

**Children First/Communities In Schools
of Buncombe County
PRESENTS:**



OTE

2011 ASHVILLE CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE SURVEY RESPONSES & VOTER GUIDE

Mark Cates Pages 6-7

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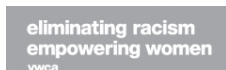
Marc Hunt Pages 14-15

Tim Peck Pages 16-17

Chris Pelly Pages 18-19

TJ Thomasson Did Not Respond

Thank you to our Co-Sponsors:



DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!!

One Stop:

Primary Election One Stop/Early Voting: Thursday, September 22 – Saturday, October 8 at Election Services (35 Woodfin St) Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm. Sat, 8am-1pm.

General Election One Stop/Early Voting: Thursday, October 20 – Saturday, November 5 at Election Services (35 Woodfin St) Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm. Sat, 8am-1pm. Other early voting locations are available, call 250-4200 for information.

For information on early voting, voter registration, and absentee ballots call Buncombe County Election Services 828-250-4200 or visit buncombecounty.org/common/election/VotingGuide.pdf

Primary Election: Tuesday, October 11, 2011

General Election: Tuesday, November 8, 2011

About This Publication:

Children First/Communities In Schools believes this nonpartisan publication offers an opportunity to raise important issues during the campaign season, educate voters, and build relationships between candidates, voters, and organizations that reinforce civic engagement. We hope you find it useful as you seek to make an informed decision in this year's election.

Children First/Communities In Schools sent survey questions to all candidates that registered to run for the public offices listed on the cover. Candidates were given a 130 word per question limit. No edits for grammar or spelling have been made to the responses.

We thank all the candidates that took time to respond to our survey questions. Candidates receive many surveys during election season and must balance their personal, professional, and political lives amid many competing demands. We especially thank our co-sponsors for supporting this effort.

As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, Children First/Communities In Schools cannot endorse, or oppose, any political candidate or party. This survey and publication is conducted in compliance with our interpretation of applicable laws and regulations related to nonprofits and electoral activity.

Asheville City Council has the authority to:

- Determine policy in the fields of planning, traffic, law and order, public works, finance, and recreation
- Appoint and remove the city manager
- Adopt the budget, levy taxes, collect revenues, and make appropriations
- Appoint and remove the city attorney and city clerk
- Authorize the issuance of bonds by a bond ordinance
- Establish administrative departments, offices and agencies
- Appoint members of the city boards, commissions and committees
- Inquire into the conduct of any office, department, or agency of the city and make investigations into municipal affairs
- Provide for an independent audit
- Provide for the number, titles, qualifications, powers, duties, and compensation of all officers and employees of the city.

A Primary Election Primer

The Asheville City Council Primary will be held on October 11, 2011 (*early voting begins September 22*). There are currently three city council seats open. Since more than six candidates are running for these council seats, a primary election is required. Voters will vote for 3 of the 9 candidates (Bill Russell will still be listed on the ballot even though he has withdrawn from the race. Votes for him will not be certified.) The top 6 candidates receiving the most votes will run for election to the Asheville City Council in the general election on November 8, 2011. The primary election is nonpartisan, meaning that candidates are not identified by party affiliation. Any registered voter living in the City of Asheville can vote. For voter registration and election information visit: <http://buncombecounty.org/Governing/Depts/Election/Default.aspx> or call Election Services at 828.250.4200

GET TO KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT THE CANDIDATES



Mark Cates

- 1. If voters have questions, they can reach me at:**
Mark@MarkCates.com or 828-301-8237
- 2. Campaign website/Facebook page:** www.markcates.com
Twitter: @CarolinaCates **Facebook:** Mark Cates for Asheville City Council
- 3. Current or most recent employment:** Self-employed



Saul Chase

- 1. If voters have questions, they can reach me at:**
saul@electsaulchase.com or 225-2902
- 2. Campaign website/Facebook page:** www.electsaulchase.com
- 3. Current or most recent employment:** SAT Tutor



Jan Davis

- 1. If voters have questions, they can reach me at:** 828-253-5634
business, 828-777-5635 Cell email jandavis@main.nc.us
- 2. Campaign website/Facebook page:** www.jandavisforcouncil.com
Facebook jandts@bellsouth.net
- 3. Current or most recent employment:** Owner, Jan Davis Tire Store;
Councilmember, City of Asheville



Lael Gray

- 1. If voters have questions, they can reach me at:**
lael@laelgrayforcitycouncil.com
- 2. Campaign website/Facebook page:** www.laelgrayforcitycouncil.com
- 3. Current or most recent employment:** Program Development &
Marketing Director for the Asheville Jewish Community Center.

