



## **2009 Charlottesville City Council Candidate Interview September 2009**

*Candidate: Kristin Szakos (D)*

On November 3, 2009, voters in the City of Charlottesville go to the polls to elect their representatives to two seats on the Charlottesville City Council. This recording is Brian Wheeler's September 1, 2009 interview with Kristin Szakos (D). Ms. Szakos is being challenged by Bob Fenwick (I), Paul Long (I), Dave Norris (D), and Andrew Williams (I-Write In).

*The audio of this interview is available online in the  
Charlottesville Tomorrow News Center*

[http://cvilletomorrow.typepad.com/charlottesville\\_tomorrow\\_/2009/10/szakos.html](http://cvilletomorrow.typepad.com/charlottesville_tomorrow_/2009/10/szakos.html)

*Complete election coverage is available on the Charlottesville Tomorrow website*

<http://www.cvilletomorrow.org/elections>

### **INTERVIEW**

**Ms. Szakos, thank you for participating in this interview with Charlottesville Tomorrow. The complete audio and written transcript for this interview will be available on the Internet. Information from this interview will be used in the compilation of Charlottesville Tomorrow's non-partisan voter guide. Charlottesville Tomorrow does not endorse any candidates and our goal is to provide information to the public so they can make an informed vote on issues related to land use, transportation, and community design.**

**As you are aware some of the questions you will be asked have been provided in advance, others have not. All City Council candidates will be asked the same questions, are you ready to start?**

Yeah, thanks for having me.

#### **1. Please describe your past experience that qualifies you to be on City Council?**

Well my education, I went to Grinnell College in Iowa and worked for a couple of years and then went to Graduate School in Journalism at Northwestern in

Chicago. And I think that that was probably the best combination of education I could have to be a City Councilor. A liberal arts education which prepared me for learning a lot about a variety of things. And then a journalism education which prepared me for really getting deeply into complicated issues and figuring out how to synthesize them in ways that regular people can understand them and that I can understand them. So that's I think – both are really good things and I have kind of come through my life. I certainly wasn't planning to go into politics, but when I started thinking about running for City Council I thought those are very good preparation.

Just civically in the community, I have raised my kids here. I have two daughters who are 18 and 19 years old. I have generally found myself getting involved in a lot of groups as they have grown up. I was the President of the Burnley-Moran PTO for a while and I was active in the PTO council. I was on the board of a local NAACP when it was still the Charlottesville NAACP. I am a second generation NAACP member. I am a Vestry member at Trinity which is the leadership board of my church, Trinity Episcopal Church. I was also the volunteer coordinator for the Obama campaign for the last year and a half before last November, and continue to be on of the local coordinators for Organizing for America.

**2. Do you support the formation of a Regional Transit Authority with Albemarle County? What are your regional transportation priorities and how do you recommend we fund them in the absence of new state funding and without the ability to raise a local sales tax?**

Well, I certainly think that we need to work closely with the County on transportation issues. We have kind of an urban core of our community that includes a lot of the County. And then we have a rural ring around it or kind of a star-shaped urban core however you want to look at it. And I think that the transportation issues that face the City also face that urban core of the County.

On the other hand I think for a lot of rural residents in the County they have very different transportation needs, very different needs for public transportation. The idea of light-rail from Crozet to Charlottesville I think is something that would interest a lot of people in those areas. But I am not sure that they would want to continue to fund an urban transportation system. And I would worry if they were combined that there would always be that pressure to not fund it adequately, because it doesn't serve the entire region.

So I am not quite to the point of wanting to combine completely, but I think we do need to work closely together, because we have a lot of shared needs and a lot of shared resources that we can use. I think that there are some things that the County has done really well in transportation and other things the City has done well and I think we can learn from each other.

As far as priorities, my priorities within the City are to try to reduce the number of cars in the City, not the number of cars people own, but the number of cars, although that too, the number of cars that people are driving. I think you know a lot of parts of the City have congestion. We have a lot of traffic by residential areas. We have people cutting through neighborhoods and there are various ways that we can address that. And I think one way is to reduce the number of people driving to do their errands, especially to go to work.

And so I am hoping to help increase and sort of coordinate our system of bike paths. I would love to see it easier for people to ride their bikes to work without taking their lives into their hands. We have [bike] lanes that go for a while and then stop. And if you are only half way to work you are kind of in danger for a while as you keep going. I would like to see some off-road bike lanes, bike paths through the City that don't include roads. Some communities have done that on railroad lines. You know there are various ways that you can do that and I know that has been explored by various studies and I would like to see those kind of revived and talked about.

