

Friends of Bolin Creek

2019 Chapel Hill Candidate Questions: Pam Hemminger for Mayor

Friends of Bolin Creek is dedicated to addressing climate change through environmental protection and conservation of the ecological 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, cost-effective transportation that meets public needs, and retaining urban natural areas, such as Bolin Forest in Carolina North, Meadow Flats, parts of the Greene Tract and the Eastowne Natural Heritage property.

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, preferably less:

1. Climate Change

Chapel Hill is developing a Climate Action Plan that is expected to be dramatically different from the actions taken by the N.C. Legislature and the Federal Administration.

- a. Please identify three actions you believe local government can take.
- b. Which do you believe is most important and why?

Answer:

1. Engage the entire community in making changes to reduce our carbon footprint.
2. Adopting land use policies and ordinances to promote sustainability and resiliency in many aspects (ie. Improving energy efficiency in buildings, promoting multi-modal transportation usage, increasing creation and use of renewable energies, protecting water quality...)
3. Switch our street lights to LEDs

Of these the most important thing is to engage and motivate the entire community. To date, the Town has focused its efforts on making changes, such as switching to LED lights and installing solar at municipal facilities but, since the Town only accounts for 2% of the Town's buildings our actions cannot appreciably impact our community's overall carbon footprint. Therefore, we need to be asking everyone to be a part of the solution. We are already seeing the benefits of efforts at UNC where they have been making solid progress toward meeting goals on energy, water and waste. Working with our other large employers and the business community we can make strides by encouraging a wide range of strategies including shifting to LEDs in parking areas, installing more EV charging stations, adding solar to buildings, composting and more. Local residents, too, can help by installing solar, using alternative modes of transportation more frequently, composting...

2. Conservation

Trees absorb carbon dioxide and potentially harmful gasses from the air and release oxygen. Chapel Hill is fortunate to have within its midst acres of largely forested acres on Carolina North, the Greene Tract, and the Natural Heritage property located at Eastowne. According to an expert on a recent walk a portion of the Eastowne property, the site possesses unusual soils and significant intact mature upland hardwoods, and could continue to serve as an important landscape link for wildlife. A recent official assessment by a Natural Heritage Program experts rated this tract “worthy of protection in its natural condition, through whatever means are feasible.” The tract adjoins conservation lands owned by the Town of Chapel Hill and is connected through them to Durham County lands and to a larger network of conservation lands.

- a. As an elected official, what tools will you use to protect and expand the tree canopy and conserve special tracts of land, such as those found at Eastowne?
- b. What role should Chapel Hill’s advisory boards have in this process?

Answer:

a. Protection and enhancement of trees, wildlife corridors and special properties is something I have been involved with for many years individually, on elected boards and as a newly retired member of the Triangle Land Conservancy (TLC) board.

Trees play a vital role in the social, environmental and economic health of our community so it is critical that protection of our tree canopy be part of our sustainability and climate protection efforts.

Tools that we can use to do this effectively include:

- 1) Conducting environmental impact studies and applying that information at the outset of planning efforts
- 2) Setting effective policies to achieve our environmental goals (tree canopy, water quality, habitat protection....)
- 3) Working with land owners and developers to facilitate preservation of areas like the Headwaters Preserve (Greene Tract) and the Natural Heritage Area (Eastowne)
- 4) Permanently conserving certain tracts of land to serve as parks that are accessible to everyone

b. Chapel Hill is fortunate to have highly qualified, environmentally-passionate individuals on several of our Boards including the Planning Commission, Community Design Commission (CDC), the Stormwater Board and the Environmental Stewardship Advisory Board (ESAB). These boards and others review development plans and participate in other efforts such as the town’s Future Land Use map update, LUMO rewrite and, now, creation of our Climate Action Plan.

Another board that deals directly with implementation of town ordinances is the Board Of Adjustment (BOA), which handles requests for variances.

One of the interests I heard when coming in as mayor was that the Advisory Boards felt disconnected from council decisions even though they are part of the review process.

We’ve taken steps to try to tighten the feedback loop and I try to reach out to Board Chairs and members when projects are coming before council if I have questions.

One area I’d like to see improved is to provide better education to members of the BOA on environmental issues and goals.

Overall, as we craft our Climate Action Plan, the intention is to have actionable goals that are measurable which will provide another way during project review for our Boards to gauge whether plans are helping us meet our goals.

Also, as we work on our Land Use Map and rewrite ordinances we will look for our boards to help us evaluate and adopt best practices and standards – including ones related to the tree canopy.

3. Flooding/ Stormwater

Damage downstream from recent floods reminds us of the value that natural surfaces and woodlands perform in slowing and soaking up rainwater during storms and slowing the release of stormwater into local streams. Chapel Hill's Stormwater Utility implements an approved Master Plan of stormwater programs to improve water quality.

To reduce flooding:

- a. What aspects of the Master Plan are most urgently needed in the next three to five years?
- b. Will you support the need to avoid cutting trees and constructing buildings in flood plains in the Bolin and Booker Watersheds? Explain.

Answer:

Overall, it is important for the Town to continue moving forward with the Sub-watershed studies so that we can identify, analyze and prioritize possible stormwater solutions throughout Town.

In terms of specific projects, we need to continue implementing the projects that have already been identified. This Fall, the Town is slated to begin work on expansion of the Elliott Road Stormwater retention area and capacity improvements to Lake Ellen.

In the 2019-20 budget, Town Council voted to increase the stormwater fee which will allow us to free up remaining bond funds for design and construction of the next set of flood storage projects.

b. I am supportive of enhancing and protecting our tree canopy throughout town and am working to establish a Community Tree replanting program to help achieve those goals.

4. Sustainable Development

Currently, both Carrboro and Chapel Hill are growing at a rate of about one percent a year. Development comes with costs, often placing a strain on resources and infrastructure, reducing tree canopy and green spaces, as well as increasing traffic and taxes.

A great deal of debate in Chapel Hill centers around how development of density, quality of life, affordable housing, our small-town past, the town's architectural as well as environmental integrity, and the need to conserve forested areas.

- a. What must the town do to ensure that future development is fiscally sustainable, as well as environmentally responsible?
- b. What policy and ordinance changes are needed to attain your vision?

- c. How would you apply your ideas to Chapel Hill's Eastowne Master Plan and/or the Greene tract.

Answers:

- a. As we work on the Future Land Use map, there are a number of factors that are important for ensuring that future development is both fiscally and environmentally sustainable such as:
 1. Setting a vision that includes opportunities for commercial space so that we add jobs and diversify our tax base.
 2. Ensuring that employment centers will be well-served by transit, connected to bike and pedestrian infrastructure, provide other uses (like coffee shops, restaurants) that serve people on-site.
 3. Use information from Town studies and plans such as the sub-watershed studies, Mobility & Connectivity Plan and Transit Plan to inform our decisions.

b. One change that I am working toward is to include green stormwater infrastructure in our LUMO as a way to enhance stormwater capture while also adding more green.

c. **The Eastowne Medical Campus** will serve as an important employment center for Chapel Hill and offers other opportunities for community benefits. At this point, the Council Committee on Eastowne (of which I am a member) is working hard to think through a vision for that site that balances the needs of UNC Health with environmental, fiscal and transportation interests.

The Committee has been working with an Urban Designer to help us identify a functional street network and critical design principles centered around our town's economic and environmental goals.

An important consideration in crafting the on-site street network is to try to minimize environmental impacts while maximizing connectivity and opportunities for green/public spaces.

We are also thinking about how the project fits into the picture of development for the immediate area and intersection.

We have recently received an environmental assessment of the Natural Heritage Area and are expecting some initial traffic information which will help us evaluate what to preserve, where to build, what uses should be on the site and how much density the site can hold.

c2. Similarly, for The Greene Tract, the Council voted on July 15th in to get started with two sets of studies: an Environmental Impact study and a Connectivity study. Once that work has been completed, we can begin the next steps in a Community First planning process to create a street plan and look at opportunities for affordable housing, a school site, recreation space and multi-modal infrastructure for the 104 acre Greene Tract.

5. Sustainable and Multi-modal Transportation

To minimize climate change, public transportation systems will need to be enhanced and expanded including transitioning to electric vehicles, and alternative modes of transportation. Chapel Hills Mobility Plan was completed in October 2017. Since the DOLRT has been abandoned, more transit tax funds are available for other projects such as for the N-S BRT.

- a. What aspect of Chapel Hill's Mobility Plan would you prioritize? Why?

- b. What are three objectives the town should implement to improve our local and regional public transit?
- c. What roles do you see for bikes and bike paths, and scooters and Segways on town streets?
- d. Explain some ways the Town could avoid constructing paved greenways immediately next to creeks and streams.
- e. Going forward, name a few changes Chapel could make in its relation to GoTriangle and its regional partners.

Answer:

A key aspect of the Mobility Plan that I am focused on is “Supporting and Expanding the Active Routes to School” programming so that more students can walk and bike safely to-and-from school. Upon taking office, I worked with staff to use bonds for sidewalk projects near Chapel Hill High.

b. Key objectives for improving local and regional transit include:

1. Moving forward with the North-South Bus Rapid Transit project.
2. Working with our regional partners for solutions along 15-501 (North to Durham, South to Chatham County/Pittsboro),
3. Making sure that transit stops have safe connections, are well-lit and are accessible for all riders.
4. Adding more service on weekends

c. We need to have bike facilities in Town that serve recreation and transportation needs. One aspect of the Mobility Plan that I think is really important is the identification of non-motorized corridors to provide ways for people to bike or walk to places around town on a system that is parallel to our street network. This system will allow more people to feel comfortable commuting by bicycle to places around town.

d. When decisions are made to construct new greenways it is critical to try to balance various interests for that particular facility, including whether it will serve as a connector in our transportation network or is more for recreation, what the environmental impacts will be of its placement and the need to make it accessible for people.

e. The Town’s Transit and Transportation Planning staffs are currently working with GoTriangle, Orange County and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to create a new Orange County Transit Plan which ties in with our Chapel Hill Transit Plan. A couple of changes I am interested in seeing are:

- 1) Restructuring the voting structure for the Staff Working Group to give the municipalities (Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Hillsborough) in Orange County voting rights so that they can play a stronger role in setting priorities and determining how monies will be spent.
- 2) I have requested that the Meeting Summaries be provided for the MPO and GoTriangle Board meetings so that elected officials and the public can be more informed about the work being done and the decisions being made.

6. Coal Clean-Up and Energy Use

UNC has 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.

- a. How will you advocate for the careful monitoring and cleanup of the coal-ash deposit?
- b. In what way(s) will you advocate for the shutdown of UNC's coal-fired power plant on Cameron Avenue?
- c. How can Chapel Hill move towards the use of clean energy in a manner that is both rapid and fiscally possible?

Answer:

a. Since taking office, I have worked with the Town manager's office to gather data on the coal ash at the Police Station site so that we can chart a path forward for mitigation. The Town has taken several important steps recently including testing and removing two small piles of contaminated soil near the greenway and fixing silt fencing – both of which were completed prior to Hurricane Dorian's arrival. We have also had three additional test wells to gather additional information on whether groundwater is being impacted, done surface testing in other areas and made sure that the contaminated soils are being moved to lined pits. Finally, we are working to make sure that contractors working in the area are appropriately trained and knowledgeable about t

b. Through their Three Zeros initiatives UNC is making good progress toward environmental sustainability, including adding a solar project on the old Horace Williams Airport site, generating power in their steam plant and moving toward using more natural gas for the short-term. As a Town we will continue to work closely with them and will continue to advocate for them to increase their use of clean renewables and to support their interest in having the ability to offset electricity usage with solar energy affordably as they transition.

c. Engaging the entire community will be the most effective way to transition to clean energy. The Town has already taken steps to make it easier to get approvals for installing rooftop solar which is one way that people can help create and use more clean energy here.

When approving development projects, I have been asking to have EV charging stations included and to have buildings wired to be "solar ready". Moving forward I am interested in having solar powered EV charging stations or carports.

7. Ordinance Implementation

Chapel Hill has state and local ordinances to address water quality, stormwater management, impervious surface limits, stream buffers, steep slopes, and tree canopy. When the Chapel Hill Town Council approves these projects, such ordinances are meant to apply.

- a. Please comment on how effectively the Town administration and Council has implemented these rules.
- b. What changes, if any, will you advocate for to increase the effectiveness of these ordinances.
- c. What combination of carrots and sticks could Chapel Hill use to enforce its ordinances, for example, about the cutting of trees in buffers?

Answers:

a. Because an applicant must be issued a variance if they are not adhering to Town ordinances, the Council and our Boards consider these things during the development review process. I do think there is room for improvement in several areas including:

1. Educating our new Council and board members about our ordinances such as the RCD so that they understand how the protections align with specific environmental goals.
2. Making sure topographical and environmental information is provided with Concept Plans so that Council and Board feedback reflects environmental interests.

b. Long-term, our rewrite of the Land Use Management Ordinance offers an opportunity for us to look at best practices and new solutions to improve our effectiveness. For instance, we have asked our Stormwater Board to provide input on how we can incorporate green stormwater infrastructure into future projects.

c. Currently, state and federal legislation can make it difficult for North Carolina towns to mandate stronger environmental protections which means that we have to continue to be creative in order to achieve better outcomes.