GET TO KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT THE CANDIDATES



Marc Hunt

- 1. If voters have questions, they can reach me at:**
mhuntcampaign@gmail.com
- 2. Campaign website/Facebook page:** www.huntforcouncil.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/huntforcouncil **Twitter:** hunt_marc
- 3. Current or most recent employment:** program officer at Open Space Institute



Tim Peck

- 1. If voters have questions, they can reach me at:**
timothyrpeck@gmail.com, 828.335.1059
- 2. Campaign website/Facebook page:** timpeckforcitycouncil.com, https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=559282404, @timothypeck
- 3. Current or most recent employment:**



Chris Pelly

- 1. If voters have questions, they can reach me at:** 828.231.3704 /
chrispelly4asheville@gmail.com
- 2. Campaign website/Facebook page:** http://chrispellyforcitycouncil.com/
http://www.facebook.com/pages/Chris-Pelly-for-Asheville-City-Council-Neighborhoods-United/147586718645150
- 3. Current or most recent employment:** Real Estate Broker / 15 years /
Keller Williams

Bill Russell withdrew his candidacy for Asheville City Council

TJ Thomasson did not respond to the candidate questions

Asheville City Council- Mark Cates

Candidates listed alphabetically

Q1. What are your top three policy priorities for your term, if elected?

The most important thing I can do is work with my colleagues on the city council in a bipartisan fashion to get people back to work. Today we have more than 17,000 people in our area out of work. Asheville is the seventh worst place in the country for food hardship and nearly 20 percent of our population lives in poverty. These issues affect children the most; I hope that every candidate is aware of this.

Therefore my top two priorities are economic development and quality jobs. Further, our water infrastructure has now become a child development issue due to water main failures near schools. The Asheville City Council should leave no stone unturned in finding a way to ensure that our children can drink water—especially at school.

Q2. An estimated 28% of students in Asheville City Schools live in poverty (family income below about \$22,000 for a family of four). Research has linked child poverty with larger societal costs including academic underachievement, higher dropout rates, higher rates of teen pregnancy, higher costs of crime, lower economic productivity, and poorer overall health outcomes – including higher death rates from chronic and infectious disease. What role, if any, does city council play to address issues related to child poverty?

The Asheville City Council has many direct and indirect ties to addressing issues related to child poverty. As I mentioned in my policy outline, the city council can address hunger and water issues, as well as economic issues, that all make a massive impact upon children. The Asheville City Council should be taking the lead governmental role in addressing hunger by working intimately with Manna Food Bank, as well as bringing more awareness overall to the issue. By taking this leadership role, we can be sure we're doing all we can to protect our children and future generations.

Q3. The city transit system will soon unveil new route changes and service hours. What is your assessment of the proposed changes and are there other changes that you support to improve public transportation and access to shopping, workplaces, and services for those not using a car?

The most important aspect of any redesign is to ensure that those most in need are serviced to the best of our ability. Only should we expand our system to support any other goal. The changes to the system should focus on getting people to jobs, food and health care.

Q4. The City currently staffs and manages the Asheville-Buncombe County Homelessness Initiative that developed the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. What is your assessment of this initiative? What actions, if any, should council take to address homelessness, especially for women and children?

Better jobs for women.

Every Asheville citizen should be proud of the 75% reduction in regional homelessness since the unveiling of 2005's Looking Homeward: the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Asheville & Buncombe County. To continue shrinking that number, though, I and other members of council must press toward a multi-pronged approach. We must improve the overall economy of Asheville and our region, set our citizens on the path to quality jobs, continue to partner with and bring attention to our many wonderful not-for-profit and charity organizations and provide personal leadership on these issues.

Asheville City Council- Mark Cates

Candidates listed alphabetically

Q5. In 2007 council approved paying all year-round city staff positions a living wage. This spring council approved a policy to ensuring that city contract workers will be paid a living wage (currently defined at \$11.35/hr or \$9.85/hr with health insurance). The ordinance covers general service contracts between \$30,000-\$90,000 and council will evaluate the impact and make a decision whether to extend the program to all contracts next year. Should the City ensure that all City employees and contractor workers make a living wage? Why or why not?

The first issue to bring up is why the City Council capped contracts at \$90,000. Unfortunately, this has not been clearly defined to the citizens and people wonder if there were sweetheart contracts above \$90,000 that were exempted. Either way, the City of Asheville has the authority to determine which private firms they wish to do business with, and I support working with contractors who put their employees first and make sure all employees are fairly compensated while not having to live in poverty. But let's be clear: the City of Asheville does not have the authority to set wages in the private sector.

Q6. More than double the percentage of White students pass both the reading and math end of grade tests compared to Black students in Asheville City Schools (91% White, 44% Black). Large achievement gaps also persist between White and Hispanic students and between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students. City Council appoints the board of education for Asheville City Schools – making council the link between voters and the school board. How can the City best support the school district's efforts to close the achievement gap?

The first line of defense in child development is parents, but the government is rightly prohibited from controlling the relationship between a child and a parent. Ultimately, the issue becomes one of culture and resources. In terms of culture, the City of Asheville should be fostering a culture of positive parenting, and should work directly with the school district to bring that about. In terms of resources, studies have shown that economic hardship is a main cause of the achievement gap. Therefore there is only one answer: the Asheville City Council must adopt a new economic vision for our area that supports the creation of more quality jobs... for all citizens.

Q7. The City's Community Development Division administers and manages programs that impact affordable housing in Asheville and Buncombe County. Describe your vision for increasing affordable housing options in Asheville and what role does the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville play?