I also am concerned about pedestrian safety because I think a lot of us would walk if we had sidewalks that were not falling apart. People who are on wheelchairs can't often get to places without driving because the sidewalks aren't adequate in certain spots, many places they are. I have read the City's sidewalk plan and it is very methodical but there are still huge gaps, places where the sidewalks are narrow, dangerous areas, especially over around the IGA off Cherry Avenue where we have lots of people living, lots of children, a school there, and no sidewalks. And so kids are walking in the street which isn't safe.

So – and then public transportation. I am supporting a model of transportation in the City that's a little different than what we have. I think we have done a really good job with our small town bus system. We have – you can get to about two thirds of Charlottesville without a car. And that's great. That's lovely. It's not very efficient. We have bus routes where you can get, like from my house Downtown I can get there in about four minutes on a bus. It takes about 25 minutes to get back, because it's a big loop. And if I miss the bus it takes an hour and 25 minutes to get back because it only runs every hour.

So what I would like to see is a system of buses that go on major commuter routes like Cherry Avenue, like Emmett, like maybe even the bypass where the bus runs every 10 or 15 minutes, so you don't have to know the bus schedule. You could just go out there, you know a bus is coming, you could hop on it, hopefully there will be park-and-rides in areas even in the County that we could work with so that people could drive say from, Lake Monticello,

but then park to get into town and know that that bus would be coming often enough that they could use that and get back when they need to get back. And then we would have smaller, either buses or vans or even cars in some places that go in the neighborhoods and bring people out to those locations. And that way people would have – you know people who don't have a car at all could still get to where they need to go on that less frequent schedule.

Funding; I think there is a larger issue about taxation in the City that I think we need to look at that has to do with state law that isn't something that we can do in the short term, although I do have some ideas in the long term. But I think that one thing I would really like to see is more engagement of our citizenry; having people participate in things. I think if we had people, say working on bike paths as volunteers or as interns or as summer programs for youth, that some of those things can be taken out of the public dollar, and also build community in ways that I think are very productive.

But other than that I would say, you know during this economic time I think we are seeing shrinking tax dollars everywhere, I don't think that the proper response would be to raise taxes on everyone. I think that we have to remember as public servants that we are not spending our own money, we are spending other people's money and some people don't have a whole lot extra and it's a sacrifice for them to pay that. So you know I think that – for things that serve the community, that's what government is for, is to spend public money and to collect public money to do that. I think we need to be very careful in how we do that, and how we raise more.

**3. In August 2009, Advocates for a Sustainable Albemarle Population released their first report in their research seeking to identify an optimal sustainable population for the community. Should City Council explore policies that would cap the City's population growth at a number below the potential build up population? Why or why not?**

Well I have spent quite a lot of time thinking about this, talking to people who are involved in this project, and then talking to folks who aren't involved in the project about it. And I must say that I am intrigued by the idea. I am glad that they did the study. I think there is lots of really good information here. I have read it now. I have gone through it once quickly with my pink highlighter and I am going through it again a little more in detail.

The population that they are talking about in this report that they consider to be a build-out population, which they feel is the larger sustainable population for the locality in Charlottesville is adding about 50% to our population. And we haven't grown significantly in recent years and I think it would take us a long time to build to 50%. So I don't think this is short term issue for the city.

On the other hand I have some philosophical questions about this whole process. The reason I am delighted about the report is that I think it's really important to understand the impact the population on the ecosystem and on the kind of ecology of the region. But no region stands in a vacuum. We are on one planet. And our planet has population growth and there are organizations that are zero population growth organizations and groups like that that are working on that. But what this is doing is saying that, yes there will be more people but we don't necessarily want them here. And that to me brings up some issues that I am concerned about. I am a little concerned about if you do put kind of caps on growth, that the only way to do it legally is really by limiting building, by limiting housing, or by driving the price up so much that people can't afford it. And what's happened in certain parts of California where localities have instituted this sort of policy is that the housing costs in those communities have risen astronomically. And you end up with a community in which the wealthy can live comfortably and ecologically and everybody is happy and the environment is relatively unscathed, and yet the people who work in the trades, the people who work as teachers, as firefighters, as police, can't afford to live there. And I don't think that that's a sustainable model. And I would rather figure out ways that we can reduce the ecological impact of each of our residents as much as possible so that we are not talking about keeping people out, we are talking about really, you know being glad of people living here, because then their ecological footprint will be smaller than if they lived out in the County or out in you know, Greene County or some place where they are taking up more room.

