

# Friends of Bolin Creek

## 2019 Carrboro Candidate Questions

Friends of Bolin Creek is dedicated to addressing climate change through environmental protection and ecological conservation of the integrity of the Bolin Creek Watershed. Specifically we advocate for minimizing flooding conditions in Carrboro and Chapel Hill by supporting best-practice stormwater management and sustainable development. In addition, we advocate for extending our tree canopy, cleaning up Chapel Hill's coal-ash deposit, transportation that meets public needs, and retaining natural areas, such as special forested tracts like Bolin Forest and Meadow Flats.

To help our membership better understand our elected officials and candidates who seek office, kindly provide your answers to the following questions. Please keep each response to 150 words or less:

Candidate name: Lydia Lavelle  
Position seeking: Mayor of Carrboro

### **1. Climate Change**

**Carrboro has a Climate Action Plan dramatically different from the actions taken by the N.C. Legislature and the Federal Administration.**

**1. Within Carrboro's Climate Action Plan, please identify three actions you believe its local government can take? Place in priority order.**

Carrboro has two climate action plans, a Town Energy and Climate Protection Plan (2014) and a Community Climate Action Plan (2017). Three actions Carrboro can or is taking from the 2014 plan are the following: 1. Work to replace all of the Town's lighting with LED lighting. We have been coordinating with Duke Energy to replace leased town streetlights with LED. In addition, we must continue to upgrade our light fixtures to LED, replace light switches with occupancy sensors in various facilities to reduce energy consumption, and replace bulbs that are on 24/7 fixtures. 2. Work to analyze and upfit our town buildings so they are more energy efficient. A space needs study this year will inform how we continue to prioritize this. 3. Continue to support alternative means of transportation, including advocating for the critical N/S BRT, and funding Chapel Hill Transit (nearly 2 million dollars this year).

## **2. Bolin Forest**

Carrboro is fortunate to have within its midst some 425 largely forested acres, made up of Carolina North (largely conserved), the P.H. Craig tract (privately owned and about half recently timbered) and the Adams Preserve (conserved by Carrboro and Orange County), as well as a small parcel owned by Ironwoods HOA. According to a 2003 N.C. State study jointly funded with the EPA, Bolin Forest and Bolin Creek possess significant water and wildlife resources and, therefore, are worthy of conservation. Given climate change and the need for environmental protection, maintaining these 425 acres as one contiguous forest is essential.

2. Will you, as an elected official, support initiatives to preserve and conserve the private portions to ensure Bolin Forest is protected as one contiguous forest?

I have been a member of the Triangle Land Conservancy for over twenty five years and I served on the Durham Open Space and Trails Committee for ten years before moving to Carrboro. I have backpacked 300 miles on the Appalachian Trail. This love of nature has informed my commitment to conservancy, maintaining lands for passive recreation, and developing trails. However, as noted, the Craig tract and UNC property are still owned by others. At present, our role can be one of advocating for these lands but our ability to control or prescribe their use is limited.

The BOA expressed interest last year in reaching out to the Craig tract landowner to work to preserve/conservate the entire property. I led those efforts through conversation with the landowner. At present, he is not interested in preserving/conserving the entire piece. We remain open to conversation, and the landowner is aware of this.

## **3. Tree Canopy**

Trees are our most effective, valuable carbon-sink vehicles. Protecting and expanding our area's tree canopy is a major goal of Friends of Bolin Creek.

3. What are your ideas about how to protect and expand the tree canopy in Carrboro?

Carrboro's current tree canopy ordinance is a fairly strong one. Carrboro's LUO includes guides for protecting existing trees and planting trees, and lists of recommended trees and shrubs. The LUO contains dripline requirements, and standards for street and parking lot trees. To continue to have these strong tree canopy laws, we need to be constantly vigilant in tracking and responding to attempts by the General Assembly to scale back tree canopy requirements (as the GA majority has tried to do in recent years).

The Town Energy and Climate Protection Climate Action Plan suggests performing an inventory of trees, and developing and implementing a tree plan on land where Carrboro's public facilities are located, and land where Carrboro has right-of-way. The plan further suggests performing a complete tree canopy analysis of the town and developing a community forestry master plan.

#### **4. Flooding**

Damage downstream from recent floods reminds us about the value that natural surfaces and woodlands perform in slowing and soaking up rainwater during storms.

4. To reduce flooding, will you support Friends of Bolin Forest's call to protect Bolin Forest and Bolin Creek, as well as our other forests and waterways, ensuring paved paths are kept away from sensitive forest and creek areas?

The Bolin Creek Greenway Conceptual Master Plan presented in 2009 to the BOA recommended 4.8 miles of a greenway trail that, once complete, would provide a safe connection from Morris Grove Elementary School in northern Carrboro to downtown. The plan suggests paving the greenway, which includes a stretch along part of Bolin Creek through UNC property. There is disagreement on whether to pave this connection. The plan suggests that paving would result in more environmental protection than the current natural path, which runs along a sewer easement. Others believe keeping the path in its current state would provide more environmental protection. As the landowner, UNC would likely have the final say on the surface (if any) of a greenway through their property. I would like to see a greenway path through this UNC property, and believe there is a way to accomplish this with proper placement and path surface.

## **5. Stormwater Utility**

Carrboro has formed a Stormwater Utility to manage stormwater programs, perform maintenance and repair of facilities, control flooding and take steps to improve water quality.

### **5. What aspects of this program is most important to accomplish in the next three-to-five years?**

On September 10<sup>th</sup>, the Board received a presentation from our Stormwater Manager of efforts thus far in the infancy of this program, created in 2018. One new program I support is a proposal for a neighborhood “Rain Ready” pilot project in the upper Toms Creek watershed. This proposal was prepared by the Center for Neighborhood Technology to work with residents to identify and pursue measures at the neighborhood scale to enhance resiliency. We also were asked to prioritize staff workload in order of importance. I stated that we should prioritize support for flood mitigation resiliency, and inspections of private stormwater control measures. I also asked that we consider the effect of potential stormwater rate increases. We also asked that homeowners experiencing stormwater issues who meet the income criteria be told of possible options through the Affordable Housing Task Force to allow them to address concerns and remain in their homes.

## **6. Sustainable Development**

A great deal of debate in Carrboro centers around how development should happen. At issue often are questions of density, quality of life, affordable housing, its small-town past, its architectural as well as environmental integrity, and the need to conserve forested areas.

### **6.1. What is your vision for environmentally responsible development within our community?**

I believe being environmentally responsible means combining actions, policies, values, and efforts by individuals and communities to maintain and protect the natural world, and the quality of life within it.

### **6.2 What policy and ordinance changes are needed to attain your vision?**

I envision our policies regarding development to continue to be guided by our values. For example, northern Carrboro should be developed with appropriate density clustered on transportation corridors, and we need to upgrade infrastructure to encourage alternative transportation. We need to continue to educate regarding composting and continue to grow our community gardens. Additionally, I envision continued efforts toward recycling with enhanced attention to reduction (in both consumption and packaging). I hope our future sees us being more responsible with our own trash. Our urban boundary, I believe, has minimized sprawl as well as protected our watershed, and I would not support efforts to change that boundary. Our buffers with regard to our creeks and waterways and our efforts to preserve open space also have helped ensure that our natural environment is protected.

### 6.3 What is your position on Carrboro's site-specific, flexible zoning district efforts?

Our Board of Aldermen voted unanimously in June of 2016 for the creation of a new site-specific, flexible zoning district. We all agreed to create this after many meetings, conversation, and public input. Although this new tool has not been successfully implemented yet, I still support the creation of the FLX district for the many reasons articulated during that process. It is meant to provide a more streamlined and certain process for a developer, while maintaining strict specifications and many opportunities for public input along the course of that process.

## 7. Town Growth

Currently, both Carrboro and Chapel Hill are growing at a rate of about one percent a year. Development comes with costs, often stressing resources and community infrastructure, as well as leading to reduced tree canopy, fewer open spaces, increased traffic and strain on town budgets (often resulting in higher taxes).

### 7.1 Please share your philosophy on the pace and costs of Carrboro's growth.

Carrboro is projected to be one of the slowest growing towns in our region over the coming decades. Our Town has long had strict requirements for open space and stream buffers, and is a jurisdictional partner that has supported the region's rural buffer. I support these requirements and efforts.

However, this projected slow growth could continue to result in an increased tax burden on our citizens. Most town revenue is generated from residential property tax, commercial property tax, and sales tax. Ways to address this tax burden are to dramatically cut services (not yet a realistic option in our demanding community) or to generate more revenue. Therefore, our Board has made a concerted effort toward encouraging and approving commercial projects in recent years, particularly those that generate sales tax.

### 7.2 Do you believe it is possible for development to pay for itself? If so, how?

I believe that commercial development financially pays for itself. Depending on where residential development occurs, how it is built, and what type of families it accommodates (such as school age children), residential development may not be as financially beneficial. However, financial considerations are not all that are at stake when asking if something “pays for itself.” Intangibles, such as being an inclusive and welcoming community, or acting on town goals and values, may require greater financial investment by the community at large.

## 8. Sustainable Transportation

To minimize climate change, public transportation systems will need to be enhanced and expanded. A change-over from gasoline-powered vehicles will also be needed.

### 8.1 Identify three ways local government can decrease automobile travel and emissions generated by gasoline-powered vehicles?

One is to continue to support our transit systems, both locally (Chapel Hill Transit) and regionally (GoTriangle). This includes support for the N/S BRT. To this end, I recently wrote a letter to the Federal Transit Administration supporting the N/S BRT as mayor on behalf of the town of Carrboro. Second is to continue to advocate for ways the Town can reduce its use of gasoline powered vehicles; for example, by switching to electric vehicles, and continuing to incentivize employees to walk, bike, or ride the bus to work, or while at work. Third is to improve the Town’s infrastructure to make it safer and easier for people in Carrboro to walk and bike. Our downtown sidewalks are being studied at this time for these very reasons, and our revised bike plan will address these concerns as well.

## 8.2 What is your position on scooters and Segways on town streets?

According to the School of Government, stand-up electric scooters are “vehicles,” not mopeds, under NC law. There is no certainty around their operation because they do not neatly fit either definition. Segway legislation (G.S. § 20-175.6) seems to be the closest fit: Segways may be operated on public highways of 25 MPH or less, sidewalks, and bicycle paths; must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and other human-powered devices; and have the rights of a pedestrian. Municipalities may regulate the time, place, and manner of their operation, but not prohibit their use.

Scooter operation has led to many studies which I would review before considering a Carrboro ordinance. However, I believe scooters are a convenient way to create accessibility in a town that encourages alternative forms of transportation. Ultimately, we would want to protect the safety of riders, pedestrians, and drivers, and make certain scooters are appropriately parked when not in use.

## 9. Biking and Bike Plan

Carrboro’s Bike Plan is currently under revision, and the town is applying to the League of American Bicyclists to be considered for a gold award.

Carrboro is recognized as having the highest bike ridership of any city in the Southeast and among the tops in the nation. Bike boulevards have been identified by the League of American Bicyclists as particularly appropriate for Carrboro, streets with low traffic and speed designated to give bikes priority. One part of the new Bike Plan currently is to create a rail-to-trails bike path along the Norfolk-Southern railbed when UNC converts its energy usage from coal.