Affordable housing is a major issue in Asheville, and the city council has the ability to directly influence this issue by focusing its efforts at creating a better economy. Further, there has been a push for building affordable housing options in our area. While I'm not directly opposed to that, I am opposed to sprawl. There is currently a large stock of foreclosures in the area that would be cheaper to refit than it would be to build new units. This would also be more environmentally friendly. Let's work with the property owners to make this a reality.

Q8. According to the USDA: "Food security for a household means that all household members have access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life." In Western NC, 1 in 6 people sought help from a food pantry, soup kitchen, or shelter in 2009 – indicating a high rate of food insecurity. What role, if any, can City Council play to increase household "food security"?

Food security issues affect everyone, but it makes its greatest impact upon women and children. The fact that we rank in the top ten worst places in America for hunger is absolutely unacceptable, and the Asheville City Council should be working overtime to bring greater attention to the issue in order to educate our citizens, work closer with the multitude of organizations in the area to provide civic leadership and resources to distribute food, work with other municipalities and government entities to address the issue, and make it a priority that each member of the Asheville City Council become directly involved in reducing food insecurity in our area.

Asheville City Council- Saul Chase

Candidates listed alphabetically

Q1. What are your top three policy priorities for your term, if elected?

Improve the quality of the streets in Asheville, including fixing deteriorating roads, cleaning drains and gutters, installing LED streetlights and improving the quality of snow removal and leaf pickup.

Make Asheville a more walkable city by repairing broken sidewalks, removing plants encroaching on sidewalks and building new sidewalks, especially along key transit corridors like Hendersonville Road, New Haw Creek Road, Lakeshore Drive and Leicester Highway.

Protect the quality of Asheville's water and invest in needed repairs to its water pipes by utilizing an impact fee which generates revenue for capital improvements without raising water rates.

Q2. An estimated 28% of students in Asheville City Schools live in poverty (family income below about \$22,000 for a family of four). Research has linked child poverty with larger societal costs including academic underachievement, higher dropout rates, higher rates of teen pregnancy, higher costs of crime, lower economic productivity, and poorer overall health outcomes – including higher death rates from chronic and infectious disease. What role, if any, does city council play to address issues related to child poverty?

Asheville has an excellent Recreation Department. Monies invested in fun activities for children, especially in low income communities, are a good investment. The City of Asheville can help protect our children's health by offering them safe sidewalks to walk on and parks to play in. Information about improving poor children's diets appears in my answer to Question #8.

For four years, I served as Tutoring Coordinator for Crossnore Academy, a charter school for children from families in crisis in western North Carolina. I saw the power of one-on-one tutorials in helping these students. I would work to promote offering these services to children growing up in poverty.

Q3. The city transit system will soon unveil new route changes and service hours. What is your assessment of the proposed changes and are there other changes that you support to improve public transportation and access to shopping, workplaces, and services for those not using a car?

I am not familiar with the specific changes to the bus system mentioned in the question. I have reviewed the City of Asheville's Transit Master Plan and have the following comments:

I strongly support the plan's call for adequate sidewalks. The plan's goal for more express routes during rush hours will encourage commuters to make the switch to buses. The goal of service until 10:00 p.m. will also make bus service more generally attractive.

Given the increasing frequency of inclement weather, the plan for more bus shelters is critical to increasing bus ridership. I was disappointed that the bus shelter on Charlotte Street near Chestnut Street was removed because Fuddrucker's complained it blocked visibility of their signs. If elected, I'll work to get that bus shelter back.

Q4. The City currently staffs and manages the Asheville-Buncombe County Homelessness Initiative that developed the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. What is your assessment of this initiative? What actions, if any, should council take to address homelessness, especially for women and children?

I am not familiar with the Asheville-Buncombe County Homelessness Initiative. The city of Asheville should certainly do what it can to help homeless women and children.

Elected or not, I'd be happy to help the Buncombe County Homelessness Initiative set up day tutorial programs staffed by volunteers if that sort of service could be of help. There is no more effective way to teach than one-on-one tutoring.

Asheville City Council- Saul Chase

Candidates listed alphabetically

Q5. In 2007 council approved paying all year-round city staff positions a living wage. This spring council approved a policy to ensuring that city contract workers will be paid a living wage (currently defined at \$11.35/hr or \$9.85/hr with health insurance). The ordinance covers general service contracts between \$30,000-\$90,000 and council will evaluate the impact and make a decision whether to extend the program to all contracts next year. Should the City ensure that all City employees and contractor workers make a living wage? Why or why not?

I support a living wage for city employees and for workers employed by contractors. Our economy seems to concentrate wealth at the top. A living wage spreads the wealth more equitably, and gets money to people who are more likely to put that money back into economic circulation, so it's also a great way to stimulate Asheville's economy.

Q6. More than double the percentage of White students pass both the reading and math end of grade tests compared to Black students in Asheville City Schools (91% White, 44% Black). Large achievement gaps also persist between White and Hispanic students and between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students. City Council appoints the board of education for Asheville City Schools – making council the link between voters and the school board. How can the City best support the school district's efforts to close the achievement gap?

As a special education teacher, special education director, and also tutoring coordinator for children from families in crisis at Crossnore Academy, it's been my job to help disadvantaged students improve their test scores.

