

Charlotte City Council – District 5 2009 Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Darrell Bonapart

Phone Number: 704-890-2771

Email Address: Votebonapart@yahoo.com

What is the number one issue facing our community and how do you plan to address it?

Public Safety and Economic Development are somewhat equal in needing increased attention by council. However, job loss (Economy) is at a very distressed level in the city especially in District 5. Business development and job creation are in dire need. Homelessness and foreclosures on residential and commercial properties are at an all time high in Charlotte. My intent to address this matter for District 5 is to increase the opportunities and incentives for small business owners to start up in fragile districts. Having a tangible, workable stimulus plan for a business district would be appealing for those wanting to invest especially new entrepreneurs. To have a successful Economic Development initiative there must be an effective, results-driven public safety effort in practice. In addition, my goal will be to aggressively work with the NC Film Industry to attract more movie production into our city. In 2007, there was \$161,000,000 spent in North Carolina by the movie production industry. The governor signed the bill into law last week increasing the credit companies receive from shooting productions from 15% to 25%. Lastly, I have begun the process of implementing a Business Development Organization for the Charlotte East business districts that will eventually lead to us having a model the same as the Center City Partners and University City Partners.

Do you support a transfer tax or impact fee on real estate? Please explain your answer.

No. I'm not overly impressed with establishing impact fees or increasing the fees to developers as a way of addressing budget shortfalls. If we are truly trying to establish a balance of affordable housing then creating more financial burdens on developers that has to be passed to homeowners is not the best solution. I understand the philosophy of the fees, but I'm not in complete agreement at this time.

How do you propose to keep housing affordable in our community?

Jobs-housing balance is an important strategy for decreasing commute time, reducing pollution, increasing community focus (if we live and work in the same community), and mixing incomes to create healthier neighborhoods and jurisdictions.

Cannot deconcentrate poverty without deconcentrating wealth. Must begin to create policies and plans that do both.

Reduce land-use barriers

- *Weed out zoning conflicts, and disincentives for innovative and affordable housing (i.e. set-back requirements vs. density requirements)*
- *Reduce off-street parking requirements in SF zones and for MF housing when studies show less is needed (elderly, poor, etc.) as well as on transit corridors.*

- *Mixed-use and higher-density zoning in city, regional, and town centers and along transit corridors.*

Inclusionary housing policies, voluntary and mandatory, have been suggested for developing additional affordable housing in our community. Do you support any type of inclusionary housing policies? Please explain your answer.

Inclusionary Zoning is truly effective if it is being utilized throughout the entire city as intended and the impact to developers is not one that impedes the opportunity for successful affordable housing developments. Continually there has been discussion, year after year; regarding Inclusionary Zoning but it continues to happen predominantly in the East and West quadrants of the city. There is a bit of hypocrisy to speak of wanting to protect the property values of communities by limiting low-income housing in any one area when we have so many children and families homeless. I'm working on how to take a definitive stand on this matter and will be consistent in my discussions with developers and residents to achieve my individual balanced approach.

Do you support a fee-based rental registration program for all rental units throughout the city of Charlotte? Please explain your answer.

When the initial discussion of the fee-based rental registration was brought up, I thought it was just for single-family housing. My experience of absentee landlords was with those of SF homes. I wasn't aware of issues with MF units having to address absentee landlords. I'm not prepared to say I support it for all rental units. In addition, I need to have a clear understanding as to how the funds from this initiative are going to be used.

Paying for roads is a community responsibility. How do you plan to address prioritizing and funding the road construction and maintenance needs of Charlotte?

As a way to ease congestion in metropolitan areas, the demand for roads can be mitigated by increased investment in public transit.

There is an issue with the city having to fund and maintenance state roads, which are sorely under funded by the NC DOT. This issue has added to dilemma of the city trying to find ways of funding public and state roads by imposing fees on developers. This is, in my opinion, an unhealthy precedence to have begun.

Charlotte roads are not in a state of serious maintenance repair although there is a need for more roads to be added. Many roads needing repair are state roads, which are behind schedule to due the state's budget shortage.

Roads that present the most danger for travelers are ones that I would prioritize for repair. I will need to look over all the funding options available to the city in order to make an intelligent decision on what I would support. Raising taxes or increasing fees on businesses is not something I'm in favor of implementing.