Because one of the things in this report showed that people who live in Charlottesville take up less room. When they live in an urban area they have less of an environmental impact than if they live in a three acre yard in a big house with a driveway and have to drive to work back and forth. So for the City – what I bring out of this report is that, no I wouldn't want to limit growth in this City. But I value reports like this because then we can see the impacts, we don't have unintended consequences and we see what the impact is and can really take that into consideration and planning.

**4. Is neighboring Albemarle County's relative population growth, too much, too little or just the right amount? What in your mind are the advantages and disadvantages to population growth in Albemarle and the operations of the University of Virginia?**

Well I have a real concern about the impact of kind of rampant housing development just outside the city limits. We have a lot of housing that's gone up just south of the City. I live just on the bypass, right near Free Bridge, going east. And every day I look out of my window and I see traffic backed up past my house, not able to get across Free Bridge because there are so many people trying to get that way turning left on 20 and going up to Pantops. And there are thousands of new apartments up at Pantops that I have just

been driving around and just astonished at, and also off Avon and off Old Lynchburg Road south of the City and off Fifth Street.

So the concern I have about that is not that I think people shouldn't be allowed to live there, but that the County growth has happened without a corresponding infrastructure commitment, either in the County or in the City. I think we need to plan better and I think studies like this population growth study show the need to do that.

If we just develop without control and without a really systematic plan, and I know there were plans to build there, but it still seems that it's ahead of what we can support with our infrastructure. And I would like to see a little bit of attention paid now to that infrastructure before we keep doing that. And it's not that I think that they shouldn't develop necessarily, but I that we really need to pay attention to how we do that so that it keeps the quality of life for the people who get driven by.

**Follow up: And anything on the University of Virginia?**

Yes. One thing about the University of Virginia, I would encourage them to provide adequate housing for their students, especially undergraduates on the grounds or near it. Most universities provide for their underclassmen ample high-rise dorm accommodations. And I know in the City you have to be under nine-stories, but by abdicating that responsibility, I think that UVA has increased the pressure on housing prices on that in the town, they have increased the pressure on nearby neighborhoods and they have increased the pressure on our City's utilities. I think that students, even freshmen come in and have to find an apartment. They are increasingly moving out into the neighboring communities. And I don't think that's a real healthy model.

**5. Should the community invest in repairing on enlarging the existing Lower Ragged Mountain Dam built around 1908 as part of the 50 year community water supply plan? Why or why not?**

Well this is one that I am frustrating people on every side of this issue, because I keep not quite being willing to come up with a definite answer. I had high hopes for the study about dredging. I thought that that was not a bad idea. Partly to get the cost of dredging which I think is something that has been argued about and finding resolution to that will be a positive. But also because I think that there is so much animosity between people who want the reservoir and people who don't, that I really was hoping that this study would at least give figures upon which everyone could agree going forward, and that we could move forward to the next step.

The price tag that came with the study bid I think is astronomical. And we were talking before about taxes and people's money and I think that's too

much. I think \$750,000 is not – we take up most of the savings that we would get from dredging by paying for the study and I just don't – I think it's kind of ridiculous.

On the other hand I am not really for scrapping it. I am hoping that we can go back to that firm and say, so what could we get for say, you know \$200,000, like we had originally intended and try to get some figures that are useful for this discussion out of that.

But as far as whether we should or not, I do think we absolutely need to repair the dam. I am not at all equivocal about that. The difference, you know where I am still kind of waffling is how big the reservoir needs to be. There are some hopes that with adequate conservation and with dredging at South Fork, that we don't have to build as much into the surrounding country side as the plan calls for. I don't know if that's possible or not, and I don't think we really can know until we get this dredging study, or some figure that we can all agree on.

I think that the whole thing has really shown that – a problem in the City I think and possibly in the County too, although I have not really followed the County process. What seems to happen on a lot of these things is that issues sort of studied and considered out of the public eye and I don't think it's intentional. It's not that anybody has hidden them. But I think that people don't pay attention soon enough. And by the time people start paying attention, things are kind of past the point at which you can have a lot of input. And I think that that makes people very frustrated and very angry.