### 9.1 What aspect of Carrboro's new Bike Plan would you prioritize? Why?

A draft of the new bike plan will be presented to the BOA later this fall. However, there have been presentations and discussions at the Steering Committee meetings that highlight areas I believe are important. First, I love a vision statement that was proposed at one of the meetings: “Envisioning Carrboro as a place where biking is accessible, safe, and convenient for everyone between the ages of 8 to 80.” It is inclusive and inviting. I also believe the discussion of an equity focus on high areas of need is extremely



important. I like that the discussion has emphasized neighborhood accessways, as these appear to be low-cost, easily implementable ways to increase bike ridership.

### 9.2 What should we do to take Carrboro to the next level in terms of biking?

The scorecard from the League of American Bicyclists tells us exactly what we need to do to get from silver to gold. It breaks out ten building blocks that factor into the scoring: 1. High Speed Roads with Bicycle Facilities; 2. Total Bicycle Network Mileage to Total Road Network Mileage; 3. Bicycle Education in Schools; 4. Share of Transportation Budget Spent on Bicycling; 5. Bike Month and Bike to Work Events; 6. Active Bicycle Advocacy Group; 7. Active Bicycle Advisory Committee; 8. Bicycle Friendly Laws & Ordinances; 9. Bike Plan is Current and is Being Implemented; and 10. Bike Program Staff to Population. I believe increased attention to #2, #3, #9, and increasing overall education and encouragement for bicycling, will help us reach the gold level.

### 9.3 How should Carrboro prioritize bike boulevards among competing bike projects?

According to the National Association of City Transportation Officials, “[b]icycle boulevards are streets with low motorized traffic volumes and speeds, designated and designed to give bicycle travel priority. Bicycle boulevards use signs, pavement markings, and speed and volume management measures to discourage through trips by motor vehicles and create safe, convenient bicycle crossings of busy arterial streets.” Note that some towns call bicycle boulevards different names, such as neighborhood greenways, bicycle priority streets, quiet streets, neighborhood connectors, neighborhood byways, bicycle friendly streets/corridors, and bicycle/neighborhood parkways. It seems many streets in Carrboro could meet the description of a bike boulevard. A proposed neighborhood connector map shown to Steering Committee members illustrating possible locations of bike boulevards looks promising. I look forward to receiving the draft plan and learning more.

### 9.4 How should Carrboro balance the needs of bicyclists with the needs of citizens desiring high frequency bus service?



The needs of bicyclists can be balanced very well with the needs of citizens desiring high frequency bus service. In fact, the two can (and should) complement each other. The ability to ride a bike to a bus stop where the rider can then either park the bike or load it on to the front of the bus to be transported to the rider's destination works perfectly for many riders. Many transportation hubs accommodate both bicyclists and transit riders. As such, safety concerns are paramount in such surroundings. In any event, both forms of transportation should be encouraged.

## **10. Coal Clean-Up and Energy Use**

Carrboro, Chapel Hill and UNC have relied on a coal-generated plant for decades now. One result has been a coal-ash deposit along Bolin Creek and beneath and adjacent to the Chapel Hill Police Department facility. One proposal has been to convert UNC's coal plant to a blend of renewable fuel.

### **10.1 Will you advocate for the careful monitoring and cleanup of the coal-ash deposit?**

This seems like a reasonable position, but I would first have to study and get up to speed on this issue, as this coal-ash deposit is on property owned by the Town of Chapel Hill, and is not in Carrboro's jurisdiction.

### **10.2 How do you plan to help advocate for the shutdown of UNC's coal-fired power plant on Cameron Avenue?**

I know our BOA supports the conversion of UNC's power plant to clean energy as soon as possible, but I do not believe the Board has officially taken action on this. The Board did authorize me earlier this year to write a letter to the NC Division of Air Quality to extend the public comment period regarding the plant's permit. Another reason to support this transition to clean energy is that the coal plant is serviced by a train that runs through Carrboro, the only train that runs on this track. This train interrupts traffic in Carrboro on a regular basis, and the railroad arms often malfunction. If the plant was no longer powered by coal, traffic would proceed more smoothly. As noted elsewhere, then this unused section of railroad track could possibly be converted into a trail connection to points outside of Carrboro, such as Hillsborough.

### **10.3 What do you see as the future of electricity generation in Carrboro and Chapel Hill?**

Carrboro has a goal to be a carbon-free town. To work to decrease carbon emissions, our town's electric power grid will likely need to increase over time to absorb increased demand, eventually becoming a smart grid. To move toward this goal, we want to replace our direct fossil fuel use (gasoline) with electricity where we can. I support the movement toward electric buses in the Chapel Hill Transit fleet. As mentioned elsewhere, we also are moving toward electric vehicles in our town fleets. We want to encourage and pursue geothermal heating and cooling, and getting off natural gas and oil where possible. We support solar options in our town. It is also essential that we convey these priorities to our legislative delegation so that the N.C. General Assembly can have serious conversation and create legislation to allow these very necessary steps to move to a carbon-neutral future.

### **11. Ordinance Implementation**

Carrboro has state and local ordinances to address water quality, stormwater management, impervious surface limits, stream buffers, steep slopes, and tree canopy. When the Board of Aldermen approves these projects, such ordinances are meant to apply.

**11.1 Please comment on how effective you see the implementation of such rules.**

The great majority of such rules are followed. However, there are times when this is not the case. Below in this question I address how these are handled.

**11.2 If elected, what changes, if any, will you advocate for?**

Carrboro has recognized there may be areas where proactive monitoring by the town to see if laws are being followed may be helpful. One example that we have discussed is implementing town inspections of private stormwater control measures. However, proactive monitoring of town ordinances would carry with it budgetary and staff capacity considerations.

**11.3 How should Carrboro enforce its town ordinances, for example people dropping trees not on their property along Bolin Creek or bikers using prohibited sections of the Adams Preserve?**

Most towns respond to ordinance violations on a complaint driven basis. In other words, the town does not regularly make sure that every person or property owner is following every ordinance in the town. Once alerted, the town investigates and can impose fines and penalties for violations of ordinances, or secure an injunction and order of abatement. I believe tracking and remedying violations of local ordinances is a challenge for most local governments, given staff capacity. A further challenge is that when a complaint of a violation comes to the town, it often takes investigation to determine who has jurisdiction over the complaint (sometimes the violation should be addressed by the County, the State, or even federal authorities). As with most interactions with an administrative or legal system, this often takes a great deal of time. It is not a perfect system.

## **12. Town Advisory Boards' Role**

Citizens in Carrboro advise the town on issues including new development plans, economic development, affordable housing, transportation, town growth, environmental protection and other matters.

### **12.1 What weight do you believe recommendations/feedback from advisory boards should figure into work by town staff?**

The work of advisory boards is helpful, and I know is valued and appreciated by town staff.

### **12.2 What weight do you believe recommendations/feedback from advisory boards should figure into decisions made by elected officials?**

Likewise, this work should be valued, appreciated, and receive consideration by elected officials. That said, advisory boards are looking at one domain; staff and elected officials are balancing all the interconnections.

### **12.3 How will you work to expand participation in town advisory boards to include more neighborhoods being represented and greater diversity?**

This is a perennial problem. If meetings are at night, single parents or night workers find attendance difficult. If meetings are by day, many traditional schedule workers cannot participate. We have considered exploring technology to allow people to attend virtually when necessary, but this implicates access and logistical issues. In recent years, we have been more diligent about making advisory board agendas and meeting minutes

available on our website for interested community members. We will continue to advertise and encourage people to apply to serve on our boards, and do what we can to make these meetings accessible to them.

#### 12.4 How else can Carrboro expand citizen participation to ensure all voices are heard equally?

Going directly into neighborhood hubs and meeting spaces is one way to inform and engage people who live there to get involved with local government. Conversation, flyers, meetings, surveys, one-on-ones work well. E-mailing residents who have spoken to the BOA about issues in the past is another way to draw in people who have already had some interaction with town government. We should work through neighborhood list-serves and continue to work with programs such as NextDoor and social media to get the word out about town matters. Sometimes there is a natural affinity group (El Centro, for example) that we contact to amplify information we want to get out into the community. Also, when we are looking to engage parents or youth, our Communication Director sometimes coordinates use of the school system's notification system. We are always open to further suggestions on how to increase outreach.

### 13. Meadow Flats

Meadow Flats is a 233-acre ecological community near Old NC 86 and Eubanks Rd. and is part of what is now simply known as Meadow Flats, adjacent Bald Mountain, and nearby Blackwood Mountain Natural Heritage Natural Areas. The Meadow Flats Natural Area is highest-rated "Exceptional" by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, and includes perched upland wetlands, mature hardwoods, and notable rare state-listed Species of Special Concern, such as the four-toed salamander. Meadow Flats is located at the headwaters of Mountain Creek, which drains into New Hope Creek, and extends into Duke Forest lands where long-term climate research is underway that will yield information on climate and atmospheric changes. Carrboro's Transition II Area (joint jurisdiction by Carrboro and Orange County) includes a critical headwaters portion of Meadow Flats. Duke Forest and scientists who conduct research in the area have explained that Carrboro's proposed 31-acre Flex District zoning development, including writing a site-specific ordinance, will destroy the ecological community and negatively impact the integrity and validity of the long-term scientific research conducted within Duke Forest. Friends of

Meadow Flats and other conservationists are trying to save this important Natural Area.

13.1 As an elected official, what weight will you give for using all available tools to conserve special tracts of land such as Meadow Flats?

Carrboro is getting ready to undertake a lengthy process that will result in the town's first Comprehensive Plan, an exercise that is long overdue. This process will identify where and how Carrboro wants to grow. This view will be long-term, informed by future public and private infrastructure, implementation steps and costs, and climate change and equity considerations. This plan will have many elements, including elements related to conservation and the environment. Through this planning process, areas of special ecological consideration must be identified and given due consideration.

13.2 What value do Carrboro's advisory boards have in this process?

Carrboro's advisory boards play a critical role in providing recommendations to the Board of Aldermen, particularly in technical areas where the expertise of advisory board members is beneficial. However, the ultimate decision makers are the elected board members. BOA members consider and value the recommendations of all of the advisory boards, but need to balance those recommendations, and make their decisions in the overall best interest of the town.

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To help our membership better understand our elected officials and candidates who seek office, kindly provide your answers to the following questions. Please keep each response to 150 words or less:

### 1. Climate Change

Carrboro has a Climate Action Plan dramatically different from the actions taken by the N.C. Legislature and the Federal Administration.

1. Within Carrboro's Climate Action Plan, please identify three actions you believe its local government can take? Place in priority order.

The plan provides recommendations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with the goal of a 50% reduction by 2025. Part of that action includes raising the community's awareness of and involvement in solutions to global climate change and a post-carbon energy future. In order to achieve this the three primary recommendations I would make are:

1. Encourage businesses to reduce their use of single-use plastic bags and bottles.
2. Provide incentives for current residences to convert their primary energy sources to renewable solutions. Also, require that all new development use renewable solutions as part of their master plan.
3. Help to drive a diversity of businesses in Carrboro so that residents can work where they live. If we can reduce the amount of traffic that leaves town every morning and provides mechanisms for those workers to use public transit in town we will reduce our town's carbon footprint dramatically.