Specifically on the issue of buffers, I have received a lot of comments from members of the public about recent projects where sites have been largely clear cut and then replanted to meet buffer requirements. For these situations and others like them, I think we can look more closely at our ordinances and make sure the wording, application and enforcement are aligned with our goals and intent. We also need to make sure we are sharing those concerns and interests with our Boards and staff so that they are aware of these things when reviewing projects.

Friends of Bolin Creek

2019 Chapel Hill Candidate Questions: Josh Levinson

Friends of Bolin Creek is dedicated to addressing climate change through environmental protection and conservation of the ecological 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, cost-effective transportation that meets public needs, and retaining urban natural areas, such as Bolin Forest in Carolina North, Meadow Flats, parts of the Greene Tract and the Eastowne Natural Heritage property.

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1. Climate Change

Chapel Hill is developing a Climate Action Plan that is expected to be dramatically different from the actions taken by the N.C. Legislature and the Federal Administration.

Please identify three actions you believe local government can take.

First we can reflect the total lifecycle cost of parking in downtown parking rates, gradually stepping up 25-50 cents each year. Until 5 dollar/hour parking either inspires more community members to choose alternative transportation or at least we are able to raise funds for infrastructure like underground parking and separate bike lanes. At the same time we can afford special parking passes that make parking easy and affordable for those in need.

Next we need to get compost out of our trash by providing increased compost pick up access and potentially charging those who produce excess waste. Charging for second week waste pick up or surplus.

Finally we need to enhance our parks and recreation program to provide a full range of support resources for all our community members.

Which do you believe is most important and why?

They are all essential along with dozens of other projects.

2. Conservation

Trees absorb carbon dioxide and potentially harmful gasses from the air and release oxygen. Chapel Hill is fortunate to have within its midst acres of largely forested acres on Carolina North, the Greene Tract, and the Natural Heritage property located at Eastowne. According to an expert on a recent walk a portion of the Eastowne property, the site possesses unusual soils and significant intact mature upland hardwoods, and could continue to serve as an important landscape link for wildlife. A recent official assessment by a Natural Heritage Program experts rated this tract “worthy of protection in its natural condition, through whatever means are feasible.” The tract adjoins conservation lands owned by the Town of Chapel Hill and is connected through them to Durham County lands and to a larger network of conservation lands. As an elected official, what tools will you use to protect and expand the tree canopy and conserve special tracts of land, such as those found at Eastowne?

I will reduce urban sprawl with smart city design that allows taller buildings careful set backs along main transport roots which expand green space availability and accessibility.

What role should Chapel Hill’s advisory boards have in this process?

Outreach to the broader community to raise voices of unheard community members and spark dynamic collaborative consultation.

3. Flooding/ Stormwater

Damage downstream from recent floods reminds us of the value that natural surfaces and woodlands perform in slowing and soaking up rainwater during storms and slowing the release of stormwater into local streams. Chapel Hill’s Stormwater Utility implements an approved Master Plan of stormwater programs to improve water quality.

To reduce flooding:

What aspects of the Master Plan are most urgently needed in the next three to five years?

Taller buildings with smaller footprints that can capture excess rain water. Rain garden reservoirs. Permeable parking and paths. Will you support the need to avoid cutting trees and constructing buildings in flood plains in the Bolin and Booker Watersheds? Explain.

No. I will increase trees and green space in appropriate areas while supporting new affordable housing development also in appropriate areas, which will mean cutting some trees. I will also create new novel building projects in the flood plane that reduce storm water.

4. Sustainable Development

Currently, both Carrboro and Chapel Hill are growing at a rate of about one percent a year. Development comes with costs, often placing a strain on resources and infrastructure, reducing tree canopy and green spaces, as well as increasing traffic and taxes.

A great deal of debate in Chapel Hill centers around how development of density, quality of life, affordable housing, our small-town past, the town's architectural as well as environmental integrity, and the need to conserve forested areas.

What must the town do to ensure that future development is fiscally sustainable, as well as environmentally responsible?

Tiny homes and apartments along with higher market adjusting property tax.

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

Raising funds from property tax and parking for many projects like public housing projects and alternative transport.

How would you apply your ideas to Chapel Hill's Eastowne Master Plan and/or the Greene tract.

Taller building potential in east town and more green space in the green tract.

5. Sustainable and Multi-modal Transportation

To minimize climate change, public transportation systems will need to be enhanced and expanded including transitioning to electric vehicles, and alternative modes of transportation. Chapel Hills Mobility Plan was completed in October 2017. Since the DOLRT has been abandoned, more transit tax funds are available for other projects such as for the N-S BRT.

What aspect of Chapel Hill's Mobility Plan would you prioritize? Why?

First separate bike lanes followed closely with escooters ebikes and then expanded bus/van routes and hopefully one day a commuter train line route. Starting with infrastructure that has a low cost to maintain and alternatives that complement our existing infrastructure follow by the most substantial long range project.

Also new low cost regular open streets projects supported with special road closure infrastructure.

What are three objectives the town should implement to improve our local and regional public transit?

Separate bike lanes followed by special road closures to get cars off the road.

What roles do you see for bikes and bike paths, and scooters and Segways on town streets?

I see them everywhere and hopefully exclusively certain times of day! More on safe separate lanes and times.

Explain some ways the Town could avoid constructing paved greenways immediately next to creeks and streams.

Wooden or natural boardwalks.

Going forward, name a few changes Chapel could make in its relation to GoTriangle and its regional partners.

Chapel Hill can partner with GoTriangle to build pressure for a commuter train.

6. Coal Clean-Up and Energy Use

UNC has 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.

How will you advocate for the careful monitoring and cleanup of the coal-ash deposit?

Prove UNC is responsible and legally push for them to clean their own mess, if that fails I think Chapel Hill should find ways to block the UNC board in future destructive acts.

In what way(s) will you advocate for the shutdown of UNC's coal-fired power plant on Cameron Avenue?

I will advocate in a way that blocks fracked gas in every possible way while pushing to end the unnecessary use of coal.

How can Chapel Hill move towards the use of clean energy in a manner that is both rapid and fiscally possible?

Increase carpooling while cutting private car use in half. Solar for all municipal projects and public housing. New compost collection and education.

7. Ordinance Implementation

Chapel Hill has state and local ordinances to address water quality, stormwater management, impervious surface limits, stream buffers, steep slopes, and tree canopy. When the Chapel Hill Town Council approves these projects, such ordinances are meant to apply.

Please comment on how effectively the Town administration and Council has implemented these rules.

Stream buffers and steep slopes have been somewhat effective. But water quality, storm water management impervious surface limits and tree canopy have been a disaster, far more needs to be done. What changes, if any, will you advocate for to increase the effectiveness of these ordinances.

Additional funding and resources for Owasa to reduce storm sewage leakage into the creeks.

What combination of carrots and sticks could Chapel Hill use to enforce its ordinances, for example, about the cutting of trees in buffers?

When possible stick fines for lawless cutting and additional resources to purchase forest buffers when we can negotiate fair prices.

Friends of Bolin Creek

2019 Chapel Hill Candidate Questions: Jessica Anderson

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1. Climate Change

Chapel Hill is developing a Climate Action Plan that is expected to be dramatically different from the actions taken by the N.C. Legislature and the Federal Administration.

- a. Please identify three actions you believe local government can take.
 1. Reduction of carbon emissions from town vehicles, installation of EV charging stations and facilitating use of alternative transportation
 2. Comprehensive planning that creates neighborhoods and areas that support multi-modal transportation and reduce commuting
 3. Protection of sensitive natural areas and existing tree canopy, and filling in migration corridors with tree canopy.
- b. Which do you believe is most important and why?

All of these are important, but since energy consumption in buildings and emissions from motor vehicles are the greatest contributors to greenhouse emissions, 1 and 2 above are my top priorities. Electrifying vehicles owned by the town, improving support of electric vehicles owned by residents, investing in bus rapid transit, and encouraging more energy efficient buildings are

the biggest changes from current policy we can make to reduce CO₂ dramatically, and set the type of environmentally responsible town policy that other municipalities can follow.

2. Conservation

Trees absorb carbon dioxide and potentially harmful gasses from the air and release oxygen. Chapel Hill is fortunate to have within its midst acres of largely forested acres on Carolina North, the Greene Tract, and the Natural Heritage property located at Eastowne. According to an expert on a recent walk a portion of the Eastowne property, the site possesses unusual soils and significant intact mature upland hardwoods, and could continue to serve as an important landscape link for wildlife. A recent official assessment by a Natural Heritage Program experts rated this tract “worthy of protection in its natural condition, through whatever means are feasible.” The tract adjoins conservation lands owned by the Town of Chapel Hill and is connected through them to Durham County lands and to a larger network of conservation lands.

- a. As an elected official, what tools will you use to protect and expand the tree canopy and conserve special tracts of land, such as those found at Eastowne?
 - a. We are on the right track with our tree replenishment program. However, we are looking into our tree ordinance to see if additional protections can be added, as mature trees are obviously much more valuable and effective at CO₂ reduction than seedlings. I will also advocate for natural heritage properties and other special conservation areas before and during development processes and keep necessary development on other parts of these parcels.
- b. What role should Chapel Hill’s advisory boards have in this process?
 - a. Advisory boards are critical not only for getting community input, but diving deeply into issues that Council often cannot. We rely on our advisory boards to dig into the details, walk properties, and provide us with input on where these special areas exist and how they should be handled. We also look for board members to apply their professional expertise and unique perspectives to bring forward ideas about ways we can improve outcomes. For example, the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Board (ESAB) has brought forward petitions aimed at improving building energy efficiency through compliance with AIA2030 and installation of solar.

3. Flooding/ Stormwater

Damage downstream from recent floods reminds us of the value that natural surfaces and woodlands perform in slowing and soaking up rainwater during storms and slowing the release of stormwater into local streams. Chapel Hill's Stormwater Utility implements an approved Master Plan of stormwater programs to improve water quality.

To reduce flooding:

- a. What aspects of the Master Plan are most urgently needed in the next three to five years?

As part of the Town's stormwater master plan, we've prioritized three projects related to the Booker Creek Subwatershed study:

1. Elliott Road stormwater storage facility. Excavating the open green space between the Eastgate culvert and South Elliott Road above the ordinary high water mark will provide additional floodplain storage that will lower the tailwater to the Eastgate Culvert, reducing flooding.
2. Increasing the capacity of Lake Ellen to retain more water and help reduce flooding downstream.
3. Funding and completing the next set of stormwater storage facilities.

- b. Will you support the need to avoid cutting trees and constructing buildings in flood plains in the Bolin and Booker Watersheds? Explain.

Yes, our stream buffers should be protected—particularly in sensitive areas that significantly impact our drinking water supply, flooding, and natural habitats.

4. Sustainable Development

Currently, both Carrboro and Chapel Hill are growing at a rate of about one percent a year. Development comes with costs, often placing a strain on resources and infrastructure, reducing tree canopy and green spaces, as well as increasing traffic and taxes.

A great deal of debate in Chapel Hill centers around how development of density, quality of life, affordable housing, our small-town past, the town's

architectural as well as environmental integrity, and the need to conserve forested areas.

- a. What must the town do to ensure that future development is fiscally sustainable, as well as environmentally responsible?
 - a. In terms of fiscal sustainability, we need to evaluate new development in terms of its impact on maintenance costs as well as town services. We need to empower the new urban designer—who I was successful in petitioning the town to add to the budget—to integrate all relevant town departments. Integration would help achieve not only environmentally-friendly and forward-looking developments, but also place-making, cohesion with existing spaces and interconnectivity.
- b. What policy and ordinance changes are needed to attain your vision?
 - a. We've already modified our budgeting process to look at long-term budgeting and impacts, but we still need additional fiscal analysis (which I have been advocating for, but we need more support). In addition to the urban designer coming on staff this fall, we have prioritized climate action planning and implementation. The plan will be integrated into our future land use map and land use management ordinance re-write.
- c. How would you apply your ideas to Chapel Hill's Eastowne Master Plan and/or the Greene tract.
 - a. We currently have a financial analyst looking at Eastowne and the new urban designer should be part of this process as soon as they are hired. Even though our climate action plan will not be operational before Eastowne is decided, we can negotiate for better energy efficiency, more renewable energy creation through solar, preservation of green space and stream buffers, inclusion of EV charging stations, full support for multi-modal transportation and more. The same issues should be discussed for the Greene Tract as well.

5. Sustainable and Multi-modal Transportation

To minimize climate change, public transportation systems will need to be enhanced and expanded including transitioning to electric vehicles, and alternative modes of transportation. Chapel Hills Mobility Plan was completed in October 2017. Since the DOLRT has been abandoned, more transit tax funds are available for other projects such as for the N-S BRT.

