

2009 SPPACE QUESTIONNAIRE

Teri Leonhardt Huntersville Town Commissioner

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

The three top issues for Huntersville to address are as follows:

- A. Infrastructure needs: Road improvements and widening have not kept pace with growth. Subsequently traffic congestion is worsening and significantly impacting many citizens quality of life commuting to work and sitting in traffic. Environmental concerns with regard to air quality and federal funding dollars also weigh heavily on this need. Local leaders need to work cooperatively and collectively to seek state and federal dollars for roads. Lobbying with one voice for high priority projects will help advance some projects within the state ranking system. Commitment of local dollars to those projects and partnering with the state will also help elevate high priority projects within the state ranking system. Finally, local leaders need to work together to address the allocation of state Department of Transportation (DOT) funds for local projects and continue asking why the Charlotte Metro region lags behind the eastern part of the state in their fair share of the distribution. Careful examination of the ranking system utilized by the DOT should also be examined.
- B. Sewer needs for the eastern extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction (ETJ) of Huntersville need to be carefully considered and local leaders should work together with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Utilities Department and private developers to help elevate the ranking of the sewer line for Ramah Creek in priority.
- C. Business recruitment and job creation in an effort to diversify the tax base and lessen the burden on the residential taxpayer should another primary goal. My goal would be to recruit another large industry to the North Mecklenburg Business Park in Huntersville and work with area business to help retain our present businesses and prevent any further job losses.

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

I would be in favor of maintaining a stable tax rate, no new taxes, and tightening the budget wherever possible. When the economy begins to turn and growth is favorable, I would support a bond referendum for the voters aimed at addressing transportation infrastructure needs and a new police station for Huntersville. However, given our current economic situation, those needs should be tabled until the taxpayer can recover from our current economic downturn and business growth is stable. With regard to changes to the town's policies and regulations, I believe town staff, the planning board and elected officials should work with our business and development community to help facilitate their needs wherever possible. If that should mean adjusting some zoning regulations and possible text

amendment changes to the town planning code, I would be willing to listen to those arguments and suggestions with an open mind and consider changes as appropriate.

- 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?**

I do not believe that the town should begin paying for school capital costs. This double taxation method is concerning to me and would set precedent. If the state and Mecklenburg County can not meet our growth needs then they should put a voter bond referendum on the ballot in 2010 or 2011 to address capitol needs and new schools.

The town of Huntersville in the past has shared a great working relationship with Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department and most of the town's park land has been bought through county land banking bonds approved by the voters in the past. Development of the parks has been a shared expense and Huntersville has also shared in the operational expenses of the parks from that point forward. I feel that the town has a good working relationship with the county in partnering for the development of new park land and this has helped tremendously in addressing major facility needs for the town with regard to ball fields, soccer fields and areas of active recreation.

Huntersville has also worked cooperatively with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System to partner wherever possible in addressing gymnasium space needs with new school development. I was proud to be on the town board at the time of the Barnette Elementary Gymnasium agreement and the Lake Norman Charter School Gymnasium agreement with the town for sharing in gymnasium space. I believe wherever the town can partner with other entities they should.

Transit is a great idea philosophically but no real funding has been allocated or designated to address the North Rail line so until that time and in the current economic environment it is a moot point. When and if funding for the North Rail line exists then we can debate the point of transit, but it will take a pool of funds both federally and on the state level and more than likely a sales tax increase to even begin to address the funding for transit. With regard to police and fire protection needs I feel it is the job of the town to address those needs. Huntersville will soon be over 45,000 citizens and is quickly approaching the size of most cities. These will be basic services provided by most cities our size and we need to plan accordingly in our budgets and capital projections to transition towards these goals.

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

Economic growth is fundamental to a strong tax base and should be a priority of the town, its leaders and the local chamber of commerce. I feel we have a great mechanism to keep businesses in the community strong and to recruit new businesses to the area. The Lake Norman Economic Development Commission (LNEDC) and the Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce (LKNCO) along with local elected officials and town staffs work well together in meeting those needs. Local municipal funding for those organizations that previously has been prorated by the town's populations has been a good method of addressing their needs and working with the business community. I would like to work toward bringing a new business to the North Mecklenburg Industrial park which is a great example of the three

towns working together cooperatively on behalf of each other to keep jobs locally and bring new jobs to the area.

- 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?**

Working together with developers and local business to address needs with small town forums and inviting them to the table with concerns and suggestions is crucial to keeping existing businesses here healthy and engaged in the community. Keeping the cost of developments down without compromising the integrity of the project and adding to the bottom line would be something that should be presented at this forum for suggestion. Including the LNEDEC and the LKCOC, local developers, town officials and the town planning staff and planning board would be one way to establish an open dialogue for suggestions and changes. Lastly, whenever necessary incentives should be used to lure as appropriate new business and jobs to the area or as tool to keep existing businesses that may be expanding and adding new jobs.

- 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 impacts on economic development and housing affordability?**

I would be in favor of supporting any analysis for existing or proposed land use and will always keep an open mind in considering these elements for the future discussion and decision making.