## **2. Bolin Forest**

Carrboro is fortunate to have within its midst some 425 largely forested acres, made up of Carolina North (largely conserved), the P.H. Craig tract (privately owned and about half recently timbered) and the Adams Preserve (conserved by Carrboro and Orange County), as well as a small parcel owned by Ironwoods HOA. According to a 2003 N.C. State study jointly funded with the EPA, Bolin Forest and Bolin Creek possess significant water and wildlife resources and, therefore, are worthy of conservation. Given climate change and the need for environmental protection, maintaining these 425 acres as one contiguous forest is essential.

1. Will you, as an elected official, support initiatives to preserve and conserve the private portions to ensure Bolin Forest is protected as one contiguous forest?

Yes, I support initiatives to preserve and conserve the private portions to ensure Bolin Forest is protected. I believe that public officials set the example, and ensuring conservation is something that is of great value. I would look forward to working with environmentally conscious groups and individuals to support conservation activities.

## **3. Tree Canopy**

Trees are our most effective, valuable carbon-sink vehicles. Protecting and expanding our area's tree canopy is a major goal of Friends of Bolin Creek.

1. What are your ideas about how to protect and expand the tree canopy in Carrboro?

Protecting the tree canopy must be part of the conversation in every development effort. I think that there is a lack of understanding among developers that the role of the canopy plays and it is incumbent upon the elected officials to ensure that this conservation is incorporated into all development. While there is no specific rule on the tree canopy in Carrboro it should be considered especially in light of the CBOA's effort to ward off the effects of climate change. The tree canopy can serve as a major source of shade and heat reduction over paths and development as well as provide a carbon offset.

## **4. Flooding**



Damage downstream from recent floods reminds us about the value that natural surfaces and woodlands perform in slowing and soaking up rainwater during storms.

1. To reduce flooding, will you support Friends of Bolin Forest's call to protect Bolin Forest and Bolin Creek, as well as our other forests and waterways, ensuring paved paths are kept away from sensitive forest and creek areas?

I live in a neighborhood that has Morgan Creek that runs around the perimeter. The creek is a big component of what attracted people to our neighborhood and we have a dirt path that residents use to walk and bike through the forest along the creek. As the development of a greenway becomes more of a reality, our neighborhood residents are unhappy that this is happening and are upset that the town has not communicated their plans more directly. There is concern about paving an area that serves its purpose without paving. There is significant evidence that with recent flooding that the path that is put in there will cost too much to maintain. There is also the voice of the neighborhood that the added traffic that comes with the path will negatively impact the area itself. I believe that all sensitive areas should be protected while still maintaining accessibility for all residents to use and enjoy.

## **5. Stormwater Utility**

Carrboro has formed a Stormwater Utility to manage stormwater programs, perform maintenance and repair of facilities, control flooding and take steps to improve water quality.

1. What aspects of this program is most important to accomplish in the next three-to-five years?

As development continues in Carrboro, mitigating the effects of stormwater runoff is the most critical for our town to address. Tom's Creek is most noticeably affected by the development of McDougle school, the upcoming development of Lloyd Farm, compounded by the stronger storms brought on by climate change. Flooding has become pervasive in the Plantation Acres community and will continue to be an issue until further steps are taken to handle the increased water flow. Our funding priorities should be focused on efforts that conserve existing water supplies. Development and growth should not strain our current water capabilities and priority should be given to those projects that adhere to this. Additionally, we must ensure that the

maintenance of our pipelines is upheld in order to ensure consistent delivery and eliminate expensive overhauls.

## **6. Sustainable Development**

A great deal of debate in Carrboro centers around how development should happen. At issue often are questions of density, quality of life, affordable housing, its small-town past, its architectural as well as environmental integrity, and the need to conserve forested areas.

1. What is your vision for environmentally responsible development within our community?
2. What policy and ordinance changes are needed to attain your vision?
3. What is your position on Carrboro's site-specific, flexible zoning district efforts?

My goal is to preserve the natural areas of Carrboro and make downtown denser and as the need for more development occurs look to grow the downtown outwards rather than put development outside of town. An example I can point to that has worked well is Shelton Station which was able to put a large number of residents in a footprint within a short distance of downtown. In the future, I would like to see mixed-use developments that incorporate dense housing with commercial space. Maintaining the character of Carrboro will be challenging as we continue to welcome more residents but we must make it a priority to also maintain our environment.

## **7. Town Growth**

Currently, both Carrboro and Chapel Hill are growing at a rate of about one percent a year. Development comes with costs, often stressing resources and community infrastructure, as well as leading to reduced tree canopy, fewer open spaces, increased traffic and strain on town budgets (often resulting in higher taxes).

1. Please share your philosophy on the pace and costs of Carrboro's growth.
2. Do you believe it is possible for development to pay for itself? If so, how?

Carrboro is growing because we are a wonderful place to live. Simple economics tells us that if demand stays constant and we restrict growth (supply) then costs for housing and land will skyrocket. We have to recognize that we can't control demand and therefore have to make

accommodation for the residents that want to move here. However, this growth will strain our resources and new development must not only cover the costs of initial infrastructure but also be done in a sustainable way so as not to strain our environmental resources. This includes putting requirements for environmentally friendly standards on all new development, ensuring that this development has ready access to public transit and that developers provide impact fees. Mixed use development is optimal in these situations to help broaden the tax base and ensure that not only are residential properties developed (which often cause the greatest strain on a town) but that there are environmentally responsible businesses to support them as well.

## **8. Sustainable Transportation**

To minimize climate change, public transportation systems will need to be enhanced and expanded. A change-over from gasoline-powered vehicles will also be needed.

1. Identify three ways local government can decrease automobile travel and emissions generated by gasoline-powered vehicles?
2. What is your position on scooters and Segways on town streets?
  1. Provide preferred parking and charging stations for electric vehicles.
  2. Make Carrboro more pedestrian friendly to encourage residents from the outer neighborhoods to walk into town.
  3. Continue to promote our public transit to outer neighborhoods to offer a viable solution to their car.

Scooters and segways are an efficient mode of transportation, particularly for students and younger people. However, our sidewalks are narrow as are many Carrboro streets. In order to implement a scooter program, we would need a closer look at how our local traffic would be impacted. While I believe the marketplace is strongly supportive of scooters, I think we also would need some responsible training to make sure pedestrian traffic and scooter traffic work in a complementary fashion, not at odds with each other. That said, I know that some larger Triangle cities have tried scooters and then reversed course. Let's explore this option carefully and transparently.

## **9. Biking and Bike Plan**

Carrboro's Bike Plan is currently under revision, and the town is applying to the League of American Bicyclists to be considered for a gold award.

Carrboro is recognized as having the highest bike ridership of any city in the Southeast and among the tops in the nation. Bike boulevards have been identified by the League of American Bicyclists as particularly appropriate

for Carrboro, streets with low traffic and speed designated to give bikes priority. One part of the new Bike Plan currently is to create a rail-to-trails bike path along the Norfolk-Southern railbed when UNC converts its energy usage from coal.

1. What aspect of Carrboro's new Bike Plan would you prioritize? Why?
2. What should we do to take Carrboro to the next level in terms of biking?
3. How should Carrboro prioritize bike boulevards among competing bike projects?
4. How should Carrboro balance the needs of bicyclists with the needs of citizen desiring high frequency bus service?

The 2019 Bike Plan has not been finalized but the goal among others is to “enhance bicycling as a mode of transportation for residents...improving access, connectivity, and safety.” I also support bike connectivity but not at the expense of damaging existing trees and forests. We should seek ways to provide that connectivity using existing roads and greenways. I support protected bike lanes and safer streets for both pedestrians and bikes. While we are a dense town there is room for both cars and bikes to co-exist and as we make Carrboro even more bike-friendly we will see an uptick in cyclists using the roads. Public transit will be a key component to this as both cyclists and pedestrians will need to make use of the service. Creating high-frequency bus service helps to alleviate the traffic strain on our roads which will provide for better conditions for cyclists.

## **10. Coal Clean-Up and Energy Use**

Carrboro, Chapel Hill, and UNC have relied on a coal-generated plant for decades now. One result has been a coal-ash deposit along Bolin Creek and beneath and adjacent to the Chapel Hill Police Department facility. One proposal has been to convert UNC’s coal plant to a blend of renewable fuel.

1. Will you advocate for the careful monitoring and cleanup of the coal-ash deposit?
2. How do you plan to help advocate for the shutdown of UNC’s coal-fired power plant on Cameron Avenue?
3. What do you see as the future of electricity generation in Carrboro and Chapel Hill?

Yes, this is a critical environmental issue. We have seen some bad examples of coal ash in recent years and we can’t afford to make the same mistakes

again. I actually can't believe that the university is still using this and not making efforts to convert to renewable energy. In advocating for the switch we can't just tell them what we don't like, we have to put forth a proposal for how we think they can do better. I believe we have enough open space in Carrboro to put in solar that can be used by commercial, residential, and government. Carrboro Plaza, Public Works, and the downtown parking structure are three places that would be ideal for such an initiative.

### **11. Ordinance Implementation**

Carrboro has state and local ordinances to address water quality, stormwater management, impervious surface limits, stream buffers, steep slopes, and tree canopy. When the Board of Aldermen approves these projects, such ordinances are meant to apply.

1. Please comment on how effective you see the implementation of such rules.
2. If elected, what changes, if any, will you advocate for?
3. How should Carrboro enforce its town ordinances, for example people dropping trees not on their property along Bolin Creek or bikers using prohibited sections of the Adams Preserve?

In my opinion, there are two things at play here, legislation and enforcement. When the BOA takes the input from all stakeholders and enacts legislation designed to prevent the devastation of our forests and the proper management of our water they are able to enforce it from the perspective of not approving any development or zoning that infringes upon that. It is part of the development of a long-range comprehensive plan. I think the BOA tends to put the effects of climate change in it's thinking when it comes to the growth of the town and I would certainly maintain that lens by discouraging the destruction of wildlife and trees. The enforcement of bikes in the Adams Tract or the unlawful felling of trees must be dealt with swiftly and immediately so as to clearly signify to others that penalties are assessed for breaking the law. The saying "What you allow will continue" applies and we should firmly enforce what we allow.

### **12. Town Advisory Boards' Role**

Citizens in Carrboro advise the town on issues including new development plans, economic development, affordable housing, transportation, town growth, environmental protection and other matters.

1. What weight do you believe recommendations/feedback from advisory boards should figure into work by town staff?  
arent communication including regular meetings with our town boards.
2. What weight do you believe recommendations/feedback from advisory boards should figure into decisions made by elected officials?
3. How will you work to expand participation in town advisory boards to include more neighborhoods being represented and greater diversity?
4. How else can Carrboro expand citizen participation to ensure all voices are heard equally?

Our best resource is an active citizen population and the advisory boards play an important role as they are often comprised of residents who are experts in their field or passionate about a topic. Oftentimes they have more practical knowledge than the Board members and therefore their input should be weighed heavily in the decision making process. Additionally, if we are to make our government more inclusive of the residents, allowing them to have a hand in the process is critical. Those who wish to advise our town, deserve that opportunity. An important part of my platform is the need to encourage more participation, more open meetings, more access to public information. Developing that ongoing outreach to our residents will create a more participatory government and one that represents the views of all of Carrboro which is essential for us to be the inclusive town we strive to be.