At Crossnore, high school students served as tutors for younger children and did an excellent job. I'm sure there are lots of capable Asheville High School students who would want to help out by tutoring elementary students.

But closing the achievement gap should be about more than raising test scores. It should be about providing all children in the Asheville City Schools with a comprehensive education including science, history, geography and the arts. I will support School Board candidates who appreciate the importance of a comprehensive and stimulating educational environment for the children attending Asheville City Schools.

Q7. The City's Community Development Division administers and manages programs that impact affordable housing in Asheville and Buncombe County. Describe your vision for increasing affordable housing options in Asheville and what role does the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville play?

Affordable housing is not an area that I know a lot about. As the campaign proceeds, I hope to gain a greater understanding of the role that the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville plays in improving housing for the disadvantaged in Asheville.

Q8. According to the USDA: "Food security for a household means that all household members have access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life." In Western NC, 1 in 6 people sought help from a food pantry, soup kitchen, or shelter in 2009 – indicating a high rate of food insecurity. What role, if any, can City Council play to increase household "food security"?

Teachers in Asheville City Schools should receive training so they recognize students who show signs of malnutrition. Nutrition for children is one area where we want no Asheville child left behind.

The city should promote urban farming. Asheville's a great place for plants to grow (just look at our gutters). Let's promote local farming and develop ways to distribute the large quantities of healthful vegetables and fruits that are available in season to people who don't have the means to purchase them. These people may be able to help out at the farms so they would be literally enjoying the fruits of their labor.

The more food we grow locally and distribute efficiently, the more "food security" we have.

Asheville City Council- Jan Davis

Candidates listed alphabetically

Q1. What are your top three policy priorities for your term, if elected?

- 1) Continue my work on the Asheville Area Riverfront Redevelopment Commission
 - 2) Lead the effort to complete refurbishment of the Asheville Civic Center
 - 3) Create more affordable housing
-

Q2. An estimated 28% of students in Asheville City Schools live in poverty (family income below about \$22,000 for a family of four). Research has linked child poverty with larger societal costs including academic underachievement, higher dropout rates, higher rates of teen pregnancy, higher costs of crime, lower economic productivity, and poorer overall health outcomes – including higher death rates from chronic and infectious disease. What role, if any, does city council play to address issues related to child poverty?

As a member of Council's Housing and Community Development Committee, I have helped with allocation of Federal funding and outside agency funding of non-profits working to address many of those issues. Having had that experience better equips me to make decisions that are very challenging in this difficult economy. Block grant, outside agency funding, land use ordinances and Housing Trust Fund management are all tools to address those issues. However, our best tool is economic development; job creation removes people from poverty.

Q3. The city transit system will soon unveil new route changes and service hours. What is your assessment of the proposed changes and are there other changes that you support to improve public transportation and access to shopping, workplaces, and services for those not using a car?

I have a long record of supporting public transportation. We are just now embarking on implementation of the Transit Master Plan. Because of funding challenges, it will be implemented incrementally. We need to give the Plan support through time, funding and re-evaluation.

Q4. The City currently staffs and manages the Asheville-Buncombe County Homelessness Initiative that developed the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. What is your assessment of this initiative? What actions, if any, should council take to address homelessness, especially for women and children?

As one of the three member Housing Community Development Committee we have the opportunity to recommend to Council on issues like the 10-Year Plan. I have been supportive of it and have seen first-hand results. We, in fact, recently recommended and saw Council put in place the new Homeless Advisory Board. Creating more affordable housing, funding outside agencies like Mountain Housing Opportunities and Homeward Bound, our Housing Trust Fund and staff support are direct ways of addressing the 10-Year Plan

Q5. In 2007 council approved paying all year-round city staff positions a living wage. This spring council approved a policy to ensuring that city contract workers will be paid a living wage (currently defined at \$11.35/hr or \$9.85/hr with health insurance). The ordinance covers general service contracts between \$30,000-\$90,000 and council will evaluate the impact and make a decision whether to extend the program to all contracts next year. Should the City ensure that all City employees and contractor workers make a living wage? Why or why not?

I supported City workers being paid a living wage, in fact, they were prior to the 2007 formal action. I did not support the contract initiative because it is contrary to good business practices. It requires forced tax dollars to supplement contractors not willing to pay a living wage. As a small business owner, I do not find that an acceptable model. I have for many years exceeded living wage standards for my own employees.

Asheville City Council- Jan Davis

Candidates listed alphabetically

Q6. More than double the percentage of White students pass both the reading and math end of grade tests compared to Black students in Asheville City Schools (91% White, 44% Black). Large achievement gaps also persist between White and Hispanic students and between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students. City Council appoints the board of education for Asheville City Schools – making council the link between voters and the school board. How can the City best support the school district’s efforts to close the achievement gap?

Closer contact with those School Board appointments is necessary. Understanding the facts underlying the gap is most important.

Q7. The City’s Community Development Division administers and manages programs that impact affordable housing in Asheville and Buncombe County. Describe your vision for increasing affordable housing options in Asheville and what role does the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville play?

One of my goals for the coming term is to aggressively approach development of the riverfront. I see a great opportunity to partner with a developer to utilize land in the area for mixed use development centered around mixed income residential use with a large number of affordable units, like the Glenrock model, only larger with jobs nearby. The Housing Authority is a great partner with the City. A Hope 6 look-alike project is a goal for them and the City.

