kind of – UVA is often an afterthought. And again, I go to this kind of – the power of a procurement organization for a large company. I don’t know what the number is, but it is huge. Millions and millions of dollars of

procurement that the University of Virginia does and of course they go out to low bidders, but you know there's a great opportunity for us to all sit down together with them and say, "Well, you know, let's see what we could provide locally." You know, "Let's, you know, maybe the city and the county we could work together in true economic development form and try to figure out how to give these our companies a chance to have like a little tax break or something so that they can compete and start to grow that business. But we can't – the county can't do that alone; the city can't do that alone.

It's the same thing with when I've talked to so many parents and so many teachers of late and I often say I say, "What do you think about the city and the county when in terms of education?" and they'll kind of look at me and I say, "Well because one of the things I really worry about is when I see the city looking at shutting down a school and the county at looking at adding one it makes me want to go bonkers because that just shouldn't happen." You know, we have an opportunity when you talk about expense management it's not enough to make incremental cuts. We have to look at fundamentally different ways of doing things. And the city and the county and oftentimes UVA, there is cohesion there if we could just make it work.

I think that the relationship between the city and the county is as bad as I've ever seen two organizations. There is kind of mutual disrespect and kind of an agreement to, you know, keep at their paces and I just think it's harming us. I think it's harming the community I live in and it's harming the other ones. I just think we have to do better. There is a real opportunity here. I mean, people when we talk about – there was, you know, one of the young men who was running for the city council in Charlottesville was talking about tourism. You know, again the three functions, the city, the county and university, we have a great story to tell why people should come and visit. It's because of Mr. Jefferson's university; it's because of the Downtown Mall and all the stuff that's there, and it's because the county is drop-dead gorgeous and has farms and wineries and this bucolic hillside. Together we have a powerful message, but it's not going to work if it's not together.

4. Should the board consider boundary adjustments for Albemarle County's designated growth areas to create new locations for business on land currently zoned as rural areas? Does it matter if the land is in the watershed of the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir?

No, yes. I mean, no, I am not comfortable at this moment expanding the boundaries of the growth area. I think especially with the Comprehensive Plan review coming up, we have a unique opportunity at this kind of pivotal point, I think, in our community. I mean I really sense that we've had this convergence of a lot of growth. We've had a lot of development. You know, there's jobs are tough to find. You know, there's not been the infrastructure

improvements. You know, there's been some stuff happening at the Board of Supervisors level. There's a frustration with government period bottom line. And I think all of that is coming together and people are anxious.

And so when I look at the Comprehensive Plan, it's an opportunity for us to determine where we're at now. What have we done? You know, what do we have now? What have we created? What really does it look like from a transportation standpoint? What does it look like from a school standpoint? I know I've been standing outside a number of schools and I'm seeing more trailers than I've ever seen, you know, here in the county. And, you know, what does that mean?

So you know and the growth area has taken a beating over the past five years in my opinion. You know, they've really kind of sucked it up and said, "Yes we understand we're the growth area." But the kind of the deal for that hasn't been finished. We haven't made it walkable, livable, bikeable, you know, self-you know-contained communities. And the rural area, you know, isn't feeling really secure either. You know, they've been worried about, you know, their ability to keep farms and what's going to happen to their development rights, and the ACE program has been, you know, kind of eliminated. Land use, everybody's nervous about that. And so, you know, we have to figure out what we have first before we make any changes to it.

I'm not certain that we need to expand into rural areas. Everybody uses Biscuit Run. "Well Biscuit Run went away and so now we've, you know, got to make it up." I'm not so sure. I really think we have to see what we do and if we can't afford to support with infrastructure and all that means schools – in the growth area that exists now. I mean, what are we going to do expanding it. And so I just, I don't support that. I think we have an opportunity to take a pause. And I would suggest there's at least ten projects that, you know, people want to expand and I think that's premature. I would not support that.

And I think that the south fork of the Rivanna Reservoir that you asked about – you know the South Fork of the Rivanna River is a critical part of our water infrastructure. I'm very nervous about, you know, the proposed bypass, you know, going so close to our water infrastructure. But certainly I don't think expanding into the growth area closer and closer to the critical elements. I mean we have – you know, protecting our waterways is hard enough and important enough that we ought to all recognize that and kind of have them off limits in my opinion.

5. What role should local government play to stimulate economic vitality? Do you support Albemarle's economic vitality plan and are there areas you recommend for improvement?