### **13. Meadow Flats**

Meadow Flats is a 233-acre ecological community near Old NC 86 and Eubanks Rd. and is part of what is now simply known as Meadow Flats, adjacent Bald Mountain, and nearby Blackwood Mountain Natural Heritage Natural Areas. The Meadow Flats Natural Area is highest-rated "Exceptional" by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, and includes perched upland wetlands, mature hardwoods, and notable rare state-listed Species of Special Concern, such as the four-toed salamander. Meadow Flats is located at the headwaters of Mountain Creek, which drains into New Hope Creek, and extends into Duke Forest lands where long-term climate research is underway that will yield information on climate and atmospheric changes. Carrboro's Transition II Area (joint jurisdiction by Carrboro and Orange County) includes a critical headwaters portion of Meadow Flats. Duke Forest and scientists who conduct research in the area have explained that Carrboro's proposed 31-acre Flex District zoning development, including writing a site-specific ordinance, will destroy the ecological community and negatively impact the integrity and validity of

the long-term scientific research conducted within Duke Forest. Friends of Meadow Flats and other conservationists are trying to save this important Natural Area.

1. As an elected official, what weight will you give for using all available tools to conserve special tracts of land such as Meadow Flats?
2. What value do Carrboro's advisory boards have in this process?

Meadow Flats is a unique tract and should be treated as such. Through strong advocacy for this land, the development appears to have stagnated and the environmental value has been realized. While we can't stop the growth of our area and have to accept that development will occur, it should not come at the expense of lands that are an exceptional habitat. Carrboro's advisory boards are the first line of defense in ensuring these areas are maintained as without their input and expertise the "loudest voice in the room" may in fact be the people who have the most to gain from it financially. As stated earlier, the advisory boards must be comprised of experts in their fields and their recommendations must be given the highest of priority as they are the voice of the community.



# Friends of Bolin Creek

## 2019 Carrboro Candidate Questions

Friends of Bolin Creek is dedicated to addressing climate change through environmental protection and ecological conservation of the integrity of the Bolin Creek Watershed. Specifically we advocate for minimizing flooding conditions in Carrboro and Chapel Hill by supporting best-practice stormwater management and sustainable development. In addition, we advocate for extending our tree canopy, cleaning up Chapel Hill's coal-ash deposit, transportation that meets public needs, and retaining natural areas, such as special forested tracts like Bolin Forest and Meadow Flats.

To help our membership better understand our elected officials and candidates who seek office, kindly provide your answers to the following questions. Please keep each response to 150 words or less:

### 1. Climate Change

Carrboro has a Climate Action Plan dramatically different from the actions taken by the N.C. Legislature and the Federal Administration.

1. Within Carrboro's Climate Action Plan, please identify three actions you believe its local government can take? Place in priority order.

Transportation is fast becoming the leading cause of greenhouse emissions in North Carolina. To slow the trend, we must get residents out of cars through smarter, more thoughtful land use policy. That is, denser, mixed use development providing more connectivity for bicyclists, walkers, and transit users alike. In addition, I'd like to see the installation of solar panels and batteries on all town buildings – including the new public library. While the town contributes just a small portion to our overall energy use, it sets an example for private employers transitioning to clean and green energy. Finally, I would add new members to Carrboro's Environmental Advisory Board, and then split the Board's responsibilities between development reviews and implementation of the town's Climate Action Plan. The additional staffing may speed up the implementation of other climate action plans including charging stations, LED lighting, composting, recycling, and weatherization.

## **2. Bolin Forest**

Carrboro is fortunate to have within its midst some 425 largely forested acres, made up of Carolina North (largely conserved), the P.H. Craig tract (privately owned and about half recently timbered) and the Adams Preserve (conserved by Carrboro and Orange County), as well as a small parcel owned by Ironwoods HOA. According to a 2003 N.C. State study jointly funded with the EPA, Bolin Forest and Bolin Creek possess significant water and wildlife resources and, therefore, are worthy of conservation. Given climate change and the need for environmental protection, maintaining these 425 acres as one contiguous forest is essential.

Will you, as an elected official, support initiatives to preserve and conserve the private portions to ensure Bolin Forest is protected as one contiguous forest?

Yes. The Bolin Creek watershed is one of Carrboro's real treasures: a 425-acre sanctuary nestled at the inner core of one of the state's most densely populated towns. The forest shelters a rich diversity of wildlife, protects us from climate change by acting as a carbon sink, and feeds into Jordan Lake, which supplies water to half a million people. To say the least, the forest is worth protecting. Among other things, this means addressing threats to the forest's continuity, namely P.H. Craig's desire to clear-cut the remainder of his privately owned 40-acre tract. While I would like to see the tract preserved, the reality is that the Town of Carrboro has little authority to stop the clearcutting. However, as an elected official, I will join in community efforts to honor Mr. Craig's legacy and voice support for fundraising campaigns to help the Town purchase the land from Mr. Craig at fair market value.

## **3. Tree Canopy**

Trees are our most effective, valuable carbon-sink vehicles. Protecting and expanding our area's tree canopy is a major goal of Friends of Bolin Creek.

1. What are your ideas about how to protect and expand the tree canopy in Carrboro?

Trees play an important role in the overall health of Carrboro residents. Studies show that people live longer if they live near greenery such as trees. They are also happier. A recent study from the University of Vermont shows that people who take a walk in a leafy public park

experience a mood spike the equivalent of Christmas Day. Trees also provide much-needed shading (and resulting energy savings) on hot summer days, cooling temperatures as much as ten degrees. Perhaps most importantly, trees help to reduce carbon emissions in the atmosphere. To protect our trees against development and disease, I would like to see Carrboro adopt a tree protection ordinance similar to Chapel Hill's, identifying tree canopy as a resource to be considered during development applications. The ordinance would call for a balanced approach in protecting trees without over-regulating developers and property owners. Looking ahead, I would consider a proposal that Carrboro developers plant a tree for every one that is cut down.

#### **4. Flooding**

Damage downstream from recent floods reminds us about the value that natural surfaces and woodlands perform in slowing and soaking up rainwater during storms.

1. To reduce flooding, will you support Friends of Bolin Forest's call to protect Bolin Forest and Bolin Creek, as well as our other forests and waterways, ensuring paved paths are kept away from sensitive forest and creek areas?

Yes. Adequate storm water drainage is central to the health of our forests, waterways, and community at large. Controversy continues to swirl around plans for a paved bicycle path along Bolin Creek first proposed by the Carrboro Board of Aldermen back in 2009. Some phases of this plan have already been completed, and we have seen increased flood damage in those areas. The issue is that impervious surfaces in Bolin Creek's watershed expedite rain water's path into the creek, overwhelming the creek bed's ability to take on extra water. This results in increased flooding, erosion, downstream damage, and water contamination with pollutants. As a Carrboro Alderman, I will work to stop the continued paving of sensitive forest and creek areas. That said, I would at least consider *pervious* surfaces (albeit more expensive) that may be suitable along Bolin Creek.

#### **5. Stormwater Utility**

Carrboro has formed a Stormwater Utility to manage stormwater programs, perform maintenance and repair of facilities, control flooding and take steps to improve water quality.

1. What aspects of this program is most important to accomplish in the next three-to-five years?

Research shows that global warming is causing more severe and more frequent storm events. The resulting runoff from streets, sidewalks, and parking lots pollutes our water supply and erodes streams. Sadly, low-income communities with the most outdated stormwater infrastructure are especially vulnerable to flooding, and are less equipped to recover from the damage. To the credit of the Town of Carrboro, we have a stormwater utility with a dedicated source of revenue (\$75/household). As a member of the Board, I would ensure that our Stormwater Enterprise Fund is fully funded to repair, upgrade, and modernize our town's current stormwater infrastructure; ensure our water is clean; and keep development in line with our current stormwater management capabilities. I would also advocate for increased use of green infrastructure such as rain gardens (i.e., at McDougle Middle School), native plants, and green alleys to improve water quality by capturing and retaining rainwater.

## **6. Sustainable Development**

A great deal of debate in Carrboro centers around how development should happen. At issue often are questions of density, quality of life, affordable housing, its small-town past, its architectural as well as environmental integrity, and the need to conserve forested areas.

1. What is your vision for environmentally responsible development within our community?

Carrboro has had a rural buffer in place since the late 1980s. That is, a circle around the edge of the town beyond which we have agreed not to develop, thereby protecting farms, forests, and the rural nature of Orange County. The buffer has prevented sprawl, which is critical in the context of addressing climate change and making transit more affordable and efficient. Yet the buffer also limits the amount of developable land within Carrboro, which is already one of the most densely populated municipalities in the state. This makes it incumbent upon our locally elected officials to develop land inside the buffer very thoughtfully and strategically.

2. What policy and ordinance changes are needed to attain your vision?

People continue to move to Carrboro because it's a great place to live: it's bicycle-friendly, hip, a mecca for good restaurants and coffee shops, and known for its vibrant art and music scene. But it's been

challenging for the Town to keep up with demand for additional housing units, thereby pushing up our already steep rents even further. The town needs to build more housing, and especially affordable housing, to ensure we continue to have a diversity of socioeconomic income levels that goes to the core of who we are as a community. At the same time, I favor developments in downtown that are set back from the street (such as Shelton Station), allowing for more trees, flower beds, benches, and sidewalks along the street front. If done properly, denser development (say 4 or 5 stories) also allows for more land to be set aside for urban parks and more housing to be built accessible to transit.

3. What is your position on Carrboro's site-specific, flexible zoning district efforts?

Because the FLX zone is a brand-new tool for the Town, there are still many questions as to how it will balance out the needs of the community and the developer. For this reason, I would recommend the FLX zone be tested in another area, as a pilot, before it is applied to a very unique and environmentally sensitive area such as Meadow Flats. I think the town should also consider waiting to use FLX zoning until after a comprehensive plan has been developed and adopted, to ensure that opening up the Transition 2 area is compatible with long-term plans for growth.

## **7. Town Growth**

Currently, both Carrboro and Chapel Hill are growing at a rate of about one percent a year. Development comes with costs, often stressing resources and community infrastructure, as well as leading to reduced tree canopy, fewer open spaces, increased traffic and strain on town budgets (often resulting in higher taxes).

1. Please share your philosophy on the pace and costs of Carrboro's growth. Data from the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce show that Carrboro has been growing at a very reasonable, average rate of 1.3% annually since 2010. This means an additional 250 - 275 residents brought into the fold each year, with accompanying costs for public schools, roads, police and fire, parks and recreation, stormwater infrastructure, transit, etc. The Board has shown tremendous restraint in approving just one property tax hike during this time – earmarked for affordable housing. Yet there has been some deferred maintenance (i.e., stormwater infrastructure, roads, Public

Works Department, Town Hall) which will need to be addressed in the near future through a tax increase or bond referendum.

2. Do you believe it is possible for development to pay for itself? If so, how?

Large single family home developments typically do not pay for themselves. Research shows they cost taxpayers as much as \$1.40 to \$1.50 for every \$1.00 of revenue raised by the new tax base. But infill development (i.e., using an empty lot in an urban area) and redevelopment are more likely to reap a net positive in property tax revenues because the infrastructure and roads are already in place. Also, commercial and industrial development often pays for itself because there are no additional costs for schools. In Chapel Hill-Carrboro the per pupil expenditure is \$6,235, the highest in the state.