Q8. According to the USDA: “Food security for a household means that all household members have access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.” In Western NC, 1 in 6 people sought help from a food pantry, soup kitchen, or shelter in 2009 – indicating a high rate of food insecurity. What role, if any, can City Council play to increase household “food security”?

Food Security is a relatively recent initiative Councilman Smith is forwarding. I am most interested in learning and supporting what Council can do. I have been a long time supporter, personally, of MANNA, ABCCM and Eblen

Asheville City Council- Lael Gray

Candidates listed alphabetically

Q1. What are your top three policy priorities for your term, if elected?

- additional steps toward environmental protection through improved alternative transportation infrastructure (i.e., public transit, bike, pedestrian) as well as energy efficiency, recycling, and water conservation;
 - increased engagement between City Council and Asheville City School board; development of community partnerships to ensure that all children in our city are receiving equal and excellent educational opportunities as well as sufficient resources to ensure that they are prepared for school;
 - creation of a more inclusive atmosphere where all are protected from bigotry and discrimination and feel welcome to participate in all aspects of community life.
-

Q2. An estimated 28% of students in Asheville City Schools live in poverty (family income below about \$22,000 for a family of four). Research has linked child poverty with larger societal costs including academic underachievement, higher dropout rates, higher rates of teen pregnancy, higher costs of crime, lower economic productivity, and poorer overall health outcomes – including higher death rates from chronic and infectious disease. What role, if any, does city council play to address issues related to child poverty?

City Council should be an active partner in bringing awareness to the issue of child poverty and advocating for additional programs and services at the county and state level to meet the needs of our community's children. At the same time, City Council must continue to work on local job creation and fostering a higher wage structure in Asheville through economic development initiatives and partnerships with the local business community, the Chamber of Commerce, and AB-Tech.

Q3. The city transit system will soon unveil new route changes and service hours. What is your assessment of the proposed changes and are there other changes that you support to improve public transportation and access to shopping, workplaces, and services for those not using a car?

I believe that we are doing the best we can with what we have to work with right now. However, I am concerned that mere changes to routes and service hours will not be sufficient to address the needs of those who rely on public transit. I would like to see a greatly expanded public transit infrastructure, including rail transportation into and out of Asheville. We have a moral and physical imperative to provide all of our residents with access to car-free transportation, and as our population ages, this need will only become greater. I envision an Asheville where people don't need a car. I would like to work with the NCDOT and the local Metropolitan Planning Organization to shift dollars from automobile-centric transportation into more sustainable options.

Q4. The City currently staffs and manages the Asheville-Buncombe County Homelessness Initiative that developed the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. What is your assessment of this initiative? What actions, if any, should council take to address homelessness, especially for women and children?

I think the Asheville-Buncombe County Homelessness Initiative is a good example of how private/public partnerships can be established to meet the needs of our residents, and I would like to see this type of model used to address child poverty and the achievement gap. I am particularly impressed with the public education and outreach that I've seen from various agencies involved with this initiative, and I get a sense that we are doing a pretty good job of identify those in our community experiencing chronic, long-term homelessness. It feels to me that by identifying these individuals, we are bringing them into focus as members of our community with a newfound voice. All of these efforts will hopefully lead to some lessening of fear and stigma around the homeless population.

Asheville City Council- Lael Gray

Candidates listed alphabetically

Q5. In 2007 council approved paying all year-round city staff positions a living wage. This spring council approved a policy to ensuring that city contract workers will be paid a living wage (currently defined at \$11.35/hr or \$9.85/hr with health insurance). The ordinance covers general service contracts between \$30,000-\$90,000 and council will evaluate the impact and make a decision whether to extend the program to all contracts next year. Should the City ensure that all City employees and contractor workers make a living wage? Why or why not?

It is vitally important that City Council take whatever steps are within its power to improve wages in Asheville. Ensuring that City employees and contract workers make a living wage is a step in the right direction.

Q6. More than double the percentage of White students pass both the reading and math end of grade tests compared to Black students in Asheville City Schools (91% White, 44% Black). Large achievement gaps also persist between White and Hispanic students and between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students. City Council appoints the board of education for Asheville City Schools – making council the link between voters and the school board. How can the City best support the school district’s efforts to close the achievement gap?

I would like to see City Council take a more active role in partnering with the ACS board in advocating for measures that will address the achievement gap. Through my work with Building Bridges of Asheville, I have gained a deeper understanding of the reasons behind this disparity in our schools. I believe that we must broaden our teachers’ and school administrators’ understanding of the circumstances of our minority populations. I am also very interested in looking at successful models in other cities, such as the Harlem Children’s Zone, that address the needs of families from birth through high-school. We cannot afford to wait until our children are already falling behind in school. We must have supports in place for our children from the moment they are born.

Q7. The City’s Community Development Division administers and manages programs that impact affordable housing in Asheville and Buncombe County. Describe your vision for increasing affordable housing options in Asheville and what role does the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville play?

