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Battlefield District

### Candidate Forum Questions

#### **1. Should proffers be the primary source for financing of new infrastructure?**

No, I do not believe that proffers should be the primary source for financing new infrastructure. If county leaders and citizens are satisfied with the current state of public infrastructure and levels of service within Spotsylvania County, then it only makes sense that proffers finance new infrastructure. Proffers mitigate the impacts of new development and growth. I am not satisfied by the current state of infrastructure and levels of service in the county, so other revenue sources must be used along with proffers. The Battlefield District was developed in accordance with the zoning regulations of the day, but by today's standards, it was done using dumb growth principles. It has become too hard and expensive to improve the infrastructure and refurbish the older neighborhoods in my district. It seems that land use decisions in every other part of the county impact the quality of life of citizens in the Battlefield District. For example, who would have believed that sewage from the Harrison Crossing Development would so adversely impact the district and Massaponex Creek? With so little land to rezone in the district, very few proffer funds will find their way to there. Other revenue sources must be tapped to improve the Battlefield District.

#### **2. Would you endorse the use of TIFs? CDAs? Special tax districts?**

Yes, I endorse the use of TIFs, CDAs,, and special tax districts. Infrastructure improvements benefit businesses and citizens. Finding and utilizing innovative financial programs to improve the county's infrastructure and levels of service while preserving its tax base and protecting tax rates for citizens is good government.

#### **3. Currently, BPOL tax is assessed on gross business receipts without regard to whether a company makes a profit. Does this tax hurt the business environment of your jurisdiction?**

No, I do not believe that the BPOL tax hurts the business environment in Spotsylvania County. Tax policy is just one aspect of the difficult county budgeting and financial process that provides services and infrastructure to our citizens and businesses. Taxes are the most visible and most painful part of the process since citizens and businesses must actually pay their hard earned money to the county. It is important that county leaders examine all revenue tools so that citizens and businesses fairly and appropriately contribute to the revenue requirements of the county. The Board of Supervisors must strive to bring more economic development to the county. This is the most effective way to increase local revenue with minimal impact on our citizens and businesses. Until Spotsylvania County has a better commercial to residential ratio, the tax burden must be appropriately set to generate the revenue to meet citizens' and businesses' expectations. The BPOL tax is part of the business community's contribution to meet county service

and infrastructure requirements. Revenue brought in by this tax has increased from \$4 million in 2005 to an anticipated \$5.2 million this year.

**4. Do you support the VRE (Which includes the 2 % gas tax under the current regulations)?**

Yes, Spotsylvania County should join VRE. The whole issue surrounding VRE has been framed incorrectly. The issue is not VRE, but how to address transportation issues in Spotsylvania County. There is a long laundry list of transportation issues that our county needs to address. These include: paving unpaved roads, fixing dangerous roads and intersections, improving roads impacted by by-right development, paying for road improvements voted on in the 2005 bond referendum, and showing the region that Spotsylvania County is interested in regional solutions. VRE is only one part of this picture, but it brings a funding mechanism that allows other pieces of the picture to come into focus. Utilizing the 2% gas tax provides funding that can address many of the transportation issues that impact all parts of the county. I support VRE and the 2% gas tax because it can help fund transportation projects throughout all of Spotsylvania County.

**5. Would you support VRE without the 2% gas tax?**

Yes, I support VRE without the 2% gas tax. I support the VRE as a commitment to the region that Spotsylvania County is committed to transportation solutions. Joining VRE without the gas tax will cost about one penny on the real estate tax and only provide a small impact on solving the transportation issues facing the county. I believe that joining VRE is worth the cost.

**6. Do you support set asides for affordable and workforce housing in new developments?**

Yes, I support set asides for affordable/workforce housing in new developments. Affordable housing has become one of the key issues in our society. Ensuring that our county workers - teachers, policemen, and county staff - can live in Spotsylvania County is important. Ensuring there is a wide range of housing options, to include home ownership and rental property options, is key to smart growth development in Spotsylvania County. One way to ensure that there are options available in every development is to have set asides in every new development. There are still issues to work out on how to define and implement an affordable/workforce housing program, but set asides are a good idea to explore.

**7. Do you support the reduction or elimination of proffers for affordable/workforce housing?**

No, I do not support the reduction or elimination of proffers for affordable/workforce housing. Ensuring there is a wide range of housing options, to include home ownership and rental property options, is key to smart growth development in Spotsylvania County.

However, it is also important that development pay for the public infrastructure that it impacts. I believe that there are other ways in development planning that can be used to achieve a spread of housing options for our citizens other than reducing or eliminating proffers.

