

2010 SPPACE Questionnaire

COREY THOMPSON

Candidates for the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners At-Large

- 1. What are the top three issues facing Mecklenburg County and how do you propose to address them?**

The number one issue facing Mecklenburg County is our out-of-control spending. As a County Commissioner, I plan to address the issue by aggressively seeking to eliminate wasteful spending. This will be accomplished by scrutinizing how the county spends each and every taxpayer dollar, and by distinguishing between Mecklenburg County's "wants" and "needs." We must also reevaluate our local priorities in regard to budget allocation. Doing so will reestablish trust in our elected board, and provide transparency where it has long been absent.

The second issue would be in developing new private-industry jobs. I would argue that it isn't the role of the government to create jobs. The role of the government is to ensure an economic environment (locally) in which job creation is encouraged using free market practices. The way we get there is by reducing taxes and by cutting 'red tape' and fees on local businesses. Government needs to get out of the way by limiting its involvement to a bare minimum. The resulting economic impact will be positive, and one that will snowball into future growth and job creation throughout the county.

The third issue I would address would be in providing a renewed commitment to government transparency on behalf of the people of Mecklenburg County. In the wake of the recent DSS scandal (and subsequent lack of transparency), the community lost faith in the ability of our leaders to remain accountable to 'the people.' After gutting local budgets, pay freezes, and layoffs last year due to the economic crisis, the Board of County Commissioners continued to launch new spending initiatives and awarded bonus payments to county management. Since that time, we've been told that more cuts are on the horizon, even at the expense of education, libraries, and parks and recreation. It's time for someone with the courage and charisma to step forward and provide the leadership necessary to hold the Mecklenburg County Commission accountable to the citizens we serve.

- 2. In 2007, the North Carolina General Assembly authorized counties, subject to voter approval, the ability to impose an additional general fund revenue source (a .4% land transfer tax or a .25% sales tax). Do you support a .4% land transfer tax? Do you support a .25% sales tax? Please explain your answer.**

No. In an era of economic hardship and a sagging real estate market, the last thing we need is additional taxation/fees that will burden the people of our community even more. I believe that a responsible approach should be taken to lower all taxes, and to seek new

methods of eliminating the fees and ‘red tape’ that place a burden on the real estate market and the people we serve.

- 3. It has recently been reported in the local media that Mecklenburg County faces an estimated budget shortfall of \$16 to \$60 million dollars in FY 2010-2011. How do you plan to address this issue?**

As stated earlier, I plan to address the issue by aggressively seeking to eliminate wasteful spending. This will be accomplished by scrutinizing how the county spends each and every taxpayer dollar, and by distinguishing between Mecklenburg County’s “wants” and “needs.” We must also reevaluate our local priorities in regard to budget allocation.

- 4. Do you support Public-Private Partnerships for the construction of schools? Please explain your answer.**

Yes. I gladly support any measures that promote competition and will reduce the burden on Mecklenburg County. Free market competition will, of course, help reduce costs and provide the county with additional options for school construction projects. In turn, doing so will also encourage private-sector job creation.

- 5. If the General Assembly authorized Mecklenburg County to hold a “Pennies for Progress” referendum similar to South Carolina’s, would you support putting the measure before voters? If yes, for what infrastructure projects (i.e. roads, schools, parks, libraries, courts, jails, etc.) would you advocate using the money?**

Yes, I would certainly be in favor of bringing the measure before voters. However, I would warn that if we hold a voter-referendum, we must commit (in advance) to uphold the will of the people after voting has concluded. If passed, I would like to see the funds used for a variety of projects to reduce the strain on the county budget. Of course, as an educator, I would make schools and libraries a top priority, along with jails, law enforcement/crime prevention, and roads.

- 6. Are you in favor of the Mecklenburg County playing a role in incentivizing environmentally sustainable development? Please explain your answer.**

I would be in favor of such projects if they provide a specified and proven benefit to the county, and will ultimately help reduce spending in another budget-related area. In regard to incentives, I will only support those incentives that are also offered to entities and corporations already located within the boundaries of Mecklenburg County.