I am very supportive of the city’s Affordable Housing Plan, and I will work to ensure that this remains a priority. I think the Housing Authority plays a very important role in meeting the housing needs of our community, and I am supportive of improvements that are planned in Housing Authority communities. I would like to explore the possibility of finding funds to establish a Community Development Corporation model that could help to revitalize neighborhoods, increase affordable housing units, and create long-term employment in those neighborhoods.

Q8. According to the USDA: “Food security for a household means that all household members have access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.” In Western NC, 1 in 6 people sought help from a food pantry, soup kitchen, or shelter in 2009 – indicating a high rate of food insecurity. What role, if any, can City Council play to increase household “food security”?

City Council members should participate in the newly proposed Food Security Council that is currently forming in Asheville. This group seeks to bring together agencies that are working to end food insecurity in Asheville to have a more focused and targeted response to the problem. I think City Council can take a leading role in advocating on this issue as well as providing resources and information for those seeking food assistance. City Council should also work to encourage establishment of markets that bring healthy food options into areas that are currently considered food deserts in our community.

Asheville City Council- Marc Hunt

Candidates listed alphabetically

Q1. What are your top three policy priorities for your term, if elected?

- Social and Economic Justice – To ensure that we improve affordability in housing by fully funding the affordable housing trust fund, by providing development incentives for affordability, and through stronger partnership with AHA; to improve our public education system through better oversight and emphasis by Council; to promote living wage jobs as a community norm; and through leveraging our desirability as a place to live into economic growth and better-wage jobs.
 - Well-Planned Growth – To ensure that we enhance livability and community integrity while absorbing growth by refining our planning ordinance and providing development incentives.
 - Environment – To ensure better energy conservation with loans/incentives for residential weatherization, advance water quality protection by continuing to improve our stormwater ordinance, expand open space protection through the greenways and parks programs, and by continuing to develop *[exceeded the word limit]*
-

Q2. An estimated 28% of students in Asheville City Schools live in poverty (family income below about \$22,000 for a family of four). Research has linked child poverty with larger societal costs including academic underachievement, higher dropout rates, higher rates of teen pregnancy, higher costs of crime, lower economic productivity, and poorer overall health outcomes – including higher death rates from chronic and infectious disease. What role, if any, does city council play to address issues related to child poverty?

City Council should:

- Continue to emphasize affordability in housing, as suggested above. For a family, stability and safety of housing are essential to economic headway.
 - Continue to improve transit and other transportation alternatives in order to reduce the cost of transportation and assure the needs of people to move efficiently from home to job and services.
 - Extend its commitment to the Homelessness Initiative in order to assure stability for families that might be temporarily without housing, and to add new emphasis in the area of food security in order to promote availability and selection of healthy food.
 - Reinforce its effort in economic development so as to provide more well-paying jobs.
-

Q3. The city transit system will soon unveil new route changes and service hours. What is your assessment of the proposed changes and are there other changes that you support to improve public transportation and access to shopping, workplaces, and services for those not using a car?

I think the changes to the transit master plan are very well-focused and I appreciate the solid work of Council, staff and the transit commission on this front. It is critical that we increase ridership on the new 30-minute interval routes and ensure that elective use of the transit system will become a good alternative to automobile use. I'd be willing to consider expanding the marketing budget to pursue that. I also think Council must insist on much better on-time performance.

Q4. The City currently staffs and manages the Asheville-Buncombe County Homelessness Initiative that developed the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. What is your assessment of this initiative? What actions, if any, should council take to address homelessness, especially for women and children?

The initiative smartly focuses on strong partnerships and efficient use of existing resources. We have made impressive progress under the plan, especially in the reduction of chronic homelessness (by about 70% since the plan was adopted). City staff for the program seem to be performing very well, having earned national honors for their work. This success is an indication of how we can smartly succeed on other fronts. City Council should extend its commitment to the program.

Asheville City Council- Marc Hunt

Candidates listed alphabetically

Q5. In 2007 council approved paying all year-round city staff positions a living wage. This spring council approved a policy to ensuring that city contract workers will be paid a living wage (currently defined at \$11.35/hr or \$9.85/hr with health insurance). The ordinance covers general service contracts between \$30,000-\$90,000 and council will evaluate the impact and make a decision whether to extend the program to all contracts next year. Should the City ensure that all City employees and contractor workers make a living wage? Why or why not?

I am supportive of the living wage policy we have adopted because city government must provide leadership on this front. I am interested in expanding the policy to all contracts and would likely support such a move. I respect the need to implement a policy like this incrementally so as to ensure fairest and most effective outcomes.

Q6. More than double the percentage of White students pass both the reading and math end of grade tests compared to Black students in Asheville City Schools (91% White, 44% Black). Large achievement gaps also persist between White and Hispanic students and between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students. City Council appoints the board of education for Asheville City Schools – making council the link between voters and the school board. How can the City best support the school district’s efforts to close the achievement gap?