## **8. Sustainable Transportation**

To minimize climate change, public transportation systems will need to be enhanced and expanded. A change-over from gasoline-powered vehicles will also be needed.

1. Identify three ways local government can decrease automobile travel and emissions generated by gasoline-powered vehicles?

Broadly speaking, I'd like to see smart, thoughtful, multi-use development providing more connectivity for walkers, bicyclists, and transit users. Specifically, let's leverage state and federal funding to pave more sidewalks (i.e., downtown to the new South Green development). Let's get more bicyclists off of busy streets and onto greenways (i.e., the new Jones Creek greenway connecting the back end of Lake Hogan Farms to Morris Grove Elementary school, or a possible greenway connecting Lake Hogan Farms to the Claremont subdivision). Let's offer more evening and weekend bus service that would be especially beneficial to folks working non-regular shifts, such as at UNC Hospital. Finally, I would like to see the Town transition to paid parking in the downtown area (perhaps free for the first hour and then \$1.50 for each additional hour), to serve as a disincentive for driving cars.

2. What is your position on e-scooters and Segways on town streets?

I am receptive to the idea of e-scooters and Segways as they are

cleaner, healthier and more cost effective than cars. That said, studies show these vehicles can be quite dangerous in crowded, public settings when driven at fast speeds, especially since the driver is in a standing position. For these reasons, certain protections need to be put into place before I would approve the use of e-scooters or Segways in Carrboro. For example, the vehicles should be banned from sidewalks, public right of ways, and greenways. To ensure the safety of e-scooter drivers, they should be treated much like moped drivers: required to wear a helmet, and possess a license or identification card. With these sensible protections in place, I would like to see Carrboro embrace the idea of e-scooters and Segways as a form of clean and green transportation with limited parking requirements.

## **9. Biking and Bike Plan**

Carrboro's Bike Plan is currently under revision, and the town is applying to the League of American Bicyclists to be considered for a gold award. Carrboro is recognized as having the highest bike ridership of any city in the Southeast and among the tops in the nation. Bike boulevards have been identified by the League of American Bicyclists as particularly appropriate for Carrboro, streets with low traffic and speed designated to give bikes priority. One part of the new Bike Plan currently is to create a rail-to-trails bike path along the Norfolk-Southern railbed when UNC converts its energy usage from coal.

### **1. What aspect of Carrboro's new Bike Plan would you prioritize? Why?**

As a long-time resident of Lake Hogan Farms, I would prioritize more bicycle safety and connectivity in the northern neighborhoods. For example, many of my neighbors are very excited about the new Jones Creek Greenway, connecting the back end of Lake Hogan Farms to Morris Grove Elementary School. This will create more opportunities for students to get out of cars and bicycle to school. I would also like to connect the paved path behind the tennis courts in Lake Hogan Farms to Claremont, which would then connect to Winmore and with Phase 1B, to Chapel Hill High and Smith Middle Schools. In addition, many of my Lake Hogan Farms neighbors would love to see connectivity with the Wexford development, perhaps by lowering the speed limit on Homestead Road and then adding a cross walk. Finally, let's provide safer, easier access via Old 86 from Farm House Road to Calvander and rural Orange County.

### **2. What should we do to take Carrboro to the next level in terms of**



biking?

While Carrboro should be proud of its silver accreditation as a bicycle-friendly community, I'd recommend certain improvements to bring home the gold. These include:

- separated space for bicyclists along busy corridors such as East Main Street, and North and South Greensboro;
- bicycle boulevards, similar to those recently added to Cobblestone, but with better communication with neighbors as to their purpose and added safety benefits; and
- separated paths, trails, and greenways, for which the community clearly shows a strong preference (nearly three-fourths of respondents in a recent survey chose "trail or greenway access" as a factor that would encourage them to bicycle more).

3. How should Carrboro prioritize bike boulevards among competing bike projects?

Bike Boulevards offer a simple, affordable way to add connectivity through low traffic and low speed neighborhoods. This helps to explain why there is so much potential for bicycling in Carrboro; the vast majority of our roads *are* low traffic and low speed. Of course, we should consider bigger projects, too, but bike boulevards offer many short-term advantages: they are less controversial and hence more easily approved by the Board of Aldermen, and their cost is minimal compared to the many benefits. As just one example, bicycle lanes in Carrboro are often filled with trash cans, parked cars, and yard debris. Hence, the boulevards provide an easy way around those obstructions. For this reason, bicycle boulevards were specifically mentioned as a step toward Carrboro's gold certification in the 2014 League of American Bicyclists' silver certification and report card.

4. How should Carrboro balance the needs of bicyclists with the needs of citizen desiring high frequency bus service?

In the town's FY19-20 budget, over \$2 million is set aside for Chapel Hill transit and close to \$4 million is designated for the Jones Creek Greenway, the Morgan Creek Greenway, and the Homestead Chapel Hill High School Multi-Use Path benefiting bicyclists and walkers. This is all to say, the town makes a significant investment in alternative modes of transportation as part of our climate action plan. To balance the needs of bicyclists and transit users, I think we need to closely examine ridership. To what extent are new greenways, trails and other improvements encouraging more bicyclists? To

what extent is weekend/evening and higher frequency bus service increasing ridership? At a time when the town's cost for stormwater management, health insurance/retirement for town employees, and climate action are skyrocketing, new bicycle improvements and transit services should produce a significant jump in ridership to justify additional tax dollars.

### **10. Coal Clean-Up and Energy Use**

Carrboro, Chapel Hill and UNC have relied on a coal-generated plant for decades now. One result has been a coal-ash deposit along Bolin Creek and beneath and adjacent to the Chapel Hill Police Department facility. One proposal has been to convert UNC's coal plant to a blend of renewable fuel.

1. Will you advocate for the careful monitoring and cleanup of the coal-ash deposit?

I will certainly be a strong advocate for the clean-up of the 60,000 cubic yards of coal ash discovered in 2013, beneath the Chapel Hill Police Department. As interim steps, I support Town of Chapel Hill's plan for additional signage along the Bolin Creek Trail to ensure users stay on the path; the removal of contaminants closest to the creek; the periodic sampling of the soil and water near the police department; and the reporting to the community on the findings from the samples. Over the long term, a comprehensive plan needs to be put into place for the removal of all the coal ash and the relocation of the police department. While the coal ash is clearly in Chapel Hill's jurisdiction, the trail is used by many Carrboro residents, thereby calling for close monitoring by our Board of Aldermen.

2. How do you plan to help advocate for the shutdown of UNC's coal-fired power plant on Cameron Avenue?

While the original plan was to shut down the Cameron Avenue coal plant powering much of UNC by 2020, that is clearly not going to happen. UNC is still paying for its Cogen plant, arguing that it can't completely transition to clean energy until the coal plant is completely paid off. So instead, UNC is calling for a slower, more financially feasible approach beginning with a burner modification allowing the plant to use more natural gas and less coal – reducing greenhouse emissions in the process. To ensure UNC transitions away from dangerous fossil fuels toward clean energy with all deliberate speed, I would hold their feet to the fire by setting targeted dates for reaching specific milestones – and then hold regular hearings before Chapel

Hill Town Council and Carrboro Board of Aldermen for a report on progress.

3. What do you see as the future of electricity generation in Carrboro and Chapel Hill?

Transitioning to 100 percent clean energy is looking much more promising thanks to recent technological innovations including battery storage. More specifically, solar and wind power are increasingly competitive with the grid, which is why we are seeing more and more solar panel installations and windmills in North Carolina. To jump start this transition, I was pleased to see Orange County approve a quarter cent, climate crisis mitigation tax, adding \$7.50 to the tax bill on a \$300,000 home. To the extent that Orange County brands itself as home to alternative energy providers that are a part of the solution to climate change, we attract more businesses developing solar and wind energy. And, these businesses by and large offer good paying jobs – often living wage jobs. Let’s give more of these businesses some work, adding solar panels to our town buildings including our new public library.

### **11. Ordinance Implementation**

Carrboro has state and local ordinances to address water quality, stormwater management, impervious surface limits, stream buffers, steep slopes, and tree canopy. When the Board of Aldermen approves these projects, such ordinances are meant to apply.

1. Please comment on how effective you see the implementation of such rules.

I am not familiar enough with Carrboro’s state and local ordinances to comment on their effectiveness.

2. If elected, what changes, if any, will you advocate for?

The western and northern areas of Carrboro are where there is still opportunity to grow in terms of available land. Growth to the west will have a direct impact on water quality since it is in the University Lake watershed, and abuts one of Carrboro's largest intact natural areas. Growth to the north will disturb mature forests and seasonal wetlands. Managing development in those areas will require great caution and rigorous enforcement of all state and local ordinances as well as the informed advice of our local environmental experts.

3. How should Carrboro enforce its town ordinances, for example people dropping trees not on their property along Bolin Creek or bikers using prohibited sections of the Adams Preserve?

Carrboro should always enforce its own ordinances. We may need to get creative about how violations to certain ordinances are identified given the limited resources of our police department. For example, public education around the ordinances may need to be ramped up and occasional cameras may need to be installed in more remote sections of town where suspected violations are occurring. Carrboro's most valuable resources for fighting climate change are our trees and wetlands, and special outreach efforts to local property owners and real estate developers should be adopted to encourage the preservation of these resources.

## **12. Town Advisory Boards' Role**

Citizens in Carrboro advise the town on issues including new development plans, economic development, affordable housing, transportation, town growth, environmental protection and other matters.

1. What weight do you believe recommendations/feedback from advisory boards should figure into work by town staff?
2. What weight do you believe recommendations/feedback from advisory boards should figure into decisions made by elected officials?
3. How will you work to expand participation in town advisory boards to include more neighborhoods being represented and greater diversity?
4. How else can Carrboro expand citizen participation to ensure all voices are heard equally?

The Town of Carrboro has 18 active advisory boards addressing a wide range of issues. Comprised of independent-minded citizens with unique perspectives, expertise, and backgrounds, the advisory boards should be given considerable weight in the decision-making process. Indeed, the broader the representation on the boards, the greater the weight their recommendations should figure into decision-making. To increase participation on advisory boards, I would explore ways for members to participate remotely through video conferencing, for example. I would also consider offering free day care and transportation (i.e., Uber) to attract more lower-income residents with young children to our advisory boards. To expand citizen participation even further, I believe the Town needs to undertake a periodic, rigorous review of its entire recruitment process to more clearly identify the demographics of who

is currently sitting on advisory boards – and who is left out. Targeted strategies can then be put into place for slowly adding more diversity to the advisory boards (i.e., college and graduate students comprise one-fifth of the Town's population yet only two students sit on any of our advisory boards). As part of this strategy, it must be made clear to potential applicants that the advisory boards offer a *no judgement zone* where all opinions matter.

### **13. Meadow Flats**

Meadow Flats is a 233-acre ecological community near Old NC 86 and Eubanks Rd. and is part of what is now simply known as Meadow Flats, adjacent Bald Mountain, and nearby Blackwood Mountain Natural Heritage Natural Areas. The Meadow Flats Natural Area is highest-rated "Exceptional" by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, and includes perched upland wetlands, mature hardwoods, and notable rare state-listed Species of Special Concern, such as the four-toed salamander. Meadow Flats is located at the headwaters of Mountain Creek, which drains into New Hope Creek, and extends into Duke Forest lands where long-term climate research is underway that will yield information on climate and atmospheric changes. Carrboro's Transition II Area (joint jurisdiction by Carrboro and Orange County) includes a critical headwaters portion of Meadow Flats. Duke Forest and scientists who conduct research in the area have explained that Carrboro's proposed 31-acre Flex District zoning development, including writing a site-specific ordinance, will destroy the ecological community and negatively impact the integrity and validity of the long-term scientific research conducted within Duke Forest. Friends of Meadow Flats and other conservationists are trying to save this important Natural Area.