1. What aspect of Chapel Hill's Mobility Plan would you prioritize? Why?

The goal of the Mobility Plan is to achieve a 35% bicycling, walking, and transit commute combined modeshare in Chapel Hill by 2025. To achieve this goal, the Town should prioritize the following plans:

1. Improving mobility on major street corridors.
2. Developing priority non-motorized corridors.

Prioritizing these two items will have the best change of reducing CO₂ emissions also allowing our town to facilitate healthier lifestyles and outcomes.

2. What are three objectives the town should implement to improve our local and regional public transit? This fall, the new Chapel Hill Transit short-range transit plan will be brought forward for public comment. This plan includes some important proposed improvements to our current public transit, including
 - a. Adding weekend hours (with a focus on Sunday service),
 - b. Improving frequency of service (especially on overcrowded routes) from 60 minute to 15 minute intervals; and
 - c. Making service simpler and easier to understand.

To improve connectivity with regional transit, the Council has taken steps to look at land use planning along the planned BRT corridor as well as examine how the corridor could be used to provide valuable regional connections to Hillsborough—including its planned Amtrak station—and Chatham County. Over time, the same should be done for the 15-501 and 54 corridors.

3. What roles do you see for bikes and bike paths, and scooters and Segways on town streets? Most of our town's travel takes place across five main corridors, none of which are "Complete Streets" that accommodate pedestrians and bike facilities. In addition, opportunity exists to tie together greenways, multi-use paths, neighborhood sidewalks and current bikeways to create a parallel transportation network that facilitates non-motorized travel. The town's Mobility and Connectivity Plan, which we've begun to implement, aims to fill these gaps and provide a safer experience for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists by creating bike facilities with some separation from traffic.

4. Explain some ways the Town could avoid constructing paved greenways immediately next to creeks and streams.
We can divert trails away from creeks and streams when possible, use pervious paving (when possible) if trails are near creeks and streams, and leave some trails unpaved and ensure there are ADA accessible ways to connect to trails that are not next to streams.
5. Going forward, name a few changes Chapel could make in its relation to GoTriangle and its regional partners. Now that DOLRT is no longer moving forward, Chapel Hill has been working with Orange County, and regional partners to match funding obtained from the distribution of the ½ cent transit tax to pay for the North-South BRT project, increased bus service hours, bus purchases and bus stop improvements. We are also moving forward with a project that will add sidewalks and bike lanes on Estes Drive. As we work on the County Transit plan continues, I will advocate for the municipalities within Orange County to have a voting member on the staff working group that determines what decisions are ultimately made.

6. Coal Clean-Up and Energy Use

UNC has 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.

- a. How will you advocate for the careful monitoring and cleanup of the coal- ash deposit?

The Town has already taken initial steps toward remediation of the coal ash deposit along Bolin Creek, including:

- Fixing silt fencing to prevent erosion
- Removing two piles of contaminated soil
- Conducting additional surface testing
- Installing additional wells to test groundwater, with results to determine future mitigation strategy

We're also ensuring contaminated soil is being disposed of into lined pits that are not near low-income or predominantly minority neighborhoods, and that the contractor and employees working on

greenway completion are trained on coal ash issues related to coal ash remediation. I will continue to play a role in advocating for detailed, in-depth analysis of all of our options, hiring any and all needed experts, and for long and short-term budgeting so we achieve remediation while protecting vulnerable populations (i.e., children, the immune-compromised and the elderly), as well as wildlife. If possible, we also need to clearly identify and work with the original polluter to help pay for the remediation.

- b. In what way(s) will you advocate for the shutdown of UNC's coal-fired power plant on Cameron Avenue?
 - While we can use our partnership and relationships with UNC and bully pulpit as elected officials to work toward the goal of clean energy on campus, we have no legislative or policy authority over UNC's coal fired power plant. It is important for us to work with UNC as we move forward on our climate action plan so we can intertwine our goals and positively influence their decisions regarding the coal-fired power plant as much as possible.
- c. How can Chapel Hill move towards the use of clean energy in a manner that is both rapid and fiscally possible?
 - Our climate action plan will evaluate which clean energy targets are aggressive yet attainable. We must set these targets and then create a strategic plan with interim goals and tracking mechanisms, and connect them to our short- and long-term budgeting strategies to ensure we are successful and responsible fiscally.

7. Ordinance Implementation

Chapel Hill has state and local ordinances to address water quality, stormwater management, impervious surface limits, stream buffers, steep slopes, and tree canopy. When the Chapel Hill Town Council approves these projects, such ordinances are meant to apply.

- a. Please comment on how effectively the Town administration and Council has implemented these rules.
 - While sometimes the Council has done a good job at effectively implementing these rules, at other times I believe we have compromised or allowed variances that have been detrimental to stormwater and tree canopy. Blue Hill's stormwater issues are an example of water quality—but not quantity—being protected.
- b. What changes, if any, will you advocate for to increase the effectiveness of these ordinances.

- The tree canopy ordinance needs to be reevaluated with respect to residential and commercial projects to see if any additional protections can be added. I believe our new urban designer can help us strengthen our buffer and protect steep slopes by providing the town with guidance on how to avoid these areas while ensuring better spaces for developments.
- c. What combination of carrots and sticks could Chapel Hill use to enforce its ordinances, for example, about the cutting of trees in buffers?
- While we have density bonuses to use as a potential carrot, often economics do not make them attractive to applicants. We could ease other requirements or requests—such as sidewalks, recreation space, etc.—but each of these concessions would also come with their own drawbacks and must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. We already have buffer requirements so no “sticks” are needed, except for “sticking” to our guns and not allowing clear cutting in buffers.

Friends of Bolin Creek

2019 Chapel Hill Candidate Questions: Sue Hunter

Friends of Bolin Creek is dedicated to addressing climate change through environmental protection and conservation of the ecological 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, cost-effective transportation that meets public needs, and retaining urban natural areas, such as Bolin Forest in Carolina North, Meadow Flats, parts of the Greene Tract and the Eastowne Natural Heritage property.

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, preferably less:

1. Climate Change

Chapel Hill is developing a Climate Action Plan that is expected to be dramatically different from the actions taken by the N.C. Legislature and the Federal Administration.

- a. Please identify three actions you believe local government can take: 1. reducing our reliance on cars through transit investments and multimodal infrastructure, 2. creating walkable, urban growth through comprehensive land use planning and 3. creating affordable housing and jobs in Chapel Hill.
- b. Which do you believe is most important and why? The three actions work together to reduce the distance people must travel between work, home, shopping and entertainment. If I had to choose one strategy, I would select the first – reducing reliance on cars. The transportation sector is the #1 source of green house gas emissions nationally, and #2 in NC soon to become #1).

2. Conservation

Trees absorb carbon dioxide and potentially harmful gasses from the air and release oxygen. Chapel Hill is fortunate to have within its midst acres of largely forested acres on Carolina North, the Greene Tract, and the Natural

Heritage property located at Eastowne. According to an expert on a recent walk a portion of the Eastowne property, the site possesses unusual soils and significant intact mature upland hardwoods, and could continue to serve as an important landscape link for wildlife. A recent official assessment by a Natural Heritage Program experts rated this tract “worthy of protection in its natural condition, through whatever means are feasible.” The tract adjoins conservation lands owned by the Town of Chapel Hill and is connected through them to Durham County lands and to a larger network of conservation lands.

- a. As an elected official, what tools will you use to protect and expand the tree canopy and conserve special tracts of land, such as those found at Eastowne?

I would ensure that developers are following the tree ordinance. The Town has an obligation as projects are being built to make sure that the tree ordinance is followed in reality and not just in principle, though ongoing monitoring of projects in process. I would also advocate for use of native and more mature trees when tree replacement is the only solution. Development and the natural environment do not have to be at odds. Green design and green infill are approaches that can help use preserve green space and meet the needs of our growing community. Chapel Hill is not an island - we also work in conjunction with Orange County to preserve green space outside of Chapel Hill and limit sprawl through the rural buffer.

- b. What role should Chapel Hill’s advisory boards have in this process? As part of the development review process, the boards weigh in and this is an opportunity for them to contribute their expertise and input.

3. Flooding/ Stormwater

Damage downstream from recent floods reminds us of the value that natural surfaces and woodlands perform in slowing and soaking up rainwater during storms and slowing the release of stormwater into local streams. Chapel Hill’s Stormwater Utility implements an approved Master Plan of stormwater programs to improve water quality.

To reduce flooding:

- a. What aspects of the Master Plan are most urgently needed in the next three to five years?

Continuing to fund design and construction of the five Capitol Improvement Projects that were identified in the subwatershed plans along with the flood storage project at Lake Ellen. We must also maintain and improve our drainage systems, to mitigate flooding. This will help manage storm water quantity. Advocating for strong storm water controls in new development and redevelopment, protecting and restoring stream buffers, and implementing ongoing monitoring are important for protecting water quality.

- b. Will you support the need to avoid cutting trees and constructing buildings in flood plains in the Bolin and Booker Watersheds? Explain.

We can negotiate for higher development standards through development agreements, special use permits and conditional zoning. Blue Hill is an example of where we are focusing on redeveloping rather than clearing undeveloped areas with trees. It's important that we get the storm water controls right and utilize our most intensive protections to mitigate flooding. The upper Booker creek watershed water comes down to Blue Hill, so we have higher flood water controls than anywhere else, and have created a pathway for higher stormwater standards. I would also support lobbying the state to remove restrictions on local control of stormwater management practices.

4. Sustainable Development

Currently, both Carrboro and Chapel Hill are growing at a rate of about one percent a year. Development comes with costs, often placing a strain on resources and infrastructure, reducing tree canopy and green spaces, as well as increasing traffic and taxes.

A great deal of debate in Chapel Hill centers around how development of density, quality of life, affordable housing, our small-town past, the town's architectural as well as environmental integrity, and the need to conserve forested areas.

- a. What must the town do to ensure that future development is fiscally sustainable, as well as environmentally responsible? Reduce sprawl, build in and up, allow more gentle density in appropriate locations within our neighborhoods (duplexes, triples,

quadplexes) through LUMO updates, as well as transit-oriented development around designated nodes.

- b. What policy and ordinance changes are needed to attain your vision? Update the LUMO to allow for various forms of density and advocate for green infill. Development and green space do not need to be in conflict with one another – they can co-exist. We must continue to advocate at the state level for stronger local control of storm water management requirements.
- c. How would you apply your ideas to Chapel Hill’s Eastowne Master Plan and/or the Greene tract. I’m interested in encouraging alternative transportation and consolidating development so we reduce the amount of impervious surface used, and make sure those principles are incorporated into the in-progress Eastowne and Greene tract planning processes.

5. Sustainable and Multi-modal Transportation

To minimize climate change, public transportation systems will need to be enhanced and expanded including transitioning to electric vehicles, and alternative modes of transportation. Chapel Hills Mobility Plan was completed in October 2017. Since the DOLRT has been abandoned, more transit tax funds are available for other projects such as for the N-S BRT.

- a. What aspect of Chapel Hill’s Mobility Plan would you prioritize? Why? Expand our bicycle and pedestrian network with additional buffered and protected bike lanes. This enables residents, employers and visitors to get around safely and easily without using a car. I would like to see a road diet on Franklin street from Boundary to Estes to add in protected bike lanes.
- b. What are three objectives the town should implement to improve our local and regional public transit? 1. Connecting to places that Chapel Hill residents go to work and recreate, Durham in particular. 2. Enhance local service – more 7 day a week service in key corridors (links in with 7 day a week regional service). We will see this put into place in the fall of 2020. 3. I support the North South Bus Rapid Transit project and the multimodal infrastructure that will come with it.
- c. What roles do you see for bikes and bike paths, and scooters and Segways on town streets? We should encourage the use of all of these modes. Each requires much less energy than even the most efficient electric vehicle, and can be used by people of all ages. In order to do so safely, we need to allocate adequate road space to separate these modes from cars.

- d. Explain some ways the Town could avoid constructing paved greenways immediately next to creeks and streams. Build safe, high-quality facilities that provide access across town near streets, which are well-lit, and add in protected bike lanes on roads.
- e. Going forward, name a few changes Chapel could make in its relation to GoTriangle and its regional partners. I fully support Orange county taking a stronger role in planning for the use of dedicated transit funds, and that process has already begun as Orange county will take the lead in developing a new regional transit plan. Town staff will need to work closely with regional partners to ensure that key town priorities are appropriately funded through this process. With Go Triangle, town staff should continue their coordination and work to improve connectivity and scheduling, and make it easier for Chapel Hill Transit users to continue their trips on Go Triangle buses. Chapel Hill could add Go Triangle arrival times to their digital real time displays. Chapel Hill Town Hall and other locations in town could sell stored value passes for Go Triangle buses to make them easier for residents to purchase.

6. Coal Clean-Up and Energy Use

UNC has 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.