- We must ensure the best possible appointments to the Asheville School Board. Council recently improved its methods for selecting members of the Planning and Zoning Commission, and it should continue to strengthen those methods for use in School Board appointments, including measures to encourage more applications from strong applicants.
 - Council should firmly support quality programs that provide development for pre-school aged children and after-school programs like the IRL program, which has made excellent progress in its initial phase.
 - As a member of Council, I would be a bold advocate for strong public schools and encourage a broader and deeper level of public support for our system.
 - Council should especially ensure that school system funding from local taxpayer sources is being spent efficiently and in ways that positively reduce the achievement *[exceeded the word limit]*
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Q7. The City’s Community Development Division administers and manages programs that impact affordable housing in Asheville and Buncombe County. Describe your vision for increasing affordable housing options in Asheville and what role does the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville play?

- Fully fund the affordable housing trust fund annually with at least \$600,000
 - Continue to develop incentives for developers to include affordable units with measures like the recently-adopted affordable/sustainable density bonus.
 - Ensure a strong partnership with AHA especially in the area of pursuit and administration of federal resources like CDBG and HOME funds. Coordinating the Homelessness Initiative with AHA is a great example, and we should build on that.
-

Q8. According to the USDA: “Food security for a household means that all household members have access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.” In Western NC, 1 in 6 people sought help from a food pantry, soup kitchen, or shelter in 2009 – indicating a high rate of food insecurity. What role, if any, can City Council play to increase household “food security”?

- The City should lead in building strong partnerships with local nonprofits and county, state, and federal governments to ensure that we are gathering and focusing resources efficiently and leveraging efforts in a coordinated way. To this end, I support City leadership in the suggested creation of a community Food Policy Council.
- Our development pattern that emphasizes “big-box” retailers in single-use districts combined with weak transportation options makes it so that many people are remote from healthy and affordable food resources. Emphasizing mixed-uses in our development pattern and better transportation options will help ensure improved food accessibility.
- The City can continue to promote the “local food” movement through support for farmers markets.

Asheville City Council- Tim Peck

Candidates listed alphabetically

Q1. What are your top three policy priorities for your term, if elected?

1) To maintain consistent and vigorous control of over-regulation; 2) to reduce the size and scope of local government to its essentials; and 3) to encourage city government to move toward the use of private industry in providing services, leading to better services, greater responsiveness and lower costs.

Q2. An estimated 28% of students in Asheville City Schools live in poverty (family income below about \$22,000 for a family of four). Research has linked child poverty with larger societal costs including academic underachievement, higher dropout rates, higher rates of teen pregnancy, higher costs of crime, lower economic productivity, and poorer overall health outcomes – including higher death rates from chronic and infectious disease. What role, if any, does city council play to address issues related to child poverty?

City council should play no role in addressing issues related to child poverty.

Q3. The city transit system will soon unveil new route changes and service hours. What is your assessment of the proposed changes and are there other changes that you support to improve public transportation and access to shopping, workplaces, and services for those not using a car?

Transit services should be based on actual demonstrated need and should not be used as an urban planning tool based on the preferences of central planners. To make public transportation more effective, we need sell our fleet of busses, outsource transit services to a private company and eliminate taxicab licenses and fare mandates.

Q4. The City currently staffs and manages the Asheville-Buncombe County Homelessness Initiative that developed the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. What is your assessment of this initiative? What actions, if any, should council take to address homelessness, especially for women and children?

City council should take no action to address homelessness. This is the function of private charity

Q5. In 2007 council approved paying all year-round city staff positions a living wage. This spring council approved a policy to ensuring that city contract workers will be paid a living wage (currently defined at \$11.35/hr or \$9.85/hr with health insurance). The ordinance covers general service contracts between \$30,000-\$90,000 and council will evaluate the impact and make a decision whether to extend the program to all contracts next year. Should the City ensure that all City employees and contractor workers make a living wage? Why or why not?

No, the city should not ensure that all city employees and contract workers make a living wage. Employees should be paid market wages based on their value to employers, not on the employee's need to buy things. From each according to their judgment, to each according to their value.

Q6. More than double the percentage of White students pass both the reading and math end of grade tests compared to Black students in Asheville City Schools (91% White, 44% Black). Large achievement gaps also persist between White and Hispanic students and between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students. City Council appoints the board of education for Asheville City Schools – making council the link between voters and the school board. How can the City best support the school district's efforts to close the achievement gap?

There should be no link between voters and the school board. Government should get out of the education business and focus on its only proper role, which is the protection of individual rights; including property rights, economic freedom and political freedom.

Asheville City Council- Tim Peck

Candidates listed alphabetically

Q7. The City's Community Development Division administers and manages programs that impact affordable housing in Asheville and Buncombe County. Describe your vision for increasing affordable housing options in Asheville and what role does the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville play?

The Housing Authority should play no role in increasing affordable housing. Zoning, over-regulation, excessive taxation and ideological public policy create conditions that result in housing that is unaffordable to poor people. I will always vote against measures that cause housing to become unaffordable.

Q8. According to the USDA: "Food security for a household means that all household members have access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life." In Western NC, 1 in 6 people sought help from a food pantry, soup kitchen, or shelter in 2009 – indicating a high rate of food insecurity. What role, if any, can City Council play to increase household "food security"?

City council should play no role in increasing household "food security." Government interference in the economy creates poverty. My votes on council will always reflect a preference for the separation of economy and state.