Another hard question! Well obviously, I mean, local government doesn't create jobs but local government can certainly do things to make a place more desirable to live in. I lived and worked in the Silicon Valley during the boom. I saw very effectively how Sunnyvale and Palo Alto and San Jose worked, you know to try to do things to make companies want to move to the Valley so that they would be part of this high tech revolution. The thing that a lot of it was though was road infrastructure, you know, schools, I mean they had to track – kind of drag out, "Here's our records on our schools," because they knew they had really bright employees who were going to expect that kind of stuff. But also roads were a big deal. I mean people – I saw companies start to move to San Jose versus, you know, Sunnyvale, Palo Alto and that kind of place because that was getting too crowded and so they said let's, you know, stretch down the Valley.

And so I think local government has to be engaged and have a development focus. We need an economic vitality focus within the county. You talk to anybody – I've talked to more people in the past weeks who are gainfully employed now but aren't seeing opportunity. You know, the kind of next thing: "I'm going to be 40; I can't find, you know, my next job here, my next opportunity. I'm looking at moving to Washington." So clearly the county has to be involved.

I think, in terms of the vitality plan that the county put together. I'm not sure that it has all of the right aspects of it. I don't – our vitality plan has to be really tied to UVA. It has to be really tied to the city. I think that, you know, I had a conversation at the doors the other day where the guy who, you know, was bemoaning the fact that, you know, we didn't – we'd lost all of our manufacturing jobs. I'm not sure we're going to get them back here. Hopefully jobs will start coming back from overseas. I've always been a proponent of someday the labor rate will universalize. It already has for – I mean if you're looking for a physicist, trust me I can tell you. If you're looking for a physicist, I've hired physicists and, you know, computer scientists, you know, PhDs, accredited in almost every country and their salaries almost leveling out. Now they have a much better lifestyle in India than they do in, you know, in upstate New York, but – and someday I think we're going to see manufacturing costs level out so some of this advantage that companies have been chasing overseas is going to eliminate and people want to come back also for quality.

I think that, you know, as we look here, there's more we can do on "buy local." You know, one of the things that my own little contribution was looking at the packages that dog treats, because I'm a dog lunatic. And the dog treats, and

I'm standing in a national chain store and I'm standing there and I'm looking and it's like it says "Made in China, not fit for human consumption." Well if you're like me, you kind of say, "Why would I feed that to my dog?" And so you find local businesses here who have food that is not made in China and that is fit for human consumption it's just made for dogs.

And so I think, you know, to being smart and it's focusing on the stuff that we do well and really trying to encourage and nurture certain industries. I think that there are industries coming today out of the University. They've just created their own kind of, you know, economic development and transference of intellectual property. We should be sitting down with them, you know, on a monthly basis trying to figure out how do we continue to drive that forward and attract businesses here against this backdrop of you have to have a place that companies want to come to. People aren't going to move here if we have gridlock. People aren't going to move here if we let our school quality deteriorate. And people aren't going to move here if it's not gorgeous. I mean that's our claim to fame. This is a gorgeous place to live with lots of smart people and Mr. Jefferson's university.

6. What is the top priority in your personal strategic plan for action by the board of supervisors if you are elected?

My personal strategic plan... Well if I was elected in November, the first thing I'd like to do in January is have a public hearing on the bypass. I am disappointed. You know, we can debate – which we won't do – the merits of the bypass or the lack of merits of the bypass or whether we should have one or whether it won't ever work, but we should have an opportunity to see the VDOT study and the environmental assessment.

I actually have talked to people who are in the medical profession and some people have told me, "So what?" But these guys are very credible and they talk about the risk, the real risk - not the perceived risk - the real risk of increased asthma rates of children who go that close to school. Now I know nobody cares about California. You know, it's wacky and all that kind of stuff, but I've got to tell you, California passed a law that they can't build roads within a thousand feet of schools. Our bypass is projected to come within a couple hundred feet of some of the schools and I just think we all should get a chance to see what the environmental assessment is of that and to have a conversation and for people to look and see, "Ah, this is what it's going to look like." It hasn't even been designed yet. And so to put it out to bid and assign a contract and none of this spring of 2012 after, you know, all the balls are in motion to invite the public in I think is not right. So that's the first thing I would do.

The second thing I think I would do is really is to focus on the Comprehensive Plan and make sure that that process is going to give us an accurate reflection of where we're at now. I don't know, we may collectively decide we need to do some modification. Maybe we'll decide we need to put more land into the growth area because we need more land to... Maybe we'll decide – my own personal bias coming out here – maybe we'll decide that we should really focus on redevelopment and taking Shopper's World and Albemarle Square and saying, "Let's keep that core of our business district healthy and vital before we move out even further." So but I think we can't do that unless we have a really clear picture today of where we're at.

