

## 2010 SPPACE Questionnaire

**JENNIFER ROBERTS**

### **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?**

Three top issues facing the County are high unemployment, declining County revenues, and the drop-out rate for students not finishing high school. I have been working with the City and Chamber to attract new jobs and new companies, targeting certain sectors and utilizing the County's economic development grant program. We also secured federal money for 500 jobs for low income workers. We are managing declining revenues by working to leverage resources, combine back office functions, and seek out private partners where possible, while making across the board cuts as well. We are increasing our collaboration with the City, CMS, and outside agencies with proven track records to lower the school drop-out rate.

- 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.**

I support additional revenues if they are supported by the electorate. The people get to choose by referendum on the sales tax/transfer fees. Right now is not the time for any additional taxes.

- 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?**

The budget shortfall is closer to \$95 million for FY11. I explained the tactics we are using to address this in #1.

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

I support public-private partnerships for school construction but it will be several years before we can take on any new debt for school construction, whether done with a private partner or not. Our debt capacity is currently at its limit.

- 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?**

I would not support a "pennies for progress" initiative this year because we don't have the money to operate any new facilities that we might build with it. We also need to let the current additional state sales tax increase role off before people could consider another sales tax increase. I might be willing to consider it in the future once the economic environment changes.

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

I have always supported economic incentives for "green" construction, such as the green permit rebate program we currently have. I understand this permit rebate may be recommended for removal by the County manager because of our budget crisis, but I will vote to continue offering it.