- a. How will you advocate for the careful monitoring and cleanup of the coal- ash deposit? We've approved a partial cleanup and containment plan until the police department has moved to a new home, allowing us to buy time. Future council will need to decide if full clean up or partial clean up and capping is most appropriate. We have to be mindful of spending our tax dollars, prioritizing health and safety of the community, and the implications of moving that waste to another, poorer, community and the issue of environmental justice.
- b. In what way(s) will you advocate for the shutdown of UNC's coal-fired power plant on Cameron Avenue? We can continue to advocate at the state level and express our community values for use of clean energy. We have to be realistic about our levels of power with UNC given the current legislature and political environment.
- c. How can Chapel Hill move towards the use of clean energy in a manner that is both rapid and fiscally possible? We must be strategic

with our limited tax dollars. We can consider incentivizing use of solar panels in development and renovations, for residential and commercial buildings, and making the permitting process for these applications as user-friendly as possible. We've put out a request for proposals to conduct a green house gas inventory in Chapel Hill. The data from this inventory will be used to focus on efforts that give us the biggest bang for our buck.

7. Ordinance Implementation

Chapel Hill has state and local ordinances to address water quality, stormwater management, impervious surface limits, stream buffers, steep slopes, and tree canopy. When the Chapel Hill Town Council approves these projects, such ordinances are meant to apply.

- a. Please comment on how effectively the Town administration and Council has implemented these rules.
- b. What changes, if any, will you advocate for to increase the effectiveness of these ordinances.
- c. What combination of carrots and sticks could Chapel Hill use to enforce its ordinances, for example, about the cutting of trees in buffers?

Enforcement is critical for all of our ordinances. Many of these ordinances have been on the books for a long time and should be revised and clarified as part of the LUMO update. The Town recently reviewed staffing levels and found that our planning and inspections departments are understaffed when compared to towns with similar levels of development activity. We could explore options for improving staffing levels and workload distribution.

Friends of Bolin Creek

2019 Chapel Hill Candidate Questions: Tai Huynh

Friends of Bolin Creek is dedicated to addressing climate change through environmental protection and conservation of the ecological 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, cost-effective transportation that meets public needs, and retaining urban natural areas, such as Bolin Forest in Carolina North, Meadow Flats, parts of the Greene Tract and the Eastowne Natural Heritage property.

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, preferably less:

1. Climate Change

Chapel Hill is developing a Climate Action Plan that is expected to be dramatically different from the actions taken by the N.C. Legislature and the Federal Administration.

- a. Please identify three actions you believe local government can take.
 1. Personal vehicle emissions is one of the major contributors to climate change. Therefore, local government should increase frequency, reliability, hours of operation, and extend the routes of public transit so that more people can get out of their cars when commuting to work or making other trips. We need to create a connected, multi-modal transit system that includes walking, biking, buses, and other new forms of personal transit that do not increase personal emissions.
 2. Local government can also leverage land-use to combat climate change. The United Nations recently released a comprehensive report detailing the relationship between land-use and climate change. By prioritizing mixed-use developments along transit corridors, local governments encourage residents to work, live, and play in the same area without getting into a car and commuting far distances for their activities, access to amenities, or work.

3. Local governments can also build relationships with innovative non-profit organizations like Grid Alternative NC that build solar energy infrastructure in low income neighborhoods while providing residents with the technical training they need to secure higher paying jobs in the alternative energy industry. This strategy not only addresses climate change by building energy resiliency in low income neighborhoods, but it also encourages workforce development so that all residents in our town are socioeconomically mobile.

b. Which do you believe is most important and why?

Designation of land-use is the most important for two reasons. First, land-use dominates Town Council's discussions and mandates. Therefore, Council has the obligation and the most control over how to leverage land-use to design walkable, transit-oriented communities with public green and gathering spaces that people will use and enjoy. Second, by viewing land-use through a climate action lens, we can be proactive about preserving natural habitats and tree canopies so that green spaces and development can coexist.

2. Conservation

Trees absorb carbon dioxide and potentially harmful gasses from the air and release oxygen. Chapel Hill is fortunate to have within its midst acres of largely forested acres on Carolina North, the Greene Tract, and the Natural Heritage property located at Eastowne. According to an expert on a recent walk a portion of the Eastowne property, the site possesses unusual soils and significant intact mature upland hardwoods, and could continue to serve as an important landscape link for wildlife. A recent official assessment by a Natural Heritage Program experts rated this tract "worthy of protection in its natural condition, through whatever means are feasible." The tract adjoins conservation lands owned by the Town of Chapel Hill and is connected through them to Durham County lands and to a larger network of conservation lands.

- a. As an elected official, what tools will you use to protect and expand the tree canopy and conserve special tracts of land, such as those found at Eastowne?

Protecting and expanding tree canopy needs to benefit all communities equitably. Trees increase the walkability of neighborhoods, increase property values, and provide cleaner air. These benefits should reach especially low income communities because they face issues of walkability, low property values, and air pollution. Therefore, the tools that I will use to

protect and expand tree canopy are ones that serve communities of ranging backgrounds equally.

The two tools I will use to protect and expand the tree canopy and conserve special tracts of land are the Mayor's Tree Committee and like-minded planning and infill development that prioritizes the missing middle (duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes) that preserves trees and special land tracts closer to the urban services boundary. The Mayor's Tree Committee prioritizes the conservation of tree canopy and the planting of the diameter of trees lost in development. This type of thinking ensures strategic planning for tree canopy protection and expansion. For special tracts of land that exist closer to downtown or on a major transit corridor (like Eastowne), I will advocate for mixed-use development that prioritizes smart development and preservation of green spaces so that people can work, live, and play in the same area. As such, closer to the urban services boundary, we should focus on infill development that will allow us to build affordable housing beyond the single family home.

b. What role should Chapel Hill's advisory boards have in this process?

The issues of tree canopy protection and special land tract preservation touch the mandate of a lot of boards, whether it is obvious at first glance or not. Objectively, tree canopies and preservation of special land tracts contribute to keep towns cooler and mitigate carbon emissions. Therefore, Chapel Hill's advisory boards, especially the Board of Adjustment, Community Design Commission, Environmental Stewardship Advisory Board, Parks and Rec, the Planning Commission, and the Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board should work together to establish a holistic vision for tree canopy and land in Chapel Hill. This holistic vision will consider the benefits of tree canopy and special land tracts in land-use ordinance writing, in smart community growth and planning, in mitigating climate change, in providing green spaces for gathering, and for mitigating the effects of flooding and stormwater. Only when all advisory boards come together on this important issue and delineate a set of guidelines for how to protect trees and special land tracts can we entertain developments sustainably.

3. Flooding/ Stormwater

Damage downstream from recent floods reminds us of the value that natural surfaces and woodlands perform in slowing and soaking up rainwater during storms and slowing the release of stormwater into local streams. Chapel

Hill's Stormwater Utility implements an approved Master Plan of stormwater programs to improve water quality.

To reduce flooding:

- a. What aspects of the Master Plan are most urgently needed in the next three to five years?

-Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the Drainage Assistance Program (DAP) to provide residents with technical and financial assistance to drain excess water

-Restore receiving streams so that they can do their natural job when it floods

-Utility-based fee incentives coupled with a public education program on water quality so that residents can measure stormwater and water quality on their private property

-Making sure drainage infrastructure such as water inlets, collection basins, streams, lakes, ditches, etc. will always be able to serve as flood mitigators

- b. Will you support the need to avoid cutting trees and constructing buildings in flood plains in the Bolin and Booker Watersheds? Explain.

Trees and greenspace serve as stormwater mitigation strategy, and building in flood plains will only incur hefty infrastructure costs later. Construction should occur in places where flood water does not collect so that residents and business owners can go about their days in peace without extra water drainage costs or flood damage repairs.

4. Sustainable Development

Currently, both Carrboro and Chapel Hill are growing at a rate of about one percent a year. Development comes with costs, often placing a strain on resources and infrastructure, reducing tree canopy and green spaces, as well as increasing traffic and taxes.

A great deal of debate in Chapel Hill centers around how development of density, quality of life, affordable housing, our small-town past, the town's architectural as well as environmental integrity, and the need to conserve forested areas.

- a. What must the town do to ensure that future development is fiscally sustainable, as well as environmentally responsible?

Right now, the Town lacks a holistic vision for development. As a result, developers have to go before advisory committees that often have competing

or mutually exclusive demands for the project. Due to this disjointed process, Chapel Hill does not attract developers that are financially efficient, provide community benefits, and are motivated to incorporate green building, green walls/roofs, affordable units, community spaces or other innovative practices that address affordability and sustainability. These developers exist out there, but are turned off by Chapel Hill's inefficient and cumbersome permitting process. Therefore, the Town should first set a strategic plan for development in Chapel Hill this is based purely on the wants and needs of residents, including those that are less heard from. Then, this plan should inform the unified set of demands advisory boards set for developers. This expedited and strategic process will then attract the developers that ensure fiscally sustainable and environmentally responsible projects that meet community needs.

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

The Town's payment in lieu process attracts developers who are not committed to community benefits, environmental sustainability, and fiscal responsibility. On the Housing Advisory Board, we created a formula for payment in lieu that is purposefully high in order to deter developers from taking this option so that they are actually encouraged to build affordable units. But, Council rejected this formula and stipulation. On Council, I will make it a priority to nullify the payment in lieu option or decentivize developers from taking this option because the payment threshold will be set very high.

Additionally, streamlining the permitting process by setting a unified set of standards by which the advisory boards and Council should judge developments will allow developers the financial resources required to provide community benefits.

- c. How would you apply your ideas to Chapel Hill's Eastowne Master Plan and/or the Greene tract.

Eastowne Master Plan: We need to be more specific about our community's priorities are to the UNC Healthcare team. I serve on the Joint Advisory Board, and UNC Healthcare has been a willing partner throughout this process. In order for us to obtain the community benefits our town wants (affordable housing, preservation of greenspace, integrate tree canopy into the design, etc), we need to present a unified, integrated vision to UNC Healthcare and negotiate from there. In order to come up with this vision with UNC Healthcare, the Town must continue to thoroughly engage the

whole community, and listen to the needs of residents so good land-use and development standards are set.

Greene tract: Community engagement with an emphasis on the voices of the historical Rogers Road neighborhood to arrive at a set of unified standards for greenspace preservation, the construction of a school, and the mixed-used development, and mixed-income housing is necessary to attract a developer that will provide the necessary community benefits.

By setting unified standards instead of each advisory board making discrete demands, the approval process becomes shorter. A shorter approval process saves money for the developer to invest in community benefits that residents list as priorities.

5. Sustainable and Multi-modal Transportation

To minimize climate change, public transportation systems will need to be enhanced and expanded including transitioning to electric vehicles, and alternative modes of transportation. Chapel Hills Mobility Plan was completed in October 2017. Since the DOLRT has been abandoned, more transit tax funds are available for other projects such as for the N-S BRT.

- a. What aspect of Chapel Hill's Mobility Plan would you prioritize? Why?

I will prioritize the following aspects of Chapel Hill's Mobility Plan:

- Complete streets so that cars, pedestrians, cyclists, etc. can all use the road without either one holding up the other
- An off-road internal network of green ways and multimodal paths so that cyclists and pedestrians can stay off of major transit corridors when getting from place to place.

Both of these aspects of the Mobility Plan are important because they encourage people to get out of their cars, and protect those who use alternative, more sustainable forms of transportation with both on-road and off-road infrastructure.

- b. What are three objectives the town should implement to improve our local and regional public transit?

- Expand routes to extraterritorial jurisdictions like RENA so that those who work in town can get to their jobs without needing to own a car.
- Increase frequency/hours of operation
- Build a bus rapid transit route (North-South) with dignified bus shelters that can withstand the elements. This system should be enlarged and connected

with other rapid transit systems in the region to build out regional public transit.

What roles do you see for bikes and bike paths, and scooters and Segways on town streets?

With complete streets, town streets will become multimodal. Roads should be shared among bicyclists, scooters, and segways. With complete streets, those with alternative modes of transportation can use roads without holding up car traffic.

- c. Explain some ways the Town could avoid constructing paved greenways immediately next to creeks and streams.

While paving greenways immediately next to creeks and streams might marginally reduce the waters' ability to mitigate stormwater, there are instances when paving a path along creeks and streams benefits typically underserved populations in our town. The paved trail along Bolin Creek on the Carrboro side and the greenway along Umstead were built for bikes, baby carriages, and wheelchair access. These pathways allow for residents of various abilities to play in nature the same way able-bodied folks in our town can. To consider the paving of greenways alongside creeks and streams, we should try to do the following:

-Setting this standard in the FLUM is one way to pair land-use and the avoidance of further impairment of creeks and streams by paved greenways.

-Building an internal network of greenways will deter construction of paved greenways by creeks or streams or large traffic corridors.

- d. Going forward, name a few changes Chapel could make in its relation to GoTriangle and its regional partners.