1. As an elected official, what weight will you give for using all available tools to conserve special tracts of land such as Meadow Flats?

Meadow Flats is not only a treasured natural heritage site, it sits adjacent to the Duke Forest Blackwood Division, an important site for climate change and air quality research. The best possible outcome for Meadow Flats is if sufficient funding were pooled (from say, Duke Forest, the Town and County, and various environmental groups) to purchase the land and set it aside in a conservancy. That said, I would not close the door on development in other parts of the FLX posing less risk to the Meadow Flats. A very similar clash between preservation of an environmentally sensitive area and mixed-use

development is occurring around the 164 acres in the Greene Tract, with its hardwood forests, walking trails, streams, and wildlife. This time, three jurisdictions – Orange County, Town of Chapel Hill, and Town of Carrboro – are struggling to find just the right balance in building much-needed affordable housing while preserving an important ecological community. If elected to the Board, I would love to have the opportunity to lend my voice to that conversation.

2. What value do Carrboro’s advisory boards have in this process?

The Northern Transition Area Advisory Board holds a unique position in making recommendations to the Town about the proposed 31-acre Flex District zoning development. While Carrboro controls the planning process, members of the NTAAB are not residents of the Town nor can they vote in our municipal elections. What’s more, the Orange County Board of Commissioners is keeping a distance from the planning process, canceling a series of scheduled meetings with the NTAAB dating back to 2016. For these reasons, the NTAAB feels that it is left without adequate representation among locally elected officials at a time when key decisions are being made about the future of the FLX. As a resident of nearby Lake Hogan Farms, I believe that I am uniquely positioned to bring to the Board’s decision-making process more of a voice from the northern transition area and the surrounding northern neighborhoods at a time when it is especially needed.

# Friends of Bolin Creek

## 2019 Carrboro Candidate Questions

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To help our membership better understand our elected officials and candidates who seek office, kindly provide your answers to the following questions. Please keep each response to 150 words or less:

### 1. Climate Change

Carrboro has a Climate Action Plan dramatically different from the actions taken by the N.C. Legislature and the Federal Administration.

1. Within Carrboro's Climate Action Plan, please identify three actions you believe its local government can take? Place in priority order.
  - Take an environmental justice approach to implementation of the Community Climate Action Plan by using participatory-democracy strategies in working with community members; seeking and valuing input and knowledge from a variety of perspectives; and gathering data in a way that enables implementation to be focused on reducing inequities.
  - Enhance public transit service, including implementation of Chapel Hill Transit's Short Range Transit Plan and North-South Bus Rapid Transit Project, with the goals of increasing ridership, creating high-frequency transit corridors, achieving significant mode shift to transit, and emphasizing equity for transit-dependent communities.
  - Begin a comprehensive organics collection and composting program by implementing the backyard composting program, initiating a pilot project with multifamily complexes to collect organic waste from residents with less ability to compost at home, and leveraging the implementation of these projects as the backbone of a neighborhood-

level communication network to support future steps in Community Climate Action Plan implementation.

## **2. Bolin Forest**

Carrboro is fortunate to have within its midst some 425 largely forested acres, made up of Carolina North (largely conserved), the P.H. Craig tract (privately owned and about half recently timbered) and the Adams Preserve (conserved by Carrboro and Orange County), as well as a small parcel owned by Ironwoods HOA. According to a 2003 N.C. State study jointly funded with the EPA, Bolin Forest and Bolin Creek possess significant water and wildlife resources and, therefore, are worthy of conservation. Given climate change and the need for environmental protection, maintaining these 425 acres as one contiguous forest is essential.

1. Will you, as an elected official, support initiatives to preserve and conserve the private portions to ensure Bolin Forest is protected as one contiguous forest?

Yes, the town should endeavor to conserve contiguous forested lands, both in urban forested areas and in the rural buffer. The town's options are sometimes limited when private property is involved. Even in those cases, the town should do what it reasonably (and legally) can to protect streams, tree canopy, and other important features.

## **3. Tree Canopy**

Trees are our most effective, valuable carbon-sink vehicles. Protecting and expanding our area's tree canopy is a major goal of Friends of Bolin Creek.

1. What are your ideas about how to protect and expand the tree canopy in Carrboro?

We can improve tree canopy protection by encouraging compact forms of development primarily within the urban core. Doing this will require updates to the town's zoning. Also, the town can continually update its standards. As with many local rules, we are somewhat at the mercy of the state. In my first year in office, I led a response to legislation in the General Assembly that threatened local environmental rules. One result of these efforts was an amendment to the Land Use Ordinance to improve tree protections. Carrboro has a long history of protecting and replacing trees lost to development. However, our standards were out of date and were inconsistent with standards and technology used by arborists. Among other changes, the updated ordinance added new protections for individual trees and tree



stands; provided techniques for planting to increase the likelihood of tree survival; and increased shading requirements for parking areas.

#### **4. Flooding**

Damage downstream from recent floods reminds us about the value that natural surfaces and woodlands perform in slowing and soaking up rainwater during storms.

1. To reduce flooding, will you support Friends of Bolin Forest's call to protect Bolin Forest and Bolin Creek, as well as our other forests and waterways, ensuring paved paths are kept away from sensitive forest and creek areas?

We should avoid exacerbating flooding and doing further harm to ecologically disturbed areas. We should complete critical stream restoration on Morgan Creek adjacent to the public works facility, among other stormwater-related projects. We should also seek sources of funding to resume activities related to the 2012 Bolin Creek watershed restoration plan, which the town currently does not have the capacity or funding to implement.

#### **5. Stormwater Utility**

Carrboro has formed a Stormwater Utility to manage stormwater programs, perform maintenance and repair of facilities, control flooding and take steps to improve water quality.

1. What aspects of this program is most important to accomplish in the next three-to-five years?

Now that the stormwater utility is established, staffed, and collecting revenue, among the most important activities is for the staff and the volunteer stormwater advisory commission to complete their prioritization of projects so that the board can build a capital program around their recommendations. Dedicated staff are now responsible for maintaining the town's participation in the NPDES program and in implementing the Jordan Lake Rules (as they evolve). Other immediate priorities should include Morgan Creek stream restoration near the town's public works facility, and obtaining FEMA hazard mitigation funds to acquire or elevate certain homes along Tom's Creek. Finally, the board should decide soon whether to authorize an expansion of the utility's services and programs (which would require more revenue.) For example, with additional fee revenue and grant

matching, the utility could build capacity to implement the 2012 Bolin Creek watershed restoration plan.

## **6. Sustainable Development**

A great deal of debate in Carrboro centers around how development should happen. At issue often are questions of density, quality of life, affordable housing, its small-town past, its architectural as well as environmental integrity, and the need to conserve forested areas.

1. What is your vision for environmentally responsible development within our community?
2. What policy and ordinance changes are needed to attain your vision?
3. What is your position on Carrboro's site-specific, flexible zoning district efforts?

In general, environmentally responsible development is development that is compact, walkable, and transit-oriented. Such development should incorporate affordable housing and include a diversity of housing types, especially “missing middle” and other multifamily housing. Decisions about long-term growth and development should be guided by a community-driven comprehensive plan. I have long advocated for and am glad the town is now embarking on a comprehensive planning process over the next two to three years.

The FLX zoning classification was completed in 2016, and I voted in favor of adding this classification to the Land Use Ordinance. Unlike most zoning classifications, it is designed to be process-oriented (rather than use-based or form-based) and to increase opportunities for direct community engagement. It may only be applied to large tracts of land subjected to detailed planning study. One project has entered the process; the project is currently on hold pending discussions to protect the wetlands.

## **7. Town Growth**

Currently, both Carrboro and Chapel Hill are growing at a rate of about one percent a year. Development comes with costs, often stressing resources and community infrastructure, as well as leading to reduced tree canopy, fewer open spaces, increased traffic and strain on town budgets (often resulting in higher taxes).

1. Please share your philosophy on the pace and costs of Carrboro's growth.

2. Do you believe it is possible for development to pay for itself? If so, how?

How new development and redevelopment contribute to or detract from community wealth—including whether development stresses resources or infrastructure or reduces tree canopy—depends on how it occurs. I find it useful to acknowledge that development and redevelopment are happening now and will continue to happen, and that the community—through ordinances, plans, policies, and advocacy—has the opportunity and responsibility to shape how that development happens, consistent with our goals and values. Compact, walkable, transit-oriented (re)development can “pay for itself” in that it is the best approach to promoting livability, affordability, and environmental sustainability.

## **8. Sustainable Transportation**

To minimize climate change, public transportation systems will need to be enhanced and expanded. A change-over from gasoline-powered vehicles will also be needed.

1. Identify three ways local government can decrease automobile travel and emissions generated by gasoline-powered vehicles?
2. What is your position on scooters and Segways on town streets?

Local governments can (1) continue expanding Chapel Hill Transit service, including implementing the North-South Bus Rapid Transit Project and the Short Range Transit Plan (for which I serve on the policy committees) and identifying opportunities to transition the fleet to electric vehicles; (2) continue expanding regional transit service, including amending the Orange County Transit Plan to further support integration of local and regional service; and (3) invest in sidewalks and bicycle facilities in a way that emphasizes the safety and comfort of pedestrians and cyclists.

With regard to scooter and bike share programs, we can take cues from experiences in other communities. I am interested in the example set by the City of Durham, which established requirements for how scooters are parked and the responsibility of vendors to respond to complaints of improperly parked scooters. I will be interested to learn how those regulations are working in the real world.

## **9. Biking and Bike Plan**

Carrboro’s Bike Plan is currently under revision, and the town is applying to the League of American Bicyclists to be considered for a gold award.

Carrboro is recognized as having the highest bike ridership of any city in the Southeast and among the tops in the nation. Bike boulevards have been identified by the League of American Bicyclists as particularly appropriate for Carrboro, streets with low traffic and speed designated to give bikes priority. One part of the new Bike Plan currently is to create a rail-to-trails bike path along the Norfolk-Southern railbed when UNC converts its energy usage from coal.

1. What aspect of Carrboro's new Bike Plan would you prioritize? Why?
2. What should we do to take Carrboro to the next level in terms of biking?
3. How should Carrboro prioritize bike boulevards among competing bike projects?
4. How should Carrboro balance the needs of bicyclists with the needs of citizen desiring high frequency bus service?

I bring personal experience to these issues as someone who commutes by bicycle and bus. The board has not yet reviewed the draft update to the bike plan, so it is difficult to say what elements I would prioritize. I support designing the plan around what community members who ride or wish to ride bicycles have identified as high-stress areas and making those areas safer. Buffered, protected, and/or separated bicycle lanes and paths—both in the urban core and in places that connect neighborhoods—would take us to the next level, whether or not they are identified as “bike boulevards.”