One of the things I've been disappointed to find out was that in a – you know, that the county staff for example does not keep track of and review the cumulative impact of "okay, here's the current timeline, we've approved this much retail, this many homes, this many whatevers and here's how many remain unbuilt, here's how many are starting, here's where they are in the process," because we continue to look at each thing as its own entity and I think we've lost the cumulative impact.

I know I was at the Planning Commission a few weeks ago about a little neighborhood where they want to kind of drive right through the middle of it and it was because we needed more housing. Well I live up in the northern part of 29 off Proffit Road and I'm like, "Really, well that is a shock to me." Because I know that a lot of real estate agents are struggling because we have over 3,000 homes on the market. I know we've got over 10,000 homes already approved, just unbuilt, so is it really necessary to destroy this one little neighborhood for yet another 68 homes on 12 and a half acres. And so I think really the Comprehensive Plan – stopping and taking a look at where we are now – is the first step in us trying to figure out "where do we go from here?" You know, and it's got to be the good, the bad and the ugly [laugh]. You know, here's what we've done well, here's what we have not done well.

And then the last thing I'd really like – I have talked to so many teachers and so many parents. I would really to get, you know, with the school board I would really like to hear from these folks and have a kind of a public meeting and really talk about – I know that Ann Mallek held one in White Hall. I think that those were really helpful. I know in the Rivanna district I would love to invite parents and teachers in to talk about again, what are we doing right, what aren't we? I mean I've heard so many stories about the new schedules and the extra classes that they're teaching and, you know, that just things aren't kind of running on really smooth wheels and I think teachers and parents need a voice. And so I just – you know, before we go too far down the road with the budgeting cycle I think it would be healthy for us all to kind of take an assessment. So I think those three things would keep me busy for the first month. We can talk about February later.

7. Do you believe the Western Bypass project is consistent with the character of our community and the public's vision for transportation in Albemarle County?

No. I just don't. I have been so disappointed over the bypass. And let me tell you why. So when I moved here, I heard about these bypasses. I thought, "What a great idea." You know 29, especially that bottleneck at where 29 goes down to the, you know, couple lanes each way and goes up and down the hill like a roller coaster. And a bypass to just kind of skip 29 – wouldn't that be great. Of course the other thing is that I actually don't believe our traffic is as horrible here as sometimes we bemoan. I mean if you've ever lived in many other places – I mean there are worse traffic nightmares than here, but we're special, so I think we've really got to work to keep it that way.

But it took me a long time of working with the Places 29 plan to realize the time for a bypass – that part of the Route 29 highway is over. It's gone. If they'd had built that 20 years ago, it would have been different. You know, ten years ago, three of twenty of us didn't live here. But twenty years ago, three out of ten of us weren't here. It was that Forest Lakes didn't exist. Hollymead didn't exist. North Pointe wasn't even a sparkle in somebody's eye. Ruckersville, Madison, all this growth that's going up here. I think the time for the bypass passed and that took me a long time to really get my head around. "Wow, wow, so then what?"

So because of that, I really bought into the Places 29 plan, which many citizens did. I mean if you were there, you would remember there were lots of people who stood and studied and argued and – but we bought into it and we said, "You're right, what we need to do is we're not going to – there's no silver bullet. There's no one quick fix that's going to do this. We've got to make this a multi-faceted [approach]... We've got to kind of widen 29, we've got to use parallel roads, we've got to make alternate...roads for people can go through as a design for new developments there should be more than one entrance and exit from a place so that people don't all have to funnel out right on 29. And we bought into extending Berkmar Drive, we bought into, you know, the Hillsdale Drive extension, the Best Buy ramp, the – you know all these kind of things that were going to have the same effect as doing the bypass. And I think as it turns out, that's a way more kind of Charlottesville, way of dealing with things anyway—is not a big road.

I am appalled that \$100 million of eminent domain has gone on or is as we speak is going on. I – you know, I'm a Democrat and I'm not sure I could do eminent domain. It makes me very uncomfortable and I think to take \$100 million worth of people's property away to build a road that isn't – doesn't meet the needs kind of character of our county and our community and has so many questionable elements and will not fix the traffic. You know, I've

seen different numbers, but in the Places 29 study, 90 percent of the traffic on 29 at that end is local.

Then the last thing I kind of, you know, point out again and with the – is that when all those people come off on Ashwood Boulevard, then what? You know, we still have this huge part of 29 that is getting by the day more developed and more congested as is Ruckersville and as is Madison County. So what happens then? You know, we don't have a plan. This isn't going to fix the problem on 29 and it's going to destroy an awful lot and it's just – and then the way it was done. We won't go there. I just, you know, I mean it's really one of the reasons I'm running is I really believe in straight talk and openness and you and I should be able to go stand out in the sunlight and talk about my budget, my checking account, I mean who I am. And to do things like the Board of Supervisors have been doing of late is changing the rules as they go and not including people I just think is wrong. So... that was a no. That was a no on the bypass [laughs].