-Give Town employees free GoPasses for the GoTriangle bus so that those who commute to Chapel Hill from other areas can use public transit to get to work.

-Work with the county to increase frequency and hours of operation so people can commute to and from work conveniently without having to use a car.

6. Coal Clean-Up and Energy Use

UNC has 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.

- a. How will you advocate for the careful monitoring and cleanup of the coal- ash deposit?

Currently, the Town is monitoring the coal-ash deposit to make sure that no toxic deposit leaks into water sources or nutritious soil. I will advocate for the continuation of this meticulous monitoring. Additionally, the Town now has access to a dating technology that can find out who deposited that coal ash to begin with. Holding those responsible for the harmful deposit accountable to its cleanup will be my priority in office. The site should be monitored until it is cleaned up with the compliance of the party that placed the toxic material in this site.

- b. In what way(s) will you advocate for the shutdown of UNC's coal-fired power plant on Cameron Avenue?

In 2010, Chancellor Holden Thorp claimed that UNC would be coal-free by 2020. Now, that goal does not have a definite end date. UNC is the only university in the country that still has a coal plant on campus. As a tier one research university with a vast hospital network, coal is the most efficient and cheapest way to power UNC's vast campuses. This fact constitutes UNC's main hesitation to shut down its coal-fired power plant. Universities in similar positions across the country were able to transition their coal-power plants into cogeneration plants by burning cleaner natural gases. Cogeneration plants power such campuses just as effectively as coal-fired ones. The main motivation for universities to make such a transition is a credit system where the company that owns the plant can sell unused energy back into the grid from credits. In office, I will advocate for an agreement with Duke Energy in which they can sell unused energy back to the grid for energy credits if they move towards a cogeneration plant infrastructure. The process here is not to completely replace coal, but to gradually decrease its burning to power UNC.

Additionally, just like the Town adopted the clean energy goals of the Paris Climate Accords, so should the university. Other universities have vowed to meet the Accords' standards, and UNC should follow in its path. Adopting these standards will further push the university to transition away from fossil fuels.

Last, I am a student with direct and deep ties to the chancellor and UNC's administration. In office, I will leverage these resources and my student networks to constantly put pressure on the university to engage in talks with Town about how to move forward for a clean energy-fuelled Chapel Hill.

- c. How can Chapel Hill move towards the use of clean energy in a manner that is both rapid and fiscally possible?
1. Work with Homeowners Associations on allowing residents to fit their homes with solar infrastructure
 2. Continue working with private partners like Duke Energy on initiatives such as the Northside Energy Savers Program so that low income residents are fitting their homes with energy efficient technology
 3. Commissioning studies for the use of geothermal energy
 4. Working with NC nonprofits that building alternative energy grid infrastructure in low income areas while building and training a green-energy workforce that in turn will attract more green-industry employers and infrastructure-providers
 5. Smart city sensors that monitor the town's energy usage, and recommend specific areas to become cleaner and/or more efficient
 6. Continue making Town buildings run on increasingly cleaner energy, and seeing the Town's green fleet through
 7. Building out EV infrastructure so that people do not encounter barriers to maintaining electric vehicles in Chapel Hill

These steps ensure that the Town's steps to clean up its energy usage will translate into resident behavior through strategic partnerships with the relevant nonprofits and private partners. When Chapel Hill invests in clean energy/ alternative energy infrastructure, it will attract the specific industries and employers that will continue to bear the torch of clean energy usage.

7. Ordinance Implementation

Chapel Hill has state and local ordinances to address water quality, stormwater management, impervious surface limits, stream buffers, steep slopes, and tree canopy. When the Chapel Hill Town Council approves these projects, such ordinances are meant to apply.

- a. Please comment on how effectively the Town administration and Council has implemented these rules.

Some of these state and local ordinances, especially those regarding stormwater management, impervious surface limits, and tree canopy have not been effectively administered in order to speed developers through the permitting and approval process. We see this as the case in the Blue Hill District where specific measures regarding stormwater management and

impervious surfaces were pushed aside in order to get the developer through the process speedily. These ordinances exist to make sure the developments are most secure and most durable in the long term without need for extra repair or upkeep costs. Therefore, ordinances that ensure the longevity of developments and the surrounding environment should not be compromised. Instead, we should have a unified set of standards that make for a speedy process so that we do not have to compromise important principles in the name of speed or efficiency.

- b. What changes, if any, will you advocate for to increase the effectiveness of these ordinances.

The best approach to increasing the effectiveness of such ordinances is to leverage form-based code so that planners can focus on building elements that are easily defined: height, mass, setbacks, and the placement of driveways and entrances, rather than on subjective elements like architectural style, color, and design.

If a form-based ordinance clearly specifies what is required of the developer, and those specifications can be consistently relied upon for streamlined entitlements, the zoning code can help stimulate economic development by reducing project approval times and the associated risk, and costs that get baked into a real estate project. By attracting the right developers and capital, the ordinance can, in turn, increase the supply of new housing and commercial space, helping moderate the natural escalation in rents that occurs in a growing community.

In addition to reducing entitlement risk and approval time, a well-written form-based zoning code also gives developers significant latitude in deciding which uses to incorporate into a specific project. This is particularly beneficial for communities trying to promote more mixed-use developments that blend housing, retail and office components. By letting developers easily switch out one use for another, a form-based ordinance all but eliminates the necessity of a zoning or site plan amendment if the developer needs to replace one type of tenant with another

- c. What combination of carrots and sticks could Chapel Hill use to enforce its ordinances, for example, about the cutting of trees in buffers?

-Vegetated buffers next to streams offer an environmentally friendly solution to stormwater flooding. Right now there are 30ft requirements and 50ft requirements for Zone One and Zone Two Riparian Buffers. While trees and vegetations in these buffers should be protected, infill development should be prioritized so that land and trees closer to the urban services boundary can be preserved. Mixed-income, mixed-use development downtown and closer to downtown will result in protected and expanded tree canopy that also combats urban sprawl. In the long term, a stormwater management plan that does not solely rely on vegetated buffers coupled with infill development is the best way to address the problems we need to address while building for a socioeconomically diverse population.

Friends of Bolin Creek

2019 Chapel Hill Candidate Questions: Nancy Oates

Friends of Bolin Creek is dedicated to addressing climate change through environmental protection and conservation of the ecological 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, cost-effective transportation that meets public needs, and retaining urban natural areas, such as Bolin Forest in Carolina North, Meadow Flats, parts of the Greene Tract and the Eastowne Natural Heritage property.

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, preferably less:

1. Climate Change

Chapel Hill is developing a Climate Action Plan that is expected to be dramatically different from the actions taken by the N.C. Legislature and the Federal Administration.

- a. Please identify three actions you believe local government can take.
- b. Which do you believe is most important and why?

Engage the community to participate in reducing our carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions. The actions town government can take will make only a small dent in the problem.

Set firm expectations with developers who propose new construction projects to clearly delineate what thresholds they need to meet for green building and carbon-neutral construction. Our expectations don't have to be so onerous as to quash the project, but they must be meaningful. Green roofs, solar panels, AIA 2030 standards can be achieved. It may be that the private equity model we see routinely in new proposals will have to be adjusted to a lower profit margin.

Figure out how to pay for the Climate Action Plan. This is the most important of the three. Town government must take a leadership role to be an example for residents. If we say we can't afford to be energy efficient, we

can't expect residents to make sacrifices in their own lives to save the planet, when we aren't willing to make sacrifices, too.

2. Conservation

Trees absorb carbon dioxide and potentially harmful gasses from the air and release oxygen. Chapel Hill is fortunate to have within its midst acres of largely forested acres on Carolina North, the Greene Tract, and the Natural Heritage property located at Eastowne. According to an expert on a recent walk a portion of the Eastowne property, the site possesses unusual soils and significant intact mature upland hardwoods, and could continue to serve as an important landscape link for wildlife. A recent official assessment by a Natural Heritage Program experts rated this tract "worthy of protection in its natural condition, through whatever means are feasible." The tract adjoins conservation lands owned by the Town of Chapel Hill and is connected through them to Durham County lands and to a larger network of conservation lands.

- a. As an elected official, what tools will you use to protect and expand the tree canopy and conserve special tracts of land, such as those found at Eastowne?
- b. What role should Chapel Hill's advisory boards have in this process?

Nothing can be built in Eastowne without Town Council approval. Because the project has maxed out its floor-area ratio with the plan that has been approved already, any extra density we allow will be a tremendous gift to the property owners. Council has passed resolutions to comply with the Paris Climate Agreement, and we have folded the AIA 2030 standards into our development policy.

Community advocates have more sway than recommendations by advisory boards (which are nonbinding), though I would expect advisory board members to have familiarized themselves with the expectations set in the Paris accord and the AIA 2030 standards, so they can view all projects through that lens.

3. Flooding/ Stormwater

Damage downstream from recent floods reminds us of the value that natural surfaces and woodlands perform in slowing and soaking up rainwater during storms and slowing the release of stormwater into local streams. Chapel Hill's Stormwater Utility implements an approved Master Plan of stormwater programs to improve water quality.

To reduce flooding:

- a. What aspects of the Master Plan are most urgently needed in the next three to five years?
- b. Will you support the need to avoid cutting trees and constructing buildings in flood plains in the Bolin and Booker Watersheds? Explain.

To reduce flooding, we need to set stringent requirements for new development, to the extent the state allows. We need to clean out streambeds regularly and boost funding to the drainage assistance program. Getting UNC on board with paying stormwater fees would make a difference. We could explore other funding options through other government grants as well. We must respect stream buffers and not build over intermittent or ephemeral streams. Heavy rainstorms are becoming more frequent.

Absolutely we need to avoid cutting trees. In a recent rezoning and SUP council approved, I made sure that the SUP stipulated that the land was not to be clear-cut and that all trees in the buffer remain. Trees soak up a tremendous amount of water, and as nearly every neighborhood in town is experiencing flooding to a certain degree after a heavy rainstorm, we need to get serious about preserving trees.

4. Sustainable Development

Currently, both Carrboro and Chapel Hill are growing at a rate of about one percent a year. Development comes with costs, often placing a strain on resources and infrastructure, reducing tree canopy and green spaces, as well as increasing traffic and taxes.

A great deal of debate in Chapel Hill centers around how development of density, quality of life, affordable housing, our small-town past, the town's architectural as well as environmental integrity, and the need to conserve forested areas.

- a. What must the town do to ensure that future development is fiscally sustainable, as well as environmentally responsible?
- b. What policy and ordinance changes are needed to attain your vision?
- c. How would you apply your ideas to Chapel Hill's Eastowne Master Plan and/or the Greene tract.

Commercial areas bring in a higher net tax revenue than apartments, so ease up on the approval of new apartments for the time being. The exception would be Eastowne, where we need apartments affordable to the people who

will work there. As we push the working class and middle class farther away from where they work in Chapel Hill, we increase pollution from cars because those employees tend to work nontraditional hours and do not have access to public transportation; thus they are driving every day and idling in the ever-worsening traffic.

My voting record shows I listen to the community. With the Greene Tract, we need to balance undeveloped natural space with the low-impact affordable housing the community wants. I'm a public servant, not a politician, so I take the risk of voting for pragmatic solutions, not simply what is most politically palatable.

5. Sustainable and Multi-modal Transportation

To minimize climate change, public transportation systems will need to be enhanced and expanded including transitioning to electric vehicles, and alternative modes of transportation. Chapel Hills Mobility Plan was completed in October 2017. Since the DOLRT has been abandoned, more transit tax funds are available for other projects such as for the N-S BRT.

- a. What aspect of Chapel Hill's Mobility Plan would you prioritize? Why?
- b. What are three objectives the town should implement to improve our local and regional public transit?
- c. What roles do you see for bikes and bike paths, and scooters and Segways on town streets?
- d. Explain some ways the Town could avoid constructing paved greenways immediately next to creeks and streams.
- e. Going forward, name a few changes Chapel could make in its relation to GoTriangle and its regional partners.

Achieving 35% of people walking, cycling or using public transit by 2025 is an ambitious goal, especially given the constraints of our budget and of NCDOT having control over our plans for complete streets, for instance. We will be hard-pressed to get students out of their cars, so the biggest return on our investment will be to help commuters leave their cars at home. We must find out when and where employees of UNC and the hospitals are coming from, and tailor our town buses to those schedules, and work with regional transit to make commuting via bus realistic and affordable. We need to install benches and shelters at bus stops used by seniors to make bus travel feasible for them. Also consider Uber-type service to supplement EZ-Rider, for those who don't need a wheelchair-accessible van. Finally, expand our

greenways to connect neighborhoods to shopping and parks to encourage people to walk or bike instead of driving.

6. Coal Clean-Up and Energy Use

UNC has 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.

- a. How will you advocate for the careful monitoring and cleanup of the coal- ash deposit?
- b. In what way(s) will you advocate for the shutdown of UNC's coal-fired power plant on Cameron Avenue?
- c. How can Chapel Hill move towards the use of clean energy in a manner that is both rapid and fiscally possible?