I see supporting the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and supporting the needs of transit users as complementary efforts rather than efforts to balance competing needs. Well-maintained pedestrian infrastructure and a good bicycle network get people to transit and are part of what constitute a functional, high-quality transit system.

### **10. Coal Clean-Up and Energy Use**

Carrboro, Chapel Hill and UNC have relied on a coal-generated plant for decades now. One result has been a coal-ash deposit along Bolin Creek and beneath and adjacent to the Chapel Hill Police Department facility. One proposal has been to convert UNC’s coal plant to a blend of renewable fuel.

1. Will you advocate for the careful monitoring and cleanup of the coal-ash deposit?
2. How do you plan to help advocate for the shutdown of UNC’s coal-fired power plant on Cameron Avenue?

3. What do you see as the future of electricity generation in Carrboro and Chapel Hill?

My understanding is that the Chapel Hill Town Council has approved remediation measures for the coal ash site. Though the site is outside Carrboro's jurisdiction, I am glad the process is beginning. I would gladly advocate for a transition to renewable energy production throughout the state, including the UNC-Chapel Hill campus. It will require state-level action, and it is unclear to me what sustainable alternatives are available in the immediate future. Meanwhile, in Carrboro, our focus should be on speeding the transition to renewable energy for residential and commercial users. The Community Climate Action Plan emphasizes community solar, but we remain hamstrung by the state in developing community-owned utilities. As we advocate for legislative change, we can promote initiatives to reduce consumption—such as energy efficiency initiatives, upgrades of town buildings, and transition to LED streetlights—and work with older homeowners associations to remove restrictions on solar technologies.

## **11. Ordinance Implementation**

Carrboro has state and local ordinances to address water quality, stormwater management, impervious surface limits, stream buffers, steep slopes, and tree canopy. When the Board of Aldermen approves these projects, such ordinances are meant to apply.

1. Please comment on how effective you see the implementation of such rules.
2. If elected, what changes, if any, will you advocate for?
3. How should Carrboro enforce its town ordinances, for example people dropping trees not on their property along Bolin Creek or bikers using prohibited sections of the Adams Preserve?

In the development review process—where most of the board's exposure to these rules occurs—staff, advisory boards, and elected officials work systematically to ensure local standards are met. Carrboro has strong standards for water quality and other protections. I support the town continuing to strengthen rules where possible. For example, in my first year in office, I led a response to legislation in the General Assembly that threatened local environmental rules, resulting in new protections for stream buffers and tree canopy. I worked with staff to identify opportunities for updating the Land Use Ordinance, and I advocated for these changes with my colleagues to protect the town from attacks on sensible local regulations.

As with enforcement of most local rules, the system is complaint-based. It is important for the town to be notified when rules are violated, whether along Bolin Creek, on the Adams tract, or in other areas.

## **12. Town Advisory Boards' Role**

Citizens in Carrboro advise the town on issues including new development plans, economic development, affordable housing, transportation, town growth, environmental protection and other matters.

1. What weight do you believe recommendations/feedback from advisory boards should figure into work by town staff?
2. What weight do you believe recommendations/feedback from advisory boards should figure into decisions made by elected officials?
3. How will you work to expand participation in town advisory boards to include more neighborhoods being represented and greater diversity?
4. How else can Carrboro expand citizen participation to ensure all voices are heard equally?

The role of the advisory boards is to advise the Board of Aldermen (and sometimes the Board of Adjustment), rather than direct the work of staff. As someone who served on and chaired local advisory boards for several years before joining the Board of Aldermen, I take seriously the work of the advisory boards and the importance of considering their recommendations.

The responsibility of increasing diversity is always a work in progress. Recently, the staff helped standardize recruitment and operating policies for advisory boards. We also can view partnerships with community groups as a way to generate interest in advisory boards, and use experiences with individual projects and initiatives to foster interest from communities who historically have not been included. For example, by standing behind the achievements of the community-first Rogers Road zoning initiative, we can build trust among participants and encourage them to engage in new ways.

## **13. Meadow Flats**

Meadow Flats is a 233-acre ecological community near Old NC 86 and Eubanks Rd. and is part of what is now simply known as Meadow Flats, adjacent Bald Mountain, and nearby Blackwood Mountain Natural Heritage Natural Areas. The Meadow Flats Natural Area is highest-rated "Exceptional" by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, and includes perched upland wetlands, mature hardwoods, and notable rare state-listed Species of Special Concern, such as the four-toed salamander. Meadow Flats is located at the headwaters of Mountain Creek, which drains into New Hope

Creek, and extends into Duke Forest lands where long-term climate research is underway that will yield information on climate and atmospheric changes. Carrboro's Transition II Area (joint jurisdiction by Carrboro and Orange County) includes a critical headwaters portion of Meadow Flats. Duke Forest and scientists who conduct research in the area have explained that Carrboro's proposed 31-acre Flex District zoning development, including writing a site-specific ordinance, will destroy the ecological community and negatively impact the integrity and validity of the long-term scientific research conducted within Duke Forest. Friends of Meadow Flats and other conservationists are trying to save this important Natural Area.

1. As an elected official, what weight will you give for using all available tools to conserve special tracts of land such as Meadow Flats?
2. What value do Carrboro's advisory boards have in this process?

Carrboro has strong standards for environmental protection and has not been shy about seeking new tools to strengthen those protections. Where tools are available and appropriate, the town should use them. Where other entities, such as neighboring property owners and other community members, are able to take action that the town cannot take to conserve valued areas, they should do so.

The advisory boards, especially the Environmental Advisory Board and the Northern Transition Area Advisory Committee, have been active and influential in shaping both the FLX zoning classification and the proposed development project at Old NC 86 and Eubanks Road. Advice from the advisory boards and input from the broader community are important to me as an elected official and a former advisory board member, and they strengthen the overall development review process.

# Friends of Bolin Creek

## 2019 Carrboro Candidate Questions

### Sammy Slade Answers

Friends of Bolin Creek is dedicated to addressing climate change through environmental protection and ecological conservation of the integrity of the Bolin Creek Watershed. Specifically we advocate for minimizing flooding conditions in Carrboro and Chapel Hill by supporting best-practice stormwater management and sustainable development. In addition, we advocate for extending our tree canopy, cleaning up Chapel Hill's coal-ash deposit, transportation that meets public needs, and retaining natural areas, such as special forested tracts like Bolin Forest and Meadow Flats.

To help our membership better understand our elected officials and candidates who seek office, kindly provide your answers to the following questions. Please keep each response to 150 words or less:

#### 1. Climate Change

Carrboro has a Climate Action Plan dramatically different from the actions taken by the N.C. Legislature and the Federal Administration.

1. Within Carrboro's Climate Action Plan, please identify three actions you believe its local government can take? Place in priority order.

*Carrboro has two climate action plans one for the community at large and one for the municipality. When no other level of government is taking EMERGENCY climate action it is incumbent upon us to do everything we must.*

*From the municipal plan, the three largest areas of emissions are buildings, vehicle fleet and streetlights. Consequently, the three most impactful things we can do are:*

1. *Building facilities energy efficiency*  
*Status: Currently undergoing facilities assessment with an eye towards upgrading to net-positive, so that when we have town*



*owned renewables we will be able to provide power for both the building's use and for powering the vehicle fleet.*

- 2. Fleet replacement*
- 3. Converting streetlights to LED*

*Because the municipality only generates 2% of town wide emissions we have a Community Climate Action Plan.*

- 1. Green Neighborhood Program*
- 2. Further support Walking, Biking and Transit*
- 3. Pursue Community Solar programs*

## **2. Bolin Forest**

Carrboro is fortunate to have within its midst some 425 largely forested acres, made up of Carolina North (largely conserved), the P.H. Craig tract (privately owned and about half recently timbered) and the Adams Preserve (conserved by Carrboro and Orange County), as well as a small parcel owned by Ironwoods HOA. According to a 2003 N.C. State study jointly funded with the EPA, Bolin Forest and Bolin Creek possess significant water and wildlife resources and, therefore, are worthy of conservation. Given climate change and the need for environmental protection, maintaining these 425 acres as one contiguous forest is essential.

1. Will you, as an elected official, support initiatives to preserve and conserve the private portions to ensure Bolin Forest is protected as one contiguous forest?

*Yes, I will support initiatives to preserve and conserve the private portions to ensure Bolin Forest is protected as one contiguous forest. The timbering of P.H. Craig tract was a tragedy. The Board of Alderman did everything we could to protect the forest, unfortunately P.H. Craig proved to be an impossible person to understand and work with. I thought we did well in making attractive offers, these were shots in the dark though as we still have no idea what has motivated P.H. Craig to timber his property.*

## **3. Tree Canopy**

Trees are our most effective, valuable carbon-sink vehicles. Protecting and expanding our area's tree canopy is a major goal of Friends of Bolin Creek.

1. What are your ideas about how to protect and expand the tree canopy in Carrboro?

*Carrboro's climate justice goals will require that we pull carbon out of the atmosphere. To this end we need to identify all opportunities for preservation of trees (i.e. urban areas, Bolin Forest, rural buffer, OWASA maintained forests) equivalent to what we are responsible for per capita in Carrboro.*

*For urban areas we need to create a tree canopy plan so that we can then accept payments in-lieu for when developers claim that they cannot abide by our tree canopy requirements. The tree canopy plan needs to require payments that are equivalent to the cost of acquiring the space for the trees to be planted at a cost equivalent to the going rate of property of the area where the development is being built. We also need to increase our street rights-of-way so that we can have municipally maintained canopy trees along all of our streets.*

#### **4. Flooding**

Damage downstream from recent floods reminds us about the value that natural surfaces and woodlands perform in slowing and soaking up rainwater during storms.

1. To reduce flooding, will you support Friends of Bolin Forest's call to protect Bolin Forest and Bolin Creek, as well as our other forests and waterways, ensuring paved paths are kept away from sensitive forest and creek areas?

*I have and will continue to protect natural surfaces and woodland delicate ecosystem preservation. In addition my work on climate action is geared at addressing the other root cause of worsening floods. The environment has always been my number one issue.*

*If and when these are at odds I will need to weigh the information and make a decision on the wellbeing of our overall ecosystem.*

#### **5. Stormwater Utility**

Carrboro has formed a Stormwater Utility to manage stormwater programs, perform maintenance and repair of facilities, control flooding and take steps to improve water quality.

1. What aspects of this program is most important to accomplish in the next three-to-five years?

*Within the next 3 to 5 years all Stormwater Control Measures (SCM) in town need to be inspected to assure that they are working properly to control stormwater runoff.*

*Also we will have completed the pilot neighborhood 'Rain-Ready' program. Hopefully the pilot will prove viability for a neighborhood program that can be taken to all neighborhoods to maximize stormwater management and energy efficiency.*

*Generally, within that time period, the utility will have generated sufficient funding for capital improvements and better upkeep of our stormwater infrastructure.*

## **6. Sustainable Development**

A great deal of debate in Carrboro centers around how development should happen. At issue often are questions of density, quality of life, affordable housing, its small-town past, its architectural as well as environmental integrity, and the need to conserve forested areas.