I think the Meadowcreek Parkway is a similar situation. And so I am really committed to improving our record of bringing all stakeholders into the process, not just sort of saying, hey you can come if you want, but actually going out and bringing them in and talking to people, so that we don't constantly run into these situations where we have really important infrastructure issues that we have to deal with, we have to do something, and yet we keep having to stop because people say, 'wait a minute, I didn't know about it'. And I think that that's a really slow way to move forward.

**Follow up: You know I do want to ask just one follow up on that, just to make sure we were clear on the question. The community water supply plan envisions a new dam downstream of the 1908 dam. So this question was more about the existing dam.**

Right.

**Follow up: And what I heard you say was that you favor repairing the existing dam.**

Well I think we can't leave it the way it is. So I don't know – I wouldn't say that I am against building a new dam at this point. I think I am just still trying to figure out what the answer is on that. I think we can't leave it the way it is because it's not sustainable the way it is.

**6. If you could focus on one area for improved partnership with Albemarle County during the next two years what area would that be?**

One area, can I have four? I think long term planning is something that we have done, and it's something that – like I was saying before I think, we need to work on closely and continue to improve the way that we bring people in. I think there is a lot of distrust or miscommunication. And I think sometimes it's – one causes the other in both directions, between the City and the County, not so much between the City and County governments, although occasionally there too, but between the people in the City who think, oh the County government doesn't care what happens to us, or the people in the County thinking, oh the City government doesn't care what happens to us. We really are a community together and I think that I would really like to see us work together to try to present a united front in some of these things.

That was my one. But let me just add three more. I think economic development is huge. And I think at that at the federal level there are going to be tax incentives in various things that will help with economic development around green energy, around green manufacturing. Our mayor just went to Washington to the White House to discuss some of these things, and I think the more that we can bring those into this area, I would love to see them in the City, but I would also love to see them in the County. I think that we need more work for people who either don't go to college or into trades, I think we have great – we have the University and we have lots of professions here, but we also need to make sure that we have adequate employment for people who come through our high school and don't go to college.

I would also like to see us working together on environmental protection and conservation. And there is one other thing I would like to see the County and the City work with cities and counties throughout the Commonwealth. There is a thing called the Dillon Rule which is a state law that says that you can't – this is kind of an oversimplification of it, but that you can't really do anything new under the sun. If you want to do something that's not provided for in the Constitution you have to go and get permission from the entire General Assembly. So some of environmental things we tried to do recently in the City, we have had to get permission from the General Assembly, which wastes their time, wastes our time, it slows down progress and I would love to see us be able to do around the state to pilot innovative projects that are –

you know, whether it's economic development or a workforce development or environmental protection, in new and exciting ways like they do in other states. And we could become a leader in some of those things, and we can't because of the Dillon Rule. So I would love to see us cooperate and work together to try to get that changed. And I think if we do that across the state then we can get a change, because almost every locality government hates it.

## **7. What are your priorities for economic development and workforce development in Charlottesville?**

Well as I mentioned, green jobs, as part of the federal and state initiatives for economic development through green technology and manufacturing. I want to make sure that as we work to get jobs in the community, that they are jobs that provide a living wage. I think tourism is wonderful and I love living in a place that people want to come and visit. But tourism itself often generates only jobs that are relatively low wage: waitresses; service jobs; the hotel maids. People who work in those sorts of industries. And while those are fine they don't pay very much and I think they are not really what we are looking for, for economic development, for jobs.

So I would like to see light industry, I would like to see a concentration of locally owned businesses. I am not really for pulling in things like chain stores or – you know, franchises [that are] are locally owned..., but that's – I think that we really need to sustain our local businesses. And I think that that includes helping local businesses that exist, not just new ones, but actually figuring out ways that we can make this a good place to do business, for local businesses. Because a dollar spent in the locally owned business stays in the community a lot longer than a dollar spent on a national chain or an international chain.

So I also think that, around a lot of universities there are spin-off industries around some of intellectual work that goes at the university [in] research and development. And there is not as much of that here as I would like to see. There are ways that the University can help build that. There are ways that the City can help do that, and the County. And I would like to see us work harder to try to do that, because we have a great resource in the university and a lot of great minds thinking great thoughts and I would like to kind of incorporate that into our economy.