From the information received so far, cap-in-place seems to work at the coal-ash deposit under the police station. The only lined disposal pits nearby are in low-wealth communities, and although we are sending some of our coal-ash there, I can't support trucking tons of our waste to a low-wealth area that is less equipped to deal with the effects of a spill.

UNC does not seem amenable these days to shifting to clean energy. We can weigh in on the searches for UNC chancellor and president to lobby for someone committed to clean energy. We might be able to apply pressure for clean energy when we are bargaining with UNC for rezoning. To make a difference in clean energy use, we must get the buy-in of residents. A marketing campaign that rewards people for clean energy use, monitors our progress as a town, and engenders a competitive spirit might spur community participation.

7. Ordinance Implementation

Chapel Hill has state and local ordinances to address water quality, stormwater management, impervious surface limits, stream buffers, steep slopes, and tree canopy. When the Chapel Hill Town Council approves these projects, such ordinances are meant to apply.

- a. Please comment on how effectively the Town administration and Council has implemented these rules.
- b. What changes, if any, will you advocate for to increase the effectiveness of these ordinances.

- c. What combination of carrots and sticks could Chapel Hill use to enforce its ordinances, for example, about the cutting of trees in buffers?

Staff recently came up with a workaround for the state-mandated stormwater changes in Blue Hill, and council adopted it. We routinely give developers a pass on steep slopes and tree canopy. We have the ability to prohibit clear-cutting of buffers in a rezoning (I got this inserted in the SUP for senior apartments recently). We can ask developers to include in their presentations a map of trees that will be removed. We may not be able to prevent mass removal of trees if we want a development project, but we can at least know what we are losing.

Most land that has not yet been developed at this point has some infrastructure problems that are expensive to remedy. We must be very careful not to relegate this land to affordable housing, thus putting residents who have the fewest resources at risk for coping with flooding.

Friends of Bolin Creek

2019 Chapel Hill Candidate Questions: Michael Parker

Friends of Bolin Creek is dedicated to addressing climate change through environmental protection and conservation of the ecological 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, cost-effective transportation that meets public needs, and retaining urban natural areas, such as Bolin Forest in Carolina North, Meadow Flats, parts of the Greene Tract and the Eastowne Natural Heritage property.

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, preferably less:

1. Climate Change

Chapel Hill is developing a Climate Action Plan that is expected to be dramatically different from the actions taken by the N.C. Legislature and the Federal Administration.

- a. Please identify three actions you believe local government can take.
 1. Dramatically reducing the use of cars (and Vehicle Miles Travelled) by encouraging the use of transit and other alternative means of transportation. This requires continued investment in transit and regulating land use in ways – such as focusing development along transit corridors – that promotes the use of these alternate means of transportation. In this regard, converting from gas-powered vehicles to electric will also be extremely important.
 2. Preserving and expanding our tree canopy through means such as revising our tree ordinance to better preserve trees during construction and finding ways/locales to plant additional trees.
 3. Mandating – consistent with state law –and encouraging the use of solar and other renewable energy sources in both new and existing construction. Over time, I believe that we must find ways to retrofit our town with renewable energy sources as new construction will only account for a relatively small fraction of energy consumption.

b. Which do you believe is most important and why?

No. 1 above. Transportation is currently the number two source of greenhouse emissions in North Carolina and is projected to reach number one in the near future. At the local level, I believe that getting people out of their cars and, to a lesser extent, substituting electric vehicles for gas/diesel powered ones is the most impactful thing that we can do. I also recognize that this will be difficult, but it simply has to be done.

2. Conservation

Trees absorb carbon dioxide and potentially harmful gasses from the air and release oxygen. Chapel Hill is fortunate to have within its midst acres of largely forested acres on Carolina North, the Greene Tract, and the Natural Heritage property located at Eastowne. According to an expert on a recent walk a portion of the Eastowne property, the site possesses unusual soils and significant intact mature upland hardwoods, and could continue to serve as an important landscape link for wildlife. A recent official assessment by a Natural Heritage Program expert rated this tract “worthy of protection in its natural condition, through whatever means are feasible.” The tract adjoins conservation lands owned by the Town of Chapel Hill and is connected through them to Durham County lands and to a larger network of conservation lands.

a. As an elected official, what tools will you use to protect and expand the tree canopy and conserve special tracts of land, such as those found at Eastowne?

As I noted above preserving and expanding our tree canopy is critical. That is why, as we grow, as controversial as it is likely to be, we need to grow up, not out, so that we can preserve/enhance green space to the greatest extent possible. As we think about sites such as the Greene Tract and the Natural Heritage site at Eastowne, we need to balance our need for affordable housing and the like with the equally important need to preserve our natural environment. It is my hope that we can preserve much, if not all, of the Natural Heritage site at Eastowne, but until we are farther along in the negotiation process, I cannot say with certainty that we will be able to preserve all of it.

b. What role should Chapel Hill’s advisory boards have in this process?

Chapel Hill is fortunate to have the knowledgeable and committed residents who serve on our advisory boards. I believe that they have already added significant value by bring to our attention many critical issues and making recommendations for such things as requiring solar

panels on new construction. As we move forward with developing our Climate Action Plan, I look forward to the Environmental Stewardship Board, the Stormwater Management Utility Board, and the Parks and Greenways Commission, among others, playing a very strong and active role.

3. Flooding/ Stormwater

Damage downstream from recent floods reminds us of the value that natural surfaces and woodlands perform in slowing and soaking up rainwater during storms and slowing the release of stormwater into local streams. Chapel Hill's Stormwater Utility implements an approved Master Plan of stormwater programs to improve water quality.

To reduce flooding:

- a. What aspects of the Master Plan are most urgently needed in the next three to five years?

We need to continue conducting our sub-watershed studies (ideally more rapidly than we have to date) and then act on the recommendations that emerge. I am pleased that we are, for example, moving ahead with the construction of the Elliott Rd. storage facility and the work at Lake Ellen. It is clear, however, that our needs for stormwater infrastructure investments currently outpace the resources that we have available. I believe that in the next three to five years we will all have an important role to play in securing the additional funds required, most like through the issuance of additional debt and a concomitant increase in our stormwater fees.

That said, I expect that our evolving Climate Action Plan will also identify significant funding needs and so we are going to need to take a holistic view of how we approach meeting all of these needs.

- b. Will you support the need to avoid cutting trees and constructing buildings in flood plains in the Bolin and Booker Watersheds? Explain.

The clear cutting of trees such as we've seen at MLK and Estes clearly distressed our residents (and me) and is bad for the environment, to say the least. Unfortunately, this type of clear cutting is regulated by the state. It is my hope that we can use

whatever persuasion we have available to us to address this and, if the legislature changes, we can obtain some level of regulatory control.

I also recognize that the clearcutting of trees during construction – even if trees are replanted afterward, is problematic. While our current tree ordinance requires a tree preservation plan, it is unclear regarding what standards should be applied in developing or reviewing it. I believe that it should be possible to make modifications that lessen the extent of tree-cutting during construction without unduly increasing construction costs.

4. Sustainable Development

Currently, both Carrboro and Chapel Hill are growing at a rate of about one percent a year. Development comes with costs, often placing a strain on resources and infrastructure, reducing tree canopy and green spaces, as well as increasing traffic and taxes.

A great deal of debate in Chapel Hill centers around how development of density, quality of life, affordable housing, our small-town past, the town's architectural as well as environmental integrity, and the need to conserve forested areas.

- a. What must the town do to ensure that future development is fiscally sustainable, as well as environmentally responsible?

Given the ongoing debates about whether new construction – either in general or a specific project – is revenue positive or negative, I would like to see the Town adopt a fair and well-thought out methodology for assessing costs. It is my belief that such a methodology should be prospective, project-specific, and focus on actual incremental costs.

Second, and this will not be very popular, we need to rethink how we set our tax rates following our periodic revaluations. While we are required to publish a revenue-neutral tax rate, we are not required to adopt it. By doing so, however, we have been effectively “giving back” some of the tax value of new construction, thereby contributing to the ongoing imbalance between revenue and expense growth rates.

In terms of the environment, we first need to ensure that we fully understand the environmental consequences, both good and bad of any development project, and then look at the various trade-offs associated with that project. Is it meeting Town goals in terms of affordable housing, parks and greenspaces, walkability, and the like and try as best as we can to optimize the project.

Unfortunately, there are no algorithms of which I am aware, although something of a balanced scorecard approach would be extremely valuable.

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

If we can agree on a methodology for assessing incremental project costs, then we as a Town will have the information to make informed decisions. We may not always reject a revenue negative project if, for example it meets other Town goals such as affordable housing, but it will be an informed decision.

As above, as a matter of policy, we need to have a serious conversation about how we set tax rates after revaluations.

As I also noted above, an enhanced project review process that explicitly addressed environmental sustainability, fiscal sustainability, racial/social equity, and other agreed upon Town goals should be explored and implemented.

- c. How would you apply your ideas to Chapel Hill's Eastowne Master Plan and/or the Greene tract?

In either case, as noted above, we need to take a holistic approach to these projects and understand the benefits and disadvantages of these projects. As we heard from Dr. Rivers at the recent meeting, a lot will come down to values and what each of us thinks most important in decision-making: affordable housing, environmental sustainability, jobs and fiscal sustainability, etc. That said, I think that there are certain non-negotiables, namely that anything that is built at either site must conform to the highest standards regarding energy and carbon footprint.

5. Sustainable and Multi-modal Transportation

To minimize climate change, public transportation systems will need to be enhanced and expanded including transitioning to electric vehicles, and alternative modes of transportation. Chapel Hills Mobility Plan was completed in October 2017. Since the DOLRT has been abandoned, more transit tax funds are available for other projects such as for the N-S BRT.

- a. What aspect of Chapel Hill's Mobility Plan would you prioritize? Why?

The Mobility plan has many excellent ideas, so it is hard to pick just one. That said, I would focus on "Mobility on Major Street Corridors." We are committed to both improving transit and focusing development on these corridors. If we want compact, walkable, transit supportive development on these corridors as a way of, among other things, addressing climate change, then we need to make these corridors as congenial to all forms of mobility as possible. Thus, this aspect would be my highest priority.

- b. What are three objectives the town should implement to improve our local and regional public transit?
1. We need to electrify our fleet as quickly and as intelligently as possible, recognizing that with a fleet of 93 fixed route buses this will be expensive.
 2. We need to move the North South BRT forward as quickly as we can and then begin planning for one or more East-West BRT routes to serve as the "trunk lines" for our evolving local system
 3. We need to work with Orange and Durham Counties to develop one or more regional solutions to address the large number of people who commute in and out of Chapel Hill on a daily basis.
- c. What roles do you see for bikes and bike paths, and scooters and Segways on town streets?

With the advent of E-bikes, I believe that bikes and bike infrastructure are going to become increasingly important and relevant in Chapel Hill. They have the potential to "flatten" the Town and make bike usage more feasible for all. I would like to see the Town partner with UNC to quickly implement an E-bike sharing program.

I don't yet know how best to accommodate scooters, Segways, and whatever else may come along, but I do know that we will have to figure out how to do so. They can be important adjuncts to our transit system providing effective first-mile/last-mile solutions.

- d. Explain some ways the Town could avoid constructing paved greenways immediately next to creeks and streams.

Given that greenways are – and hopefully will be important connectors for bicyclists and pedestrians, paving is likely to be necessary if we are to meet our alternative transportation goals. That said, we should look for routes that move the greenways as far from streams as is practical so that we find the balance between maximizing stream protection and promoting alternative means of transportation. To the extent that alternate materials are available that are both bike and stream friendly, their use should be required.

- e. Going forward, name a few changes Chapel could make in its relation to GoTriangle and its regional partners.

There is one key change in how Chapel Hill interacts with our local and regional transit partners that is key: we need a formal role in the planning and implementation of regional transit, particularly as we develop a new Orange County Transit Plan. By statute, Orange County (and not Chapel Hill), along with the DCHCMPO and GoTriangle govern how the half-cent sales taxes are spent. Here in Orange County, we need to adopt a model similar that being used in Wake County, where the TPAC has staff representatives from all jurisdictions, as well as CAMPO and GoTriangle on it. While they are actually advisory, their decisions are rarely if ever, ignored.

In Orange, we have the Staff Working Group in a role analogous to the TPAC. However, while Chapel Hill sits on the group, we are not a voting member – Orange County, DCHC MPO and GoTriangle are the voting members. We need change this to make sure that all jurisdictions in OC have voting membership. I believe that this will go a long way to ensuring that Chapel Hill's needs and interests are properly served.

6. Coal Clean-Up and Energy Use

UNC has 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.

- a. How will you advocate for the careful monitoring and cleanup of the coal- ash deposit?

