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At-large leaders

Foxx, Lassiter, Peacock, Burgess best prepared for office

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Charlotte's voters will select from a solid field of candidates seeking four at-large seats on City Council in the Nov. 6 election.

They should choose representatives with a broad view of the city's concerns, ones who can work well in a bipartisan setting and who show respect for consensus. Those qualities are essential to effective leadership in seats that represent all citizens. Eight candidates -- four Democrats and four Republicans -- are vying for those seats.

The Republicans include incumbent John Lassiter, 52, president of Carolina Legal Staffing; challenger Edwin Peacock III, 36, who markets insurance and investments; challenger Dan Ramirez, 60, a Mecklenburg County commissioner who does mapping and surveying for Government Information Systems; and challenger David Romero, 34, a self-employed benefits consultant.

The Democrats include incumbent Susan Burgess, 61, a homemaker and former educator; challenger Raphael Basisa, 46, a real estate investor; incumbent Anthony Foxx, 36, a lawyer; and challenger Jack Flynn, 55, co-owner of a graphic design company.

Two incumbents, Anthony Foxx and John Lassiter, stand out as strong choices.

Mr. Foxx is seeking a second term. He has a notably thorough view of Charlotte and its problems, and is deliberate and thoughtful in explaining his concerns and positions. He is unafraid to disagree with fellow council members, yet is able to do so with an even demeanor and by remaining focused on facts. Mr. Foxx has been a consistent advocate for policies that improve the quality of life for all citizens. He tends to approach decisions based on process and principle, not politics. Those qualities are assets on an elected board. We recommend **Anthony Foxx**.

Mr. Lassiter came to the dais seasoned by 11 years on the school board, and has been a strong leader. He asks probing questions, pays attention to details and consistently reaches across party lines to seek common ground in order to move issues forward. For example, he skillfully devised a compromise that led to funding cultural arts facilities uptown -- a critical need for Charlotte-Mecklenburg. We recommend **John Lassiter**.

For the third seat, voters should confidently choose a newcomer, Mr. Peacock, who grew up in Charlotte and returned here after living in Washington for eight years. He offers a broad view of the city's needs and favors a comprehensive transit system and development decisions that carefully follow long-term land use plans. He also wants to combat crime and local gangs by focusing on the underlying causes. He appears open-minded and solution-oriented rather than partisan in his outlook. His experience living in a large metropolitan area also strengthens that perspective on City Council. Those qualities set him apart from a field of appealing challengers. We recommend **Ed Peacock III**.

For the fourth seat, voters should consider Ms. Burgess, who is seeking her fourth at-large term and currently serves as mayor pro-tem. She spent seven years on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board, including two as chair. Her involvement with the N.C. League of Municipalities and National League of Cities has been useful on City Council. Yet her tendency to inject partisan tension into council matters at times has interfered with the council's work and damaged her relationships with other members. Nevertheless, Ms. Burgess' knowledge of how other cities solve problems is a valuable presence on City Council. We recommend **Susan Burgess**.

One note: Voters who find Burgess' tendency to inject politics unacceptable might consider Democrat **Jack Flynn**, a newcomer with an even demeanor who shows a good grasp of the city's needs.

This race attracted a diverse and good field of candidates. Others are Mr. Ramirez, whose calm and reasonable approach to problem solving makes him more valuable on the county board, and Mr. Romero, who has run a strong race in his first try for elective office.

Endorsement schedule

- On Monday, Charlotte City Council districts 1 and 7
- On Tuesday, Mayor EDITORIALS

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