8. In recent budgets, the board of supervisors has chosen not to raise taxes to provide additional funds for capital budget needs such that the current capital budget primarily supports only maintenance projects. How will you address capital funding needs as part of the next county budget?

So the only word you left off there is the – you had “primarily supports only maintenance projects. I think that the actual word from the county executive was “minimally maintains what we have.” Minimally maintains what we have. And yet if I look at the capital needs budget, it's actually a funny document because it talks about all these grand and glorious things we're going to do. Here's our vision, we have walkable communities and they're self-sustained and then we're going to protect the rural areas, we're going to do – provide great quality of life and infrastructure. We're going to do all this stuff but oh by the way we don't have any money. And, you know, the first thing – I don't think it's just the Board of Supervisors. Now my opponent would argue with me, he believes in a representative form of government – “I was elected therefore I get to make the decisions.” I'm not so happy to that kind of thing. I mean, I think it's not my county, it's our county. It's our community and it's our money as it turns out. [Laughs]

You know we all kind of chip into this and I think that the reason I was unhappy this spring was that we didn't post – or advertise I guess is the technical – we didn't advertise a new tax rate is because we stopped short any opportunity to go back out to the people and say, “Here's where we're at, folks. Here's – as we talk to them – here's all the things we can't get done because we don't have any money.” I just think, you know, when if we start talking to teachers and say, “Guess what? We're going to have to lay off more teachers.” We start talking to, you know, commuters, “Guess what?

We're not going to be able to pave that road or add that turn lane." I think [laughs] if somebody was just to put in a right turn lane from Pantops up to Route 20 they could win any election. You know what I mean [laughs]. It was just like they'd be a hero, they'd carry people through the streets.

I mean, we're not talking Meadow Creek Parkway or bypass kind of dollars, but I mean what are some of the things that really are just pent up demand against – and tell them: "We can't do this, we can't do this, we can't do this, we can't do this. If we were to raise the tax rate one penny, here's what that would buy. What are the priorities. If we did it two cents. Here's how we compare to other places. Here's – you know, what kind of community do we want to be."

If you look at the Strategic Plan, if you look at the Comprehensive Plan, you look at the Economic Vitality Plan, we continue to articulate a vision for what this place looks like, what it feels like, you know, the kind of place it is to get an education, raise children, you know, conduct a business and yet we're not supporting those goals. We're not even being honest about the goals. We're not saying, "This isn't the goal. We can't meet this goal." If we're not – I don't know how you can have goals that we don't ever work on. You know, so when we say that we want to build walkable communities, walkable, bikeable communities, what are we doing? What are we doing to hold ourselves accountable for that. And if it's not feasible because there's no money, then we need to be honest with it.

We should take over the Daily Progress and Charlottesville Tomorrow and have them kind of help us communicate to people that say "we really need your input. You know, what is important to you? Are you okay with the status quo? Do you want to improve things? Do you want to do it over time? And so I think it's our community has to have an opportunity to be more engaged and because it comes up all the time.

You know, in the past few months I can't tell you how many people have told me, "Before you lay off any more teachers, please give us a chance to talk about taxes." You know, because nobody really wants their taxes – last night I was on the phone with two teachers who are married to each other and have children up on Stony Point Pass. And you know, they said, "Look, we don't have much money. You know, we're teachers" [laughs] – which we could have a whole other conversation about – but "we don't have much money because we're teachers." But it's like "before you cut more teachers or get, you know, or make our lives, you know, even more difficult than they are, as taxpayers can't we talk about that?" So I think yes, we should be talking about that. So, that's – I mean I don't have a firm answer because I think it's not just my decision. It is our decision what we do.

9. How will you support preserving the rich agrarian tradition and texture of our rural areas?

Well, you know, I mean it's kind of a deal that Albemarle County has worked out with between the rural lands and the growth areas is that, you know, we have this – there's a delicate balance by design, you know, but we were going to keep the rural areas rural and we were going to keep the, you know, the all of our growth into specific things and the growth people would have walkable communities and blah, blah, blah, these amenities and the rural people would have these beautiful hillsides. We'd make it easier for them to have farms, you know, land use, conservation easements. We'd give them all these breaks. And I think on both ends of that equation, we're kind of slipped a bit on the deal.

