



2013 Albemarle Board of Supervisors Candidate Interview

Candidate: Cindi Burket (R)

On November 5, 2013, voters in the Scottsville Magisterial District go to the polls to elect their representative on the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors. This recording is Brian Wheeler's September 17, 2011 interview with Cindi Burket (R). Burket's opponent is Jane Dittmar (D).

The audio of this interview and complete election coverage is available on the Charlottesville Tomorrow website:

http://www.cvilletomorrow.org/topics/county_elections/

INTERVIEW

Ms. Burket, 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, The Daily Progress, and the League of Women Voters. 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, public education, and community design.

As you are aware, some of the questions you will be asked have been provided in advance, others have not. All Albemarle 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 the Albemarle Board of Supervisors.

I have a Bachelor's from Penn State University in Law Enforcement and Corrections and I have a Masters in Public Administration from George Mason University. I have been past president or chair of several organizations here in Albemarle County including the Newcomer's Club of Greater Charlottesville, the Albemarle-Charlottesville Republican Women's League, and the Albemarle County Republican Committee. I have lived in the County since 1997. I have the ability to work collaboratively. I try and bring optimism and enthusiasm to any critical work that is being in done. I have a strong work ethic to do the research, go onsite, engage the public with phone calls, e-mails, meeting in person, or whatever it takes to get to the bottom of all the issues that come about.

2. What is your top priority for action by the board of supervisors if you are elected?

This is an interesting question. I want to preface everything by saying that I do not come with a pre-described agenda. I am here to make sure that all the issues that come in front of the board are viewed on their own merits. However, in a general sense I would like to promote a working environment that encourages innovative thinking and citizen input, basically setting a tone for the county.

A generalized priority would be creating a long range county plan that encourages growth and protects our environment. A plan that includes improving the image of the county's business climate, simplifying the development review process, nurturing small business growth, and creating a career ladder job structure that provide a myriad of career opportunities. I've gone around and talked to folks in the last month or so and met an incredible number of entrepreneurs. We need to make sure that those folks are encouraged. I'm talking real small business, where they go the farmer's markets and they make their goods, and they come and sell them at the farmer's markets. We need to make sure that that environment is there so there is a general tone that this is a county that wants to work with me.

3. Do you support the construction of the Western Bypass of U.S. 29? Why or why not?

Yes I support the construction of the bypass, this road needs to be built to reduce the traffic congestion and address the accident rate on this part of the 29 corridor. Furthermore I'd just like to remind people that this construction project also includes the other needed work including the extension of Hillsdale Drive, the Best Buy ramp and the widening of 29.

4. Name one specific area of the county budget that you are concerned about and why. Do you think it deserves more funding or less?

I strongly believe each issue brought before the board needs to be considered on its own merits. However if I was going to name one specific area of the budget that is of some concern I would say the police department's budget. It is a core function of any local government and I think these areas are underfunded. We need to provide the recommended number of officers for Albemarle County and the training that goes along with it. This would include support structure for fire and rescue as well.

5. Are the cash proffers paid by residential real estate developers too much, too little, or just about the right amount to contribute to the costs for community infrastructure?

I think proffers are too high. We should at the very least go back and crunch the numbers that determine the cost of the proffers. We also should analyze the effect that proffers have on the cost of affordable housing and perhaps the unintended consequences of builders skipping the rezoning process because of the fees. I think we should look at the entire process.

6. If real estate tax revenues increase, should Albemarle lower its property tax rate? Why or why not?

I think not. Unless it were to go on for a long time, I think we can just keep the property tax where it would be.

7. What is the best example to date of Albemarle County's neighborhood model form of development and why do you like it? What improvements could be made to our community's placemaking efforts?

Right now the best example is Old Trail in Crozet. It is idyllic in what it does. I think there are some limitations to that model, and I want to say that there are other developments in the county that are just as successful in terms of growth and maintaining education, infrastructure and all of those things. But knowing what the neighborhood model is supposed to do; I think old trail has captured that. People do ride their bike to the store, yet it is in a beautiful area, but I think the limitation is that it just can't be everywhere. There is just not enough land or interest. I also think that was sort of what Stonefield was supposed to be, but guess what – now we got Big Box there. So it is never totally in place, so that would be a limitation. I do like the model, but I think it has its limitations.

WHEELER: And the follow-up was: Are there any improvements that could be made to our community's placemaking efforts?

I would like to see businesses that develop themselves within those neighborhoods be encouraged to come in to those neighborhoods. I think now there are only certain things that come in, we need to widen perhaps that scope of businesses that are allowed to come in to the neighborhoods.

8. Business leaders and social service agencies have told the Albemarle Board of Supervisors that new investments are sorely needed in the area of early childhood education. Will you make pre-K education and quality childcare a priority and if so how?

Understanding that programs like Head Start, where their funding from federal government and other places are decreasing, not just Head Start but a lot of programs that took care of those children. I think we should consider putting some money into that but as far as individual programs, they would all need to be evaluated on their own merits and include every facet of what would make good early childhood education, particularly with childcare. Those are all issues that we all as a community need to do but we may have to get creative in figuring out how to fund them.

9. How would you describe the challenges and opportunities facing Albemarle County's rural farms, fields, and forests?

The opportunities are endless in terms of the fact that the rural areas are what attract most people to come to Albemarle County. It is the natural beauty, the clean water and clean air. We have done an excellent job so far protecting all of those things. The challenge is going to be making sure we keep that 95 to 5 [percent] ratio of rural to development areas, being very careful that if we do something rezoning it is done methodically with great care so that we can maintain that very delicate balance between growth and environmental concerns.

10. Describe a part of local government that would benefit from increased city and county cooperation and that you would make a priority.

What really needs to happen is [we need to] have a process already in place or a committee already in place so that when something comes up – We should talk to the County, or we should talk to the City – it is already there. Someone just goes in and says we would like this to be discussed, could we collaborate on this, instead of having to go through the whole process of getting a committee together it is already done; and we simply get approval in terms of scope of the investigation. To have an automatic task force committee ready to go so that we don't miss an opportunity to collaborate and cooperate with the City.