Asheville City Council- Chris Pelly

Candidates listed alphabetically

Q1. What are your top three policy priorities for your term, if elected?

Top three priorities: Jobs, infrastructure improvements & energy efficiency improvements for Asheville homeowners. If elected, I will work to implement a city-sponsored program to make low-interest loans available to Asheville homeowners to make weatherization and energy efficiency improvements. Using the City of Asheville's AAA bond rating, this program will: 1) Lower energy costs for recession-strapped homeowners; 2) create local living-wage green energy jobs; 3) improve Asheville's aging housing stock and 4) reduce Asheville's carbon footprint.

If elected, I will also work to expand Asheville's sidewalk, greenway and safe biking options. My goal is to increase safe walking and biking options for all Asheville neighborhoods in order to decrease reliance on motor vehicles and increase safe and healthy transportation options.

Q2. An estimated 28% of students in Asheville City Schools live in poverty (family income below about \$22,000 for a family of four). Research has linked child poverty with larger societal costs including academic underachievement, higher dropout rates, higher rates of teen pregnancy, higher costs of crime, lower economic productivity, and poorer overall health outcomes – including higher death rates from chronic and infectious disease. What role, if any, does city council play to address issues related to child poverty?

City Council can impact childhood poverty through the funding priorities they establish and the persons they choose for appointment to boards and commissions. The complex nature of poverty requires an empathetic and progressive city council working in partnership with existing agencies and non-profits and always on the lookout for programs that work.

Q3. The city transit system will soon unveil new route changes and service hours. What is your assessment of the proposed changes and are there other changes that you support to improve public transportation and access to shopping, workplaces, and services for those not using a car?

I support the updated transit master plan which includes more frequent stops on selected routes and longer hours of service. Other related improvements for which I will work include more sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks near or along transit routes. Our present pedestrian infrastructure outside of downtown is improving but many areas such as Hendersonville Road, Leicester Hwy, Deaverview Road and elsewhere are difficult for transit riders to safely access.

Q4. The City currently staffs and manages the Asheville-Buncombe County Homelessness Initiative that developed the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. What is your assessment of this initiative? What actions, if any, should council take to address homelessness, especially for women and children?

The A-B Homelessness Initiative has had a demonstrated impact including a 75% reduction in chronic homelessness from 2005 to 2011. This level of success has earned this initiative continued support from Asheville City Council, particularly as the recession and economic insecurity continue. As a most vulnerable homeless population, children and women warrant priority inclusion in the "Housing First" program.

Asheville City Council- Chris Pelly

Candidates listed alphabetically

Q5. In 2007 council approved paying all year-round city staff positions a living wage. This spring council approved a policy to ensuring that city contract workers will be paid a living wage (currently defined at \$11.35/hr or \$9.85/hr with health insurance). The ordinance covers general service contracts between \$30,000-\$90,000 and council will evaluate the impact and make a decision whether to extend the program to all contracts next year. Should the City ensure that all City employees and contractor workers make a living wage? Why or why not?

The path from poverty must include the ability to earn a living wage. Unlike the two incumbents seeking reelection, I would have voted YES for the living wage resolution requiring employers with general service contracts with the COA in the \$30K to \$90K range pay their employees a living wage. While the COA cannot mandate that private employers pay a living wage, they can set an example by paying city employees and those with whom the COA contracts, a wage capable of a minimum standard of living.

Q6. More than double the percentage of White students pass both the reading and math end of grade tests compared to Black students in Asheville City Schools (91% White, 44% Black). Large achievement gaps also persist between White and Hispanic students and between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students. City Council appoints the board of education for Asheville City Schools – making council the link between voters and the school board. How can the City best support the school district’s efforts to close the achievement gap?

With two of five school board seats to be appointed in early 2012, in a system serving 4,000 students with a \$60 million budget, Asheville City Council must select school board members prepared to demand accountability at all levels from superintendent on down. Further, city council members themselves must champion our fine school system. Sized and scaled to serve the best interest of students, Asheville City Schools is a genuine economic development asset of our community.

Q7. The City’s Community Development Division administers and manages programs that impact affordable housing in Asheville and Buncombe County. Describe your vision for increasing affordable housing options in Asheville and what role does the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville play?

I support consideration of a pilot voucher system to allow residents of public housing to choose other housing options. I support city council providing incentives to increase affordable housing options, particularly along transit corridors. I support a home energy efficiency program (#1 above) to increase housing affordability.

Q8. According to the USDA: “Food security for a household means that all household members have access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.” In Western NC, 1 in 6 people sought help from a food pantry, soup kitchen, or shelter in 2009 – indicating a high rate of food insecurity. What role, if any, can City Council play to increase household “food security”?

With so many poverty issues interrelated, food security is a fundamental need for which city council can help via support for churches and other frontline non-profits service providers. This might mean making available unused office or warehouse space, publicity services through the Neighborhood Coordinator’s position, or directing staff or other resources.



Communities
In Schools

Empowering children and their families to reach their full potential through advocacy, education and services. As Communities In Schools, we surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life

Children First/Communities In Schools of Buncombe County is a not-for-profit organization advocating for Buncombe County's children while providing innovative programs for vulnerable children, and engaging the community in creating a better future for all children.

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