I believe that the Council has done a good job of overseeing the coal-ash situation. Recently, at our urging, an Environmental Toxicologist was brought on board to help us understand the health risks associated with the current situation and help us plan for what ultimately needs to be done. We need to make sure that we continue in this role and that any and all solutions implemented are fact-based and based on the best scientific and engineering expertise that we can avail ourselves of.

- b. In what way(s) will you advocate for the shutdown of UNC's coal-fired power plant on Cameron Avenue?

The existence of a coal-fired power plant in the heart of Chapel Hill is an embarrassment to us all, to say the least. The Town has been working with UNC – an organization over which we have little jurisdiction – change this. The fact that it is a COGEN plant, not a power plant, complicates the situation. As has recently been mentioned, UNC has not burned coal at the plant since May as it shifts toward burning natural gas. This is clearly not a true solution, but it will help. Over time, we have to keep working with them to find a solution that moves them toward renewable energy sources.

- c. How can Chapel Hill move towards the use of clean energy in a manner that is both rapid and fiscally possible?

As I noted above, I am supportive of amending our ordinances to require the use of solar power and other alternative energy sources in new construction in Chapel Hill. However, that will only make a small dent in our overall energy usage. We need to find ways through tax incentives, community education, and the like to encourage the retrofitting of existing buildings, large and small, residential and commercial, as well. Only by doing so, can we have a major impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

7. Ordinance Implementation

Chapel Hill has state and local ordinances to address water quality, stormwater management, impervious surface limits, stream buffers, steep slopes, and tree canopy. When the Chapel Hill Town Council approves these projects, such ordinances are meant to apply.

- a. Please comment on how effectively the Town administration and Council has implemented these rules.

I believe that the Town staff implements these rules quite effectively at the time a new building is constructed. However, I am not convinced that follow up after construction is as effective as it should be. For example, I am not convinced that ongoing inspection of stormwater management facilities post-construction is as routine or as rigorous as it should be.

- b. What changes, if any, will you advocate for to increase the effectiveness of these ordinances.

In some cases, Town staff is blamed for exceptions granted by the Council. I think overall, we need to commit more resources to enforcement of a variety of ordinances including the ones mentioned above, as well as, for example, our four person per house occupancy ordinance.

- c. What combination of carrots and sticks could Chapel Hill use to enforce its ordinances, for example, about the cutting of trees in buffers?

I am not aware of instances in which trees are being cut down in buffers without permission. If they, are there needs to be enforcement action.

I think it would be useful to think about incentives for single family residences to maintain and even increase their tree canopy since they are not subject to most of the rules in our tree ordinance. I think issues of this kind need to be looked at comprehensively as we move toward specific actions arising from our Climate Action Plan.

Friends of Bolin Creek

2019 Chapel Hill Candidate Questions: Amy Ryan

Friends of Bolin Creek is dedicated to addressing climate change through environmental protection and conservation of the ecological 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, cost-effective transportation that meets public needs, and retaining urban natural areas, such as Bolin Forest in Carolina North, Meadow Flats, parts of the Greene Tract and the Eastowne Natural Heritage property.

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1. Climate Change

Chapel Hill is developing a Climate Action Plan that is expected to be dramatically different from the actions taken by the N.C. Legislature and the Federal Administration.

a. Please identify three actions you believe local government can take.

1. Greening town operations
2. Encouraging alternative forms of transportation
3. Improving our building codes

b. Which do you believe is most important and why?

They are all important, but I think the town can have the biggest impact by looking at vehicle travel—cars are our largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, so we'll get the biggest bang for our buck here. We should leverage our substantial investment in our fare-free bus system, move to an electric fleet, and work to expand the EV charging infrastructure in town to help get more people out of cars for more trips, and have cleaner electric trips for more car users.

Good land planning plays a role here too; we should locate our infill development on transit corridors, so new arrivals will have the option of relying on transit as a primary mobility choice.

Finally, we need to continue our investment in bike and pedestrian infrastructure, so more people can safely and conveniently access alternate, non-fossil-fuel-burning modes of transportation.

2. Conservation

Trees absorb carbon dioxide and potentially harmful gasses from the air and release oxygen. Chapel Hill is fortunate to have within its midst acres of largely forested acres on Carolina North, the Greene Tract, and the Natural Heritage property located at Eastowne. According to an expert on a recent walk a portion of the Eastowne property, the site possesses unusual soils and significant intact mature upland hardwoods, and could continue to serve as an important landscape link for wildlife. A recent official assessment by a Natural Heritage Program experts rated this tract “worthy of protection in its natural condition, through whatever means are feasible.” The tract adjoins conservation lands owned by the Town of Chapel Hill and is connected through them to Durham County lands and to a larger network of conservation lands.

- a. As an elected official, what tools will you use to protect and expand the tree canopy and conserve special tracts of land, such as those found at Eastowne?

One of the ways we can protect our tree canopy—an important part of our town character, as well as an environmental asset—would be to work on LUMO changes that would incent developers not to clear-cut their building sites. Now, even though we have tree canopy requirements, developers can take down all the mature trees and replant saplings, which will take many years to provide the same level of environmental services.

I’m a strong believer that natural heritage area should be preserved free of development. These valuable and shrinking resources are a legacy for our future, as well as a source of biodiversity preservation.

- b. What role should Chapel Hill’s advisory boards have in this process?

In my time on the Planning Commission, I have often advocated for protection of existing tree canopy, stream buffers, and wetlands. I petitioned Council during their review of the Turkish Cultural Center to work with the

applicant to maintain more of the mature trees on the site, plant more trees, or make a payment-in-lieu for missing canopy—the proposal they brought to the Planning Commission had only a 28% canopy coverage, not the 40% required in ordinance.

Our advisory boards do a great service to the town advocating for streams, trees, and other environmental protections, but they can only have impact if Council is listening. One of the reasons I want to become a member of Council is so that I can have a vote on issues like this, so my advocacy can be more effective in implementing the policies I support.

3. Flooding/ Stormwater

Damage downstream from recent floods reminds us of the value that natural surfaces and woodlands perform in slowing and soaking up rainwater during storms and slowing the release of stormwater into local streams. Chapel Hill's Stormwater Utility implements an approved Master Plan of stormwater programs to improve water quality.

To reduce flooding:

- a. What aspects of the Master Plan are most urgently needed in the next three to five years?

Addressing flooding was identified as a priority by all groups surveyed for the master planning process. As the stormwater master plan itself comments, our stormwater needs will outstrip our ability to pay for them for at least the next several years, so it will be key to prioritize carefully.

For specific flood-prone properties, the master plan describes establishing a flood hazard mitigation program, which compares the losses from flood damage against the cost of capital projects to mitigating the flooding or a buy-out of the property. With this knowledge in hand, the town will be in a position to make sound decisions on how to strategically invest town and grant money for effective flood mitigation.

On a broader level, as funds are available, the town will need to take measures to (1) protect and restore our natural stream corridors, so they can function in ecologically healthy ways and then (2) in places where the natural system can no longer cope with the amount of stormwater, implement the recommended capital improvement projects to slow the rate of flow through the system during significant flooding events.

- b. Will you support the need to avoid cutting trees and constructing buildings in flood plains in the Bolin and Booker Watersheds? Explain.

I've long been a supporter of our town's RCD rules and have consistently opposed building in the RCD. We of course should not allow greenfield development in floodplains. Where possible, existing development in floodplains—like the Eastgate area—that undergoes redevelopment should try to work with natural systems (like restoring and daylighting creeks) to mitigate flooding and install appropriate stormwater infrastructure to cope with the increasing impacts of climate change.

I have always known that clear-cutting increased the rate of flow of stormwater from a piece of land, but I was unaware until recently of how much impact it has on the broader area hydrology. As we revamp the LUMO, I'd like to see the town gather information on the hydrological impact of tree loss, so we can update our tree-protection standards accordingly.

I hope that as part of the FLUM/LUMO process we can get a map identifying areas that contribute significantly to downstream flooding, so that boards and Council will be alerted when development is proposed in those areas and can make sure to calibrate the level of impervious surface allowed and recommend appropriate mitigation measures.

4. Sustainable Development

Currently, both Carrboro and Chapel Hill are growing at a rate of about one percent a year. Development comes with costs, often placing a strain on resources and infrastructure, reducing tree canopy and green spaces, as well as increasing traffic and taxes.

A great deal of debate in Chapel Hill centers around how development of density, quality of life, affordable housing, our small-town past, the town's architectural as well as environmental integrity, and the need to conserve forested areas.

- a. What must the town do to ensure that future development is fiscally sustainable, as well as environmentally responsible?

I've advocated for years for the town to obtain a detailed fiscal impact analysis, so that we can understand deeply the benefits and costs associated

with specific types of development, from high-end residential to townhomes to office and retail. We've been making decisions for years without this information, and as a result have seen cost of services rising faster than tax revenue.

I also support the mayor and Council's current policies of actively seeking more commercial development in town; the earlier very high level analysis done by Mitch Renkow of NCSU was confident that this kind of development is a net positive to the town's bottom line.

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

To allow us to make development economically sustainable, I'd find a way to fund a fiscal impact analysis (this would be a substantial investment; I'm told by staff that such a study can run between \$50K and \$75K).

To increase the commercial percentage of our tax base, I'd like to continue the mayor and Council's efforts to attract new businesses to Chapel Hill. I'd also like to see the FLUM prioritize commercial development in the South MLK focus area; its proximity to downtown and location on the future BRT line make it attractive to companies who want a walkable in-town location, and it could be a great spot for nurturing start-ups and giving successful companies a place to grow in town.

Finally, to maintain town character as we grow, I'd advocate for allowing right-size, right-place infill in our denser neighborhoods and on transit lines, for setting moderate-size heights (ca. 4 stories) for most focus areas, allowing extra height only if significant community benefits are provided (affordable housing, contributions to greenways and open space, etc.).

c. How would you apply your ideas to Chapel Hill's Eastowne Master Plan and/or the Greene tract?

The town needs to do a better job of developing OUR priorities for the Eastowne site, so that UNC-Health isn't setting the agenda for us. They are asking for a huge amount of building on the site—we'll need to look carefully at impacts, like traffic and effects on sensitive environmental areas, from the very beginning, not leaving it until after density decisions have been made. In terms of placemaking, we need to insist that buildings facing town roads are at a walkable scale and are not just hundreds of feet of parking deck, and that UNC is contributing to filling in gaps in the local

greenway network and working on transit solutions (like funding a shuttle to the main medical campus) that will mitigate the traffic they'll bring.

5. Sustainable and Multi-modal Transportation

To minimize climate change, public transportation systems will need to be enhanced and expanded including transitioning to electric vehicles, and alternative modes of transportation. Chapel Hill's Mobility Plan was completed in October 2017. Since the DOLRT has been abandoned, more transit tax funds are available for other projects such as for the N-S BRT.

- a. What aspect of Chapel Hill's Mobility Plan would you prioritize? Why?

After funding the N-S BRT, I would promote Objective 1, "Integrate System" to build a complete structure in town for bike and pedestrian mobility. Ideally, we'd couple this with linking the disparate pieces of our parks and greenway system, so that we'd have a complete transportation network that would also allow for recreation, habitat preservation, and carbon sequestration.

- b. What are three objectives the town should implement to improve our local and regional public transit?

1. Find a way to fund increased hours for our bus service, so that people working early and evening shifts can use transit.
2. Work to electrify our bus fleet.
3. Work to make better connections for CH Transit buses into the regional network.

- c. What roles do you see for bikes and bike paths, and scooters and Segways on town streets?

I'm a big fan of bikes and bike paths. As electric bikes become more common, more of our residents will be biking, and I want to make sure they have safe routes to get where they're going. Scooters and Segways are more complicated—our sidewalks are too narrow to accommodate them, and our roads and bike lanes aren't designed for them either. Add safety concerns, and I think the town will have to look carefully before allowing electric scooters and Segways as a transportation mode.

- d. Explain some ways the Town could avoid constructing paved greenways immediately next to creeks and streams.

Trail construction has to involve sensitive balancing of protecting the environment (flora, fauna, water resources) with providing safe access for users. Good analysis of potential sites is crucial to see which concerns predominate for a given project or trail segment.

Where the land is available, trails should be sited away from waterways. On the Morgan Creek Trail, for example, much of the paved trail was designed to meander dozens of yards away from the stream itself. This allows less impact on the stream while providing an accessible surface for users, and provides room for vegetated areas to filter and infiltrate runoff. In places where topography or land ownership means that the trail route is constrained to near a waterway, pavement that infiltrates water can be considered if accessibility or use issues rule out a natural-surface path.

- e. Going forward, name a few changes Chapel Hill could make in its relation to GoTriangle and its regional partners.

I think the most important change I'd like to see is for the town to have an independent seat at the table for decisions on our regional transit issues, not merely be one of several municipal constituents represented by the MPO.

6. Coal Clean-Up and Energy Use

UNC has 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.

- a. How will you advocate for the careful monitoring and cleanup of the coal-ash deposit?