And I also am delighted with the internship program that the City has now for our youth. And I know that the city council has committed to continuing to expand that and I fully support that. I would also like to see a similar internship program for people who may not be youth, but don't have a work history, people who have not worked before, but who might – you know with that sort of mentoring might be able to get full time employment. And I think

that those are some ways that we can help some work done that we need in the City as well as developing good work skills for people who need jobs.

**8. What would you like to see happen to the whole Martha Jefferson hospital site in Charlottesville?**

Well I understand that there is – and I don't know a whole lot about this which is really kind of sad, because I live right near the neighborhood of Martha Jefferson Hospital. But I understand that there is a developer involved who is looking at mixed use development and presumably there would be some community involvement in that. And that's my first hope, is that there would be community involvement in that--it's a well organized neighborhood and I think that that's an important thing.

But it's not just the impact on the neighborhood. I think we also have the impact on the City, a lot of people work as nurses, as housekeepers in the hospital and we need to figure out what's going to happen to them; you know are they going to be able to get to work at the new places or if are they going to be able to work in the City and not have to leave. So I would like to see some attention paid to that workforce.

But I would love to see a mixed-use kind of center with maybe groceries and small shops and places where you can go in the neighborhood. I would like to see a range – I would like to insist on a range of income levels for people who live there, you know a range of affordability in the housing. I think that that's when our communities work best is when we live together instead of in our own little segregated neighborhoods by income. So that's about as detailed as I think I can go in that.

**9. What is your vision for McIntire Park?**

My vision for McIntire Park is people using it, I would love to see – well one of the things I think about an urban park is that it offers opportunities for kids who don't have big yards, kids who may not have a whole lot of green space in their lives to have open space, to be able to run and play and be outside and see trees and grass and flowers and maybe even get poison ivy God forbid!

And I think that at this point our park in some ways does that very well. We have baseball that's there, it's I think probably a majority of County residents. But they need parks too. I have no problem with that. And we have the golf course which is relatively well used; a lot of people play golf there. But there are no bus lines to McIntire Park and so that limits who can go there. It's in walking distance from the high school, but at this point there isn't much there for high school age kids.

I am really excited about the idea of having the YMCA there. I think that's going to bring people into the park in a way that exposes kids to that sort of space. It takes up very little of it proportionately and I think that the payback is great. And so I am delighted about that.

There has been some talk about the botanical gardens. I haven't talked to the folks who are doing that yet although I am planning to. I don't know how I feel about that. I kind of like raw untamed space a little bit. But we also have an incredible heritage here of trees and things that I would love to have kids be able to look at and understand in a small space. So I think it's an intriguing idea. I am not sure that I want a whole lot of public funds tied up into sustaining it long term. I think if it were privately funded I would feel a lot better about it.

Let's see, my other vision for McIntire Park. I would just love to see people in it, to see it – a place where you don't have to drive your car to get it. A place where kids say, hey meet me at McIntire Park after school, you know, are in that space and using it.

**10. Do you support the Three Party Agreement reached in 1990 between Albemarle, Charlottesville and the University of Virginia which identified a sequence of transportation projects to be completed before the construction of a western bypass of US Route 29?**

Well lots of different people characterize the Three Party Agreement in different ways and I am still kind of muddling through that. From what I understand the widening of 29 from Hydraulic up to – I guess up to the River, has happened once. And there are some talks about widening it again. But that was part of the three party agreement that's been done. I know that the University was supposed to do their connector to the grounds and that's been done. The Meadowcreek Parkway is part of this. The County has started, the City has agreed to get theirs done at the same time as the County parts. So that's there.

The part that hasn't happened is the off grade interchanges that were agreed to at that point. And I believe that the County has said that they don't plan to do that. So the way I look at it, it seems like there are a couple of things that the County agreed to that they haven't fulfilled. And I know that other things have happened in between. And so I am not going to say, 'oh those bad people', because I don't know what all those interim processes were.

But you know we are getting all that traffic to the City at this point and I think that we have kind of – I am not quite sure why the County won't consider or doesn't want to build that Western Bypass except that it's politically difficult to get passage through other people's land. And I think people fight back. And I think that sometimes that's what you need political courage for, to do projects

that are needed in the community. I don't know that that's one of them and I haven't read enough of these studies to really come down on that, but I do feel that at this point a lot of that is in the County's lap.

