

2009 SPPACE QUESTIONNAIRE

Bill Toole Belmont City Council

1. **What are the top three issues your community needs to address? How would you propose to tackle these issues?**

Maintaining our small town essence while encouraging the healthy growth of neighborhoods, jobs, and our downtown is Belmont's number one challenge.

2. **Because of present economic realities, what changes do you propose to your town's policies and regulations?**

We must be more efficient with fewer revenues, because the economic recovery is likely to take a very long time. Any town regulation must help our local businesses by promoting a healthy community and strong economy.

3. **Do you believe your town should fund school capital costs, parks, roads, transit, police and fire protection needs for your town? Should purchasers of new homes be responsible for funding these services for the entire town? Do you believe that these types of proposals are a fair way to pay for required services to existing taxpayers?**

Every town must provide police and fire protection. Parks are an important amenity for our citizens which should be funded to the extent revenues are available. Funding the capital costs of schools, roads or transit are not town functions. Purchasers of new homes should participate in the funding of town services just as existing residents do and under not circumstances should be asked to pay any more than their fair share.

4. **How would you encourage your town's/community's economic growth while including a variety of housing types and prices?**

Before the recent downturn, land in Belmont without direct access to sewer and water was selling for between \$65,000 and \$70,000 an acre. This meant the minimum selling price for a new home in a dense community would be in the \$200,000 range and, on a $\frac{3}{4}$ acre lot, would approach \$800,000. The base price of land limits the various housing price points that can be made available. Certainly, the town should promote infill development where sewer and water is already available, as this will help keep housing construction costs down.

5. **Recently adopted ordinances and policies have increased development costs and as a result will increase prices for office, industrial and retail space, as well as housing. What could be done to lower development costs in order to prevent families and businesses from relocating across county lines?**

Belmont is an attractive relocation alternative to Mecklenburg, and promoting healthy growth is essential to the future of Belmont. I intend that no town policy or regulation would stand in the way of Belmont being the preferred destination for businesses and families to relocate, and for others to come visit and shop.

6. **Would you support a cost/benefit analysis for existing and proposed land use regulations in order to ensure that the purported benefits outweigh their negative impact on economic development and housing affordability?**

Yes. As a natural resources lawyer who has represented numerous developers over the past twenty years, I find this is a basic decision making tool.