**8. Do you support density bonuses for affordable/workforce housing?**

Yes, I support density bonuses for affordable/workforce housing. Density bonuses are an increase in the number of market rate units on a site in order to provide an incentive for the construction of affordable housing. A diverse county like Spotsylvania needs to pursue unique ideas to ensure a wide range of housing options are available. Density bonuses are one of those ideas that need to be explored.

**9. If a proposed mixed-use development contains 10% workforce housing and commercial development, is that acceptable?**

No, I do not support this concept. Each new development from a rezoning is unique. What will convince the Board of Supervisors that the rezoning is good for Spotsylvania County and its citizens is also unique. Proffers, workforce housing, and commercial development are all important considerations that will determine whether a development is good for the county, but each rezoning must be examined on an individual basis.

**10. Would you support downzoning outside of the primary settlement areas (PSA)?**

Yes, I support downzoning outside of the PSA. Even if the Board of Supervisors did not approve another rezoning, by right development would still cause huge problems for the county. Not only would the county fall victim to sprawl, but it would also be unable to improve infrastructure and levels of service through out the county. The county would also be unable to protect open space and environmentally sensitive and historic areas. Downzoning is a painful process, but it can only be accomplished with a vision for the future that is supported and maintained by multiple Boards of Supervisors, and articulated to and accepted by the citizens of the county.

**11. Would you compensate property owners for any downzoning?**

No, I would not support compensating property owners for any downzoning. I would support re-visiting real estate tax assessments based on the new downzoned property since the value of the land may have been diminished. Finding unique ways to plan and control growth is imperative. Finding ways to protect Spotsylvania County's open space and rural heritage is also important. Property owners and county leaders must find ways to do both in a way that is fair and equitable.

**12. Would you support a regional comprehensive plan?**

Yes, I support a regional comprehensive plan. Spotsylvania has particular issues and problems that demand local government action. This inward focus makes regional

cooperation and consensus with neighboring localities difficult. Still, the Board of Supervisors needs to develop strategic plans that identify areas where regional cooperation can benefit our citizens and businesses. In the military, the boundaries where two units meet is always the weak link that can be exploited. In our local planning, it is the boundaries between localities that can cause conflict due to divergent planning ideas. Spotsylvania has boundaries with Stafford, Culpeper, Orange, Louisa, Hanover, and Caroline Counties, and the City of Fredericksburg. Ensuring our comprehensive plan is in harmony with other localities' comprehensive plans will only benefit our citizens and businesses. A regional comprehensive plan is a good idea.

**13. Would you increase the urban service area if the criterion is for build out at 80%? 70%? 60%?**

No, I do not support an increase in an urban service area for a reduction in the build out. The Board of Supervisors need to have a vision for how the county should grow. One hundred percent build out in designated growth areas is desired. This does not mean that these areas should not be expanded sometime in the future, but boundaries are designated to protect open space and rural heritage areas. I believe that increasing urban areas and then not demanding one hundred percent build out as planned only leads to sprawl.

**14. Would you support upzoning in the primary settlement area (PSA)?**

Yes, I support upzoning in the PSA. Upzoning is a way to redevelop areas that are already developed. It is a way to fix infrastructure and levels of service in areas that have difficulty being rezoned. Although there is a potential for conflict, as long as the rezoning enhances the character of the community, having an upzoning capability should be considered.

**15. Would you support the use of eminent domain in the case of private property taken for public use (such as schools, roads, utilities, etc)?**

Yes, I do support the use of eminent domain to transfer property for public use. Although I would like to avoid using this type of transfer, there will be times when the needs of the county and its citizens will take priority over the needs of the private property owner. The private property owner will be compensated, although the exchange will not be voluntary. This type of transfer should be rare, but in a county rapidly transforming from a rural community to a suburban one, there will be disagreements on public requirements and how to acquire the property to meet the public good. Eminent domain is an important tool in local government's tool box, but hopefully it only needs to be used on rare occasions.

**16. Would you support the use of eminent domain to transfer private property to another private property holder (such as Kelo vs. City of New London, Connecticut)?**

No, I do not support the use of eminent domain to transfer private property to another private property owner. Although the courts have authorized this type of transfer, local government should avoid using this type of property transfer. Local government needs to have a vision of how the county should be developed and an idea of the steps it needs to take to achieve that vision. It needs to articulate this vision to private property owners, businesses, and citizens so there is an incentive to achieve this vision. Private property rights are essential to achieving a prosperous economic future for the county and its citizens. Respect for private property ownership and the proper transfer of property is a core value that must be maintained.