**11. Given the long funding and implementation period for multi-jurisdictional projects like the Meadowcreek Parkway and the community water supply plan, what are the advantages and disadvantages to the current City Council revisiting previous Councils' decisions regarding such projects?**

I think it's never a bad idea to kind of see where you are if it's really where you want to be going in your life. I mean this is what I do in my life, you know every year just before New Year's I kind of say, okay am I living my life the way I want to do it, am I doing what I think I should be doing with my life, and make minor adjustments to direct myself in the way that I want to go.

And I think that as a community it's important to do that too. On the other hand I think it's important to realize that some things are long term projects. And if you keep revisiting them you never get to the long term, you keep starting over. And I think that that is very unhealthy. And I think that we have done a fair amount of that. It drives me crazy to have decisions that everybody thought were made start over. I think that that's often sour grapes from people who didn't get their way, they just keep pushing and yelling until somebody listens and then they start over again, not really a sustainable model. On the other hand we need to be responsive to people. So we need to listen but I don't think we need to necessarily start over every time our decisions are disagreed with.

**12. Should Albemarle County officials be able to revisit or renegotiate their past decision on the 1982 revenue sharing agreement with the City Charlottesville? Why or why not?**

Well this is one of the questions I just got today so I didn't bring my information. But I have read some stuff about this in the past. My understanding is that the revenue sharing agreement came because the City agreed not to annex certain property in the County, back when they could annex property of the County, in exchange for this revenue stream that would come from the County, kind of them paying them not to annex. And over the last however many years it was since that happened, 1982, that area which is like right off Hydraulic Road, right it's just the north end of the City, is incredibly revenue rich for the County.

They get an awful lot of property tax; they get a lot of other taxes from that area. There are a lot of businesses there that are very profitable, and from what I understand if we undid the '82 revenue sharing agreement, I mean if we really undid it we would get that land and they would start paying us and

we would win, you know it would be to our benefit to end the revenue sharing agreement.

But in a way we can't because we can no longer annex that. And since we can't annex that I think it would be mighty unfair of them to take back their part when they can't take back our part. So I think the County has had a great benefit from this revenue sharing agreement. I think they have come out ahead, not that we are kind of behind because we agreed to it, but I think that it would be shortsighted of them to take it back at this point.

**13. In June 2006 the City and County signed off on a 50 year water supply plan that includes a new dam at the Ragged Mountain Reservoir and a new pipeline connecting it to the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir. Do you support this plan, why or why not?**

I support most of the plan, and on some of the plan I am still – still up in the air. I do support not fixing the pipeline that comes down from Sugar Hollow. I think that that is clearly done. It would need such repairs and such a long pipeline for relatively little water at great ecological cost; I am not for undoing that part. So that part of the plan I think is great.

I think that the idea of having our primary water resource at Ragged Mountain is absolutely critical. It's a natural place for us to have that. It makes sense. It's not great. I am not happy about it. I wish we didn't have to cut down trees. I wish we didn't have to store water. I wish that we could just catch it from the sky and purify it and that would be lovely.

But I think we do. And I think that especially, you know we were talking before about population growth, and I think that the City is not growing at a very great pace. And the County is growing tremendously. So it's mostly the County that needs this water supply, I think more than the City does. And so one concern I have about the water plan, it's the funding of it, and who pays for that, who pays for that increased capacity.

I think one reason to have increased capacity is that we want to be able to draw light industry; we want to be able to draw things that – even as we are conserving individually water use, we want to be able to have that access in the City for industry. So we may grow some in our need for water. But I just want to make sure that at some point it's not the City who is bearing the brunt of this project, both in the property at Ragged Mountain Reservoir which is City property, and then ratepayers having to pay for the increase.

#### **14. What is your top priority for action by City Council if you are elected?**

Well I have two, but they are inter-related. So I am going to count them as one for the purpose of this question. One is civic engagement. As I was working with the Obama campaign one of the things that excited me about that candidate and about the campaign was the commitment to drawing people in not just into getting someone elected, but into a long term participation in the public process, in caring about public issues, in getting involved in public issues, in pushing for the change that people said that they wanted.

And I think that over the course of history that's when we have achieved sorts of things that we wanted to achieve. Whether it was sending someone to the moon or you know the Civil Rights Movement or whatever it was, I think when we have done important things in this country, it's when people got involved in civic life. And over the past quarter century we have gotten increasingly uninvolved. People have gotten very cynical, people have gotten very isolated from each other, and I really – I loved that. And that was why I decided to run for City Council, is that I want to bring that energy to the City level. I want people to realize that they can have a huge impact, each person, on what happens in the City.