1. What is your vision for environmentally responsible development within our community?

*Growth is outstripping the planets carrying capacity. According to the Worldwatch Institute, the Earth can support at most one-fifth of the present population, 1.5 billion people, at an American standard of living. The Earth has [4 acres](#) of land per person for growing food and textiles for clothing, supplying wood and absorbing waste. The average American uses about 23 acres.*

*We need to get a handle on what this means for us locally.*

*Generally, my vision is that we transform culturally in a manner that would allow for self-care. We need to expand our notions of 'self' to include each other and nature as an extension of ourselves.*

*An environmentally responsible development would be accessible to the least wealthy among us and it would be positively integrated with our local nature life support ecosystem.*

2. What policy and ordinance changes are needed to attain your vision?

*Firstly, we need to implement our climate action plans with the urgency of an emergency.*

*Second, we need to maximize localization of our economy as a means for maintaining accountability for our impact on each other, natural systems and ourselves. This means for Carrboro updating and ramping up our local living economy efforts; specifically we need a sustained campaign to promote a locally owned and accountable economy. We also need the county to support local living economy efforts in Carrboro and countywide.*

*Third, we need to assure that the comprehensive plan that is currently being developed will be contextualized by our regional carrying capacity (water, power generation, waste, food, environmental relationships, climate emergency crisis). Zoning that maximizes walking, biking and transit friendly development and reduces sprawl must be pursued. Higher density mixed use along transit corridors needs to be accomplished in a manner that maximizes integration with nature and is affordable.*

3. What is your position on Carrboro's site-specific, flexible zoning district efforts?

*In principle I support efforts for high density mixed use in north Carrboro to minimize sprawl and maximize car emancipation. However, in practice developers are reluctant to do a development, especially if located in a peri-urban area, with minimal car infrastructure; proposals end up being strip-mall-like. The town needs to be clear about expectations; developers should not bother to apply if they cannot deliver.*

*Also, when conditions on the property change significantly and cause the developer to propose something that is not in line with the originally understood and assumed property features, community designed maps must be generated anew.*

*Lastly, in the earliest stage of the process, features that are not currently recognized for protection by the town's ordinance need to be assessed and if warranted the town ordinance needs to be updated so that such features can be protected.*

## **7. Town Growth**

Currently, both Carrboro and Chapel Hill are growing at a rate of about one percent a year. Development comes with costs, often stressing resources and community infrastructure, as well as leading to reduced tree canopy, fewer open spaces, increased traffic and strain on town budgets (often resulting in higher taxes).

1. Please share your philosophy on the pace and costs of Carrboro's growth.

*In question 6.1 I describe why growth is unsustainable. Until conditions change the task is to manage growth to minimize its externalized costs.*

*More so than development, what causes an enormous strain on town and county budgets are the misallocation of resources at the state and federal levels. Without support from state and federal governments our budgets are straining as we try to keep apace with flooding, providing alternatives to car infrastructure, affordable housing, education, health care, addressing the climate emergency, economic development, etc...*

*Developments that happen where public infrastructure already exists are cheaper: another reason why infill and going up instead of out is important.*

2. Do you believe it is possible for development to pay for itself? If so, how?

*I am not sure how to answer this question. If the question is about tax money supporting a new investment and the development over time paying back that cost, yes, given enough time the development will pay for itself.*

*If the question is about the costs of a new development relative to the externalities (which typically are never accounted for) I am beginning to believe, no.*

## **8. Sustainable Transportation**

To minimize climate change, public transportation systems will need to be enhanced and expanded. A changeover from gasoline-powered vehicles will also be needed.

1. Identify three ways local government can decrease automobile travel and emissions generated by gasoline-powered vehicles?
  - a. *Transportation Demand Management programs*
  - b. *Maximizing infrastructure for walkers, bikers and transit.*
  - c. *Higher density mixed use development*

2. What is your position on scooters and Segways on town streets?

*Roads are major public infrastructure investments they should be accessible by everyone independent of their preferred mode of transportation. We are in a climate emergency, if anything it is cars that we need to be re-assessing, the amount of resources spent towards providing the infrastructure necessary to make private cars viable is staggering and could be better invested towards more efficient modes of mobility.*

## **9. Biking and Bike Plan**

Carrboro's Bike Plan is currently under revision, and the town is applying to the League of American Bicyclists to be considered for a gold award.

Carrboro is recognized as having the highest bike ridership of any city in the Southeast and among the tops in the nation. Bike boulevards have been identified by the League of American Bicyclists as particularly appropriate for Carrboro, streets with low traffic and speed designated to give bikes priority. One part of the new Bike Plan currently is to create a rail-to-trails bike path along the Norfolk-Southern railbed when UNC converts its energy usage from coal.

1. What aspect of Carrboro's new Bike Plan would you prioritize? Why?

*We need to prioritize the whole plan, we are in a climate emergency and that means that we cannot afford to continue with our dependency on cars. We need high comfort bike facilities because when people feel safe on their bikes they are more likely to bike and to bike often. Bike lanes that are physically separate from cars are key for many parts of town. The bike network needs to expand.*

2. What should we do to take Carrboro to the next level in terms of biking?

*We are currently pursuing gold bicycle-friendly-community designation, the next level for us to pursue immediately after gold is platinum.*

3. How should Carrboro prioritize bike boulevards among competing bike projects?

*Alternatives analysis of competing bike projects should be done to assess greenhouse gas emission reduction impact alongside other values as identified by the community.*

4. How should Carrboro balance the needs of bicyclists with the needs of citizen desiring high frequency bus service?

*These are not mutually exclusive and both are necessary if we are to address the climate emergency!*

## **10. Coal Clean-Up and Energy Use**

Carrboro, Chapel Hill and UNC have relied on a coal-generated plant for decades now. One result has been a coal-ash deposit along Bolin Creek and beneath and adjacent to the Chapel Hill Police Department facility. One proposal has been to convert UNC's coal plant to a blend of renewable fuel.

1. Will you advocate for the careful monitoring and cleanup of the coal-ash deposit?
- 2.

*Yes, to the extent appropriate for Carrboro. The coal ash deposit is in Chapel Hill.*

3. How do you plan to help advocate for the shutdown of UNC's coal-fired power plant on Cameron Avenue?

*I will support direct action activity to shut down the power plant. I am in contact with UNC Democratic Socialists and have offered to work with them on developing a resolution for the BOA to pass formalizing our wish that the University move away from fossil fuels by shutting down the plant. The University is failing in its commitment to stop burning coal.*

4. What do you see as the future of electricity generation in Carrboro and Chapel Hill?

*If we are to have a future it must be renewable energy. Duke Energy's charter needs to be revoked for being the largest ghg emitter in our state. In its place we need distributed owned and generating renewables.*

## **11. Ordinance Implementation**

Carrboro has state and local ordinances to address water quality, stormwater management, impervious surface limits, stream buffers, steep slopes, and

tree canopy. When the Board of Aldermen approves these projects, such ordinances are meant to apply.

1. Please comment on how effective you see the implementation of such rules.

*Generally, we are effective in applying our rules. One area that needs improvement is when we waive canopy requirements for downtown developments because developers are allowed to request relief too late in the process.*

2. If elected, what changes, if any, will you advocate for?

*Developers must set aside 'primary constraints' (stream buffers, steep slopes, and tree canopy). When a developer has set aside primary constraints equivalent to 40% open space requirement, they are allowed to encroach into primary constraint areas. I will advocate for preservation of all primary constraints on a property independent of meeting 40% open space requirement.*

*Also I will advocate that developers seek relief before they begin a permitting process because I believe the Board of Alderman is more likely to adhere to our rules when staff and developer resources have not been heavily invested into a development approval process.*

5. How should Carrboro enforce its town ordinances, for example people dropping trees not on their property along Bolin Creek or bikers using prohibited sections of the Adams Preserve?

*Town of Carrboro unfortunately does not have the capacity to actively enforce rules; instead we rely on citizen complaints. When we do receive complaints I believe that we must act in an expedited fashion and adhering to written processes that guarantee fairness.*

## **12. Town Advisory Boards' Role**

Citizens in Carrboro advise the town on issues including new development plans, economic development, affordable housing, transportation, town growth, environmental protection and other matters.

1. What weight do you believe recommendations/feedback from advisory boards should figure into work by town staff?



*I believe advisory boards need to be clear about who they are advising.*

*Town staff should consider advise from advisory boards.*

*Also, I am wary of when town staff gatekeep advise from advisory boards to the Board of Alderman.*

2. What weight do you believe recommendations/feedback from advisory boards should figure into decisions made by elected officials?

*I give enormous value to the work done by advisory boards in advising the Board of Alderman. The Board of Alderman would not be able to review the range of issues that we do without their help. When the board chooses to go against an advisory board's recommendation it should do so only after carefully considering their argument and should be able to provide an explanation publicly for why they are doing so.*

3. How will you work to expand participation in town advisory boards to include more neighborhoods being represented and greater diversity?

*Our Community Climate Action Plan has a Neighborhood engagement component, I believe that as neighbors are engaged at their neighborhood level they will have more opportunities of engagement with advisory boards and that can lead to joining a board.*

*To increase diversity, the Board of Alderman factors in diversity of candidates for appointment at the time of making appointments. I believe that it is also the role of Alderman to recruit applicants that will make our boards more diverse.*

4. How else can Carrboro expand citizen participation to ensure all voices are heard equally?

*A main principle towards expanding citizen participation is to have major questions debated actively by the board in public meetings that the community at large can know about. Depending on the significance of the issue there should also be opportunity for input by the community during public hearings or through drop in sessions or at tabling during events with a lot of foot traffic.*

### **13. Meadow Flats**

Meadow Flats is a 233-acre ecological community near Old NC 86 and Eubanks Rd. and is part of what is now simply known as Meadow Flats, adjacent Bald Mountain, and nearby Blackwood Mountain Natural Heritage Natural Areas. The Meadow Flats Natural Area is highest-rated "Exceptional" by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, and includes perched upland wetlands, mature hardwoods, and notable rare state-listed Species of Special Concern, such as the four-toed salamander. Meadow Flats is located at the headwaters of Mountain Creek, which drains into New Hope Creek, and extends into Duke Forest lands where long-term climate research is underway that will yield information on climate and atmospheric changes. Carrboro's Transition II Area (joint jurisdiction by Carrboro and Orange County) includes a critical headwaters portion of Meadow Flats. Duke Forest and scientists who conduct research in the area have explained that Carrboro's proposed 31-acre Flex District zoning development, including writing a site-specific ordinance, will destroy the ecological community and negatively impact the integrity and validity of the long-term scientific research conducted within Duke Forest. Friends of Meadow Flats and other conservationists are trying to save this important Natural Area.

1. As an elected official, what weight will you give for using all available tools to conserve special tracts of land such as Meadow Flats?

*I give a lot of weight to conserving sensitive parts of Meadow Flats that may be vulnerable to development and that are of significance to the integrity of longstanding climate change research. I am for the preservation of upland wetlands that have been designated by the North Carolina Heritage Program as exceptional. I have been asking for town staff to come back to us with standards for protection that go beyond the army corp. of engineers which only recognizes wetlands that are part of 'navigable waters'.*

*I am not in favor of continuation of the current process without involving the community in generating new designs that account for changed understandings and conditions that have been generated by both concerned citizens and the developer.*

2. What value do Carrboro's advisory boards have in this process?

*The town's advisory boards provide a lot of value in this process. Through the EAB a lot of the issues of this property have been brought to light and*

*have served to mobilize the community and give second thoughts to the Board of Alderman and the developers.*