I think that Council and staff are taking the matter very seriously, acting appropriately, and funding the necessary work. Monitoring is ongoing (I was especially pleased to learn about increased monitoring efforts after major storm events and the creation of an additional well to check for groundwater contamination). As a Council member, I would continue to follow the advice of our risk assessment consultants and commit to keeping people who live, work, and hike near the site, and those downstream, safe from health risks.

- b. In what way(s) will you advocate for the shutdown of UNC's coal-fired power plant on Cameron Avenue?

The coal plant is at heart a UNC issue. While we have no input into their decision-making, we can foster good relations with our university partners and advocate with them to make action plans for switching to a cleaner, more sustainable source of power for the university than coal (or natural gas).

- c. How can Chapel Hill move towards the use of clean energy in a manner that is both rapid and fiscally possible?

I support the town's current efforts to move us toward cleaner energy. For example, we now provide resources (like permitting checklists and lists of incentives) for residents who want to go solar. We've also installed rooftop solar on some of our buildings, and have become a Gold-Level member of the DOE SolSmart program, which offers technical assistance to help our community increase our use of clean energy.

The town can continue efforts to improve building codes to call for making buildings solar and EV ready, and explore the Environment and Sustainability Board's recommendations for requiring solar on new construction.

The town's initial efforts to make its buildings more efficient and install LED lighting have brought substantial cost savings with them. These investments pay off both financially and environmentally for the town.

7. Ordinance Implementation

Chapel Hill has state and local ordinances to address water quality, stormwater management, impervious surface limits, stream buffers, steep slopes, and tree canopy. When the Chapel Hill Town Council approves these projects, such ordinances are meant to apply.

- a. Please comment on how effectively the Town administration and Council has implemented these rules.

The ordinances are as effective as long as Council is willing to stick to them and not allow variances except when there is significant benefit to Chapel Hill. Sometimes, there are good reasons for considering trade-offs – for example, allowing a project to plant some understory trees instead of canopy

trees to allow them to use solar energy on site. Other times, such as with incursions into the RCD, I think Council should be much more reluctant to grant variances.

- b. What changes, if any, will you advocate for to increase the effectiveness of these ordinances?

First, I'd like to see us add incentives (see below) for developers willing to take extra steps to preserve our trees, streams, and slopes. Second, since the ordinances are effective to the degree that we are willing to insist on them, I'd like to see Council be much stingier with granting variances.

- c. What combination of carrots and sticks could Chapel Hill use to enforce its ordinances, for example, about the cutting of trees in buffers?

Town policy for years has allowed clear-cutting and replanting. I'd like to change to an incentive system where we reward developers who make the effort to preserve mature trees on their site; planting a sapling is in no way a replacement for a lost mature canopy tree for at least several decades into the future.

I understand that the state legislature has indicated that they'd be willing to intervene in the town's ability to legislate if they try to limit tree cutting, so I think we'll have to tread carefully for a bit to make sure that our existing protection measures aren't negated by the state. With time and a change in Raleigh, we will be able to strengthen our tree-protection standards.

Friends of Bolin Creek

2019 Chapel Hill Candidate Questions: Renuka Soll

Friends of Bolin Creek is dedicated to addressing climate change through environmental protection and conservation of the ecological 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, cost-effective transportation that meets public needs, and retaining urban natural areas, such as Bolin Forest in Carolina North, Meadow Flats, parts of the Greene Tract and the Eastowne Natural Heritage property.

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, preferably less:

1. Climate Change

Chapel Hill is developing a Climate Action Plan that is expected to be dramatically different from the actions taken by the N.C. Legislature and the Federal Administration.

a. Please identify three actions you believe local government can take.

- 1) **Buildings alone account for 39% of annual global green-house gas emissions. I believe that building sustainable buildings is the primary way to combat this problem. We need to move toward a net zero energy performance.**
- 2) **We need to maintain our canopy trees. Our Tree Protection Ordinance needs to be strengthened. There is no reason to completely clear areas for development—some of the trees can be preserved to stand alongside the new buildings and line the roads. We should also continue to plant trees.**
- 3) **Go electric. I would like to see the town move to a full fleet of electric buses and to install more charging stations.**

b. Which do you believe is most important and why?

I believe that building sustainable buildings is the most important, but I would advocate to do all three. Our infrastructure is the biggest source

of green-house gas emissions. We can actively do something about it by building any new structures with carbon neutrality and upgrading our current buildings to reduce their Carbon footprint.

2. Conservation

Trees absorb carbon dioxide and potentially harmful gasses from the air and release oxygen. Chapel Hill is fortunate to have within its midst acres of largely forested acres on Carolina North, the Greene Tract, and the Natural Heritage property located at Eastowne. According to an expert on a recent walk a portion of the Eastowne property, the site possesses unusual soils and significant intact mature upland hardwoods, and could continue to serve as an important landscape link for wildlife. A recent official assessment by a Natural Heritage Program experts rated this tract “worthy of protection in its natural condition, through whatever means are feasible.” The tract adjoins conservation lands owned by the Town of Chapel Hill and is connected through them to Durham County lands and to a larger network of conservation lands.

- a. As an elected official, what tools will you use to protect and expand the tree canopy and conserve special tracts of land, such as those found at Eastowne?

I feel that environmental impact studies must be done before committing to specific land use. In these studies, we also need to get information on how wildlife will be affected. The conclusions from these studies will give us the knowledge and means to protect these sensitive areas and populations. Additionally, I feel that a strengthened Tree Protection Ordinance is another way of protecting our trees. Developers find it easy to clear cut areas and replant saplings. Those saplings will take decades to reach maturity. I hope to do whatever it takes to protect the environment.

- b. What role should Chapel Hill’s advisory boards have in this process?

We must use the knowledge and expertise of our advisory boards effectively. They look at these issues all the time and are experts. Their recommendations are essential for helping the Town Council make decisions.

3. Flooding/ Stormwater

Damage downstream from recent floods reminds us of the value that natural surfaces and woodlands perform in slowing and soaking up rainwater during storms and slowing the release of stormwater into local streams. Chapel

Hill's Stormwater Utility implements an approved Master Plan of stormwater programs to improve water quality.

To reduce flooding:

- a. What aspects of the Master Plan are most urgently needed in the next three to five years?

I feel that we need to understand the potential flooding impacts before giving project approval and we need to put into effect the appropriate flood detention into the development plans. We absolutely need to be proactive in this endeavor. We should also continue to do small maintenance repair projects to decrease flood risk. Additionally, we need to avoid constructing in flood plains.

- b. Will you support the need to avoid cutting trees and constructing buildings in flood plains in the Bolin and Booker Watersheds? Explain.

Yes. We need to do everything possible to reduce stormwater damage. We can see the damaging results as the strong storms continue to occur.

4. Sustainable Development

Currently, both Carrboro and Chapel Hill are growing at a rate of about one percent a year. Development comes with costs, often placing a strain on resources and infrastructure, reducing tree canopy and green spaces, as well as increasing traffic and taxes.

A great deal of debate in Chapel Hill centers around how development of density, quality of life, affordable housing, our small-town past, the town's architectural as well as environmental integrity, and the need to conserve forested areas.

- a. What must the town do to ensure that future development is fiscally sustainable, as well as environmentally responsible?

We need to build responsibly. Green space and tree canopies are important for environmental reasons, and also contribute to our well-being. When we consider any new development, we need to do an environmental impact analysis to make sure that we aren't building in flood plains and not building on sensitive land. Then, when we build, we should do it with minimal chopping down of trees and try to build with green space. The new construction should be sustainable, and we need to insist on the provision of an adequate supply of affordable housing. We should continue to connect the greenways, bike lanes, and pedestrian paths to give people more transportation options. We must work hard to protect our environment.

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

We need to strengthen the Tree Protection ordinance and make them keep a certain percentage of trees where building can be built around. Additionally, the trees along the edges of the property should be allowed to remain. We need to incentivize the developers to build according to our high environmental standards and to provide sufficient affordable housing.

- c. How would you apply your ideas to Chapel Hill's Eastowne Master Plan and/or the Greene tract.

For the Greene tract, after the environmental impact analysis and the connectivity analysis, we should see which part of the land we can actually develop. Since the town is short of green space, I would like to preserve as much green space and trees as possible. So there are two objectives here – new development that includes affordable housing, and preserving green space. The town should work with the Rogers Road Community to determine the right balance. I think that together we can come up with a plan that can satisfy both objectives.

For Eastowne, we should try to save as many trees as possible and ask for a public greenspace and/or playground that the residents of the town can use. We also need to protect the environmentally sensitive parts of the land.

5. Sustainable and Multi-modal Transportation

To minimize climate change, public transportation systems will need to be enhanced and expanded including transitioning to electric vehicles, and alternative modes of transportation. Chapel Hills Mobility Plan was completed in October 2017. Since the DOLRT has been abandoned, more transit tax funds are available for other projects such as for the N-S BRT.

- a. What aspect of Chapel Hill's Mobility Plan would you prioritize? Why?

I would like to see the BRT come about on MLK, Jr Blvd, as is being planned. I also think that 15-501 (being a large transit corridor) is also a good place to have BRT. This bus system has the potential to be a fast and an efficient mode of transportation. I believe that having this bus system will help to ease congestion on the roads as more people see its

benefits and begin using it. I would also like to see the town move toward a full fleet of electric buses as finances allow.

b. What are three objectives the town should implement to improve our local and regional public transit?

- 1) Have public transit on well-traveled paths or transit corridors to help ease traffic congestion in Chapel Hill.**
- 2) Connect the bus service to places in the Triangle where people want to go. This includes the airport, Southpoint Mall, locations in Durham and Chatham counties, and more.**
- 3) Run the bus services on more frequent and consistent schedules. Right now, service reduces when UNC is not in sessions. This makes it difficult for those who rely on public transportation for getting to and from a job.**

c. What roles do you see for bikes and bike paths, and scooters and Segways on town streets?

I would like to see bike paths connected throughout town and beyond. The bike paths should be safe. There is a “bike lane” on MLK, but there is not a dedicated lane for the bike in that it feels like the car lane is being shared with a biker. I feel that it is dangerous. I would have to investigate the idea of scooters and segways on town streets. At first glance, it feels that it would be dangerous for the riders since they would go at a much slower speed than cars and the operators don’t have protection in case of an accident. I would have to see if some other city has done it and how they ensure safety.

d. Explain some ways the Town could avoid constructing paved greenways immediately next to creeks and streams.

Greenways shouldn’t be constructed immediately next to creeks and streams. Without a buffer, hot pavement transfers heat into the creeks and streams. This causes danger to animal and plant life in the water. We need to have an ordinance that establishes a minimum distance between a paved path and bodies of water.

e. Going forward, name a few changes Chapel Hill could make in its relation to GoTriangle and its regional partners.

I would like for us to coordinate and work with GoTriangle and its regional partners to get a fast, efficient, and electric bus that can provide the connectivity that is needed in Chapel Hill and the Triangle.

6. Coal Clean-Up and Energy Use

UNC has 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.

- a. How will you advocate for the careful monitoring and cleanup of the coal- ash deposit?

We need to insist on careful monitoring of this area to make sure that no harmful chemicals are being emitted. I would like to see the cleanup of this area because I worry about contamination into Bolin Creek and harm to people using the Bolin Creek Trail.

- b. In what way(s) will you advocate for the shutdown of UNC's coal-fired power plant on Cameron Avenue?

I think that the town needs to continue to discuss this with UNC. Duke stopped using coal in 2011. UNC can do the same. I would like to work with UNC to formulate a timeline for phasing out the coal-fired power plant. Chapel Hill should be a forward-thinking green town, and for me this includes the University.

- c. How can Chapel Hill move towards the use of clean energy in a manner that is both rapid and fiscally possible?

We need to push toward developers using renewable energy. Using things such as solar panels may be expensive initially, but it will pay off in the long run. Resale value will be higher, and operating costs will be much lower. There is no excuse for not doing all we can to protect the environment.

7. Ordinance Implementation

Chapel Hill has state and local ordinances to address water quality, stormwater management, impervious surface limits, stream buffers, steep slopes, and tree canopy. When the Chapel Hill Town Council approves these projects, such ordinances are meant to apply.

- a. Please comment on how effectively the Town administration and Council has implemented these rules.

I feel that these ordinances have not been applied strongly enough. Instead, canopy trees are being clear cut. Planting saplings doesn't make up for taking down a mature canopy tree. We need to find ways to get developers to go beyond what the state is requiring. The town staff did come up with options for developers when it comes to stormwater management in the Blue Hill area. The options encourage the

developers to take the more stringent option because they get something in return. I feel that we need to do more of that.

- b. What changes, if any, will you advocate for to increase the effectiveness of these ordinances.

The penalties must be severe enough such that developers would prefer to comply with the ordinances.

- c. What combination of carrots and sticks could Chapel Hill use to enforce its ordinances, for example, about the cutting of trees in buffers?

This may seem extreme, but if they illegally cut trees in the buffers, we can impose a large penalty and not use that developer again. We must enforce our development ordinances.