But I'm pretty committed to keeping rural land rural. I mean because – in fact it's pretty funny. I live my side of the street is rural; across the street from me is the growth area. So I really have a foot in both things and I can see the difference. You know, when I first moved here, Ken Boyd thought maybe I should get my neighbors on my side of the street together and put our land into the growth area and I said, "Well why in heaven's sake would I do that?" And he said "to make your land more valuable." And I said "well, but we have cows on my side of the street; we have chickens on my side of the street and I don't – I can't see that we should be, you know, developing on that land." And none of my neighbors – I mean, they like that. And as well, but it's like they want to keep their land rural. And the folks in the growth area, you know, want the amenities that are supposed to come with that. And so we've got to keep that balance.

And we can't destroy the deal further by letting lots of growth. I mean, it's happening, you know, without us – I mean it's one of the things by not tracking what we're doing and having a real sense. You know, when you stop and look back, we've developed a lot of the rural area and I'm not sure that's what we really intended as a community to do.

And so, I would love to see the ACE program come back. I've stood on property where people have looked at me and said, "Three hundred years from now, this land will still look like this." You know, and it kind of takes your breath away, I mean, so I think that's a powerful program. I think that, you know, we've had a lot of confusion in the land use, you know, requirements and people who aren't sure. And you know, there's a lot of, you know, elderly folks who are, you know, that own property that, you know, their value is in that land and so, you know, we have to really figure out how to make this work for both the folks in the growth area and the folks in the rural area so we can meet our goals of keeping it gorgeous.

10. Will you consider raising the real estate property tax rate in the next county budget to invest in capital funding priorities? Why or why not?

Well I think we talked about that a bit before but I mean again, I think it's a collective decision; I think we have to – you know, there was a conversation about the schools. I mean this is part of why I keep harkening back to the Comprehensive Plan. We have to see what we've done but we also have to take into account these maybe it's more than 10 thousand, could be 11, 12 thousand new homes. And where they end up it has a huge impact on our water, on sewer, on all those kind of, you know, infrastructure things but it also has an impact on schools.

I was really disheartened a couple of months ago to read in the paper people were acting surprised that our schools were crowded. Well how can you be surprised our schools are more crowded than when they were built when we have more people here. You know, we have really increased the size of our population over the past 20 years so of course schools... So why aren't we planning for that?

I don't think – I mean, we need to have open books in the county. We need to make it easy: the point of entry and access for people to understand that if we know that we're going to have 10,000 more kids going to school, then what is our plan? It's irresponsible to not have a plan. And if we have a plan, then how are we going to fund that plan. And again, I think we have to be open and honest and engage in a dialogue with our citizens. I think they're smarter than we give them credit for.

11. Should the board of supervisors support moving the Rivanna Sewer Pump Station from its current location in Woolen Mills even if it will cost city and county ratepayers an additional \$15 million to \$18 million to do so?

So it's interesting. Again, because you know, I have this aberrant behavior of sitting in Board of Supervisors meetings. I've heard the people from Woolen Mills get up and speak about this. And you cannot listen to people talk about the impact of living [laughs] with the sewage treatment, you know, facility in your neighborhood until you've actually sat there and listened to people, one person after another, I mean you kind of come awake going, "wow, that's not right." You know, and then you hear these statistics like we're the only major part of – that has one of these right in the middle of its city limits and near a water and all this kind of stuff. So I'm pretty comfortable now that it needs to be moved.

I'm encouraged that we're exploring alternatives other than the kind of knee-jerk "oh we'll move it up next to State Farm" because I've talked to the folks at

State Farm and they're not so hot for having this sewage treatment facility on a piece of property that they're holding in abeyance for in case they have growth. Pissing off one of our major employers in the county just does not seem bright to me. You don't need to put that in there, but – so I'm glad we're looking at that.

I think at the end of the day, sometimes the cheapest decision isn't the best decision. And I think we need to make this transference work. You know, I think we need to move it and I think we need to make it work. And it may not be the cheapest solution and I think sometimes you just have to kind of suck it up. And I think this may be one of them. You know, it is a sewage treatment facility and if you've walked over there as I have – I actually went down there because you know, I've been saying - I went down there and walked around and sure enough you can smell it. And it wasn't even a hot day and you know with the people talked about. And so I empathize with them.

I mean it's a historic area down there too. I mean if you've ever really walked down there, I mean, it's a gorgeous area and there's a lot of history with ports and stuff down there so I think this is a very thoughtful decision. I mean, sewage infrastructure is important, but so is that little spot on the planet. And so I expect that it will be – it won't be the cheapest solution that wins the day.

Thank you very much for speaking with us.