And at the same time I want the City at the staff level, at the City Council level, at every level to be responsive to that. I want to make sure that the City listens to people, ask people, brings people into the process, not just residents, but business owners, you know people who visit the City, you know just kind of bring that all in. I would like to see people more involved in doing things for the City and in volunteering and in getting involved with their bodies as well as their minds and their mouths.

I would like to see City Council meetings, or in the short term at least work sessions around the City in public schools and in community centers, and I would like to see us have pizza and childcare so that people can come after work and it won't be a burden and people won't be unwilling to come, so that we can get a wider variety of voices that were listening to us, we make these decisions.

The flipside of this very same thing is that we have a community in which about probably 80%-85% of us, and I include myself in this, have a wonderful place to live. It's a terrific city. We have some of the best music, we have the University, we have parks, it's beautiful area, the beach is not too far, the mountains are on the side, it's lovely. And a lot of very – for my purpose, a very progressive government that does environmental things, and we have curbside recycling, you know all these wonderful stuff. And yet we have far too large, small proportion of our community that isn't able to access the wonderful things that we have in this community.

People who go to our wonderful world class schools and either drop out or not able to graduate. We have people who finish from our high school and can't get a job and have to live. We have amazing pockets of poverty for such an affluent community. And it's persistent poverty. It's generational poverty. And I think that what I want to see us do in this community, I don't know if you have heard of the project in Harlem, Children Zone, where they – it was really one person kind of had this idea and it has grown incredibly. Geoffrey Canada, where they looked at the whole community and they said, you know our kids are not making it, our kids aren't graduating from high school, they are not going to college, what can we do about this. And they set their entire community to figuring out how to make sure that their kids made it their own – really their goal was to have their children graduate from high school, or from college at the same rate as other kids.

And so they started early-childhood development programs, they started parenting classes for everyone, not just for people who might be considered at risk parents, but everybody could come. So it wasn't just a stigmatized thing. They had prenatal care, they made sure that was available. They had – you know lots of different things in the community, they did after school programs, they ended up starting a charter school because there they couldn't get the schools to participate in working with kids during the school day.

Because you know as we look at some of these issues, especially in the schools, I think we need to realize that a child finishes high school she has only spent 15% of her waking time in school. And the rest of her time has been spent in the community, at home or out in her neighborhood or in after school programs. And so the community needs to realize the impact that we have on our kids. And I don't think that we are a Harlem, and I don't think that we need to do what Harlem did, but I think that what we need to do is take that same process and say, what do we need to do to make sure that all of our kids have a chance to make it. And then you know figure out how we can come together as a community to make that happen.

**15. Do we have appropriate resources in City government to achieve the objectives in the City's strategic plan? In what way, if any, do we need to make changes? What impact will your recommendations have on staffing and the annual budget?**

Yes, no-no, yes-yes. We have appropriate resources in city government to achieve the objectives of the strategic plan, but not enough. I think you know it's always that way. And I think that that's how you can kind of tell you are in a good position is if you have the basics, you have just enough but you would really like more. And I think that's where we are.

I think that this is certainly about as hard a time as we are going to have. I think for the next few years it's going to be really tight and I think we are going to have to figure out ways that don't involve raising the budget significantly unless we try to find ways that lower it, to compensate for those. I think there are a lot of things we can do that can be either revenue neutral or of such impact that it's worth an expenditure. But I think we need to be very careful about that.

So I mean the changes that I would like to make, I have been talking about all along. So I don't really see any massive – you know I don't want to overhaul the budget my first year on city council. I think I will spend my first year really learning a lot, and I had started that over the past several months, reading all of these reports that sit on the shelf, collecting dust, and reading all the budget reports and the different analyses of tax structure and zoning plans. And I have read the city code a couple of months ago, that was fun. And so you know that's – I don't really have an answer yet. But I think that it's something that I want to be very careful about, and yet I don't want to be so afraid of spending money that when we have an opportunity to make a huge impact that we just don't spend the money. I think sometimes we can be penny wise and pound foolish and when we have a chance to do something important we need to do it.

**16. What do you see as the primary responsibilities of City Council?**

To serve as the people's voice and eyes in the running of the City, we are the people's watchdog; we are the people who are accountable to the voters. I think that's the big thing. I think we are – the reason it's an elected City Council is so that we have accountability in our City government.

**Okay, thank you very much